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Where Judaism differs, 1952.



## WHERE JUDAISM DIFFERS

### I. That Man Should Be Saved

February 10, 1952

My dear friends, when we speak of Judaism, its doctrines and its principles, we should bear in mind that we are dealing with a religion nearly 4,000 years old, nearly two-thirds of the recorded history of mankind. Clearly, therefore, Judaism experienced changes and modifications through its long history - changes which were induced from within and from without. Organic evolution accounts for some of these changes; contact with alien cultures and civilization accounts for others. Jews found themselves time and again in new environments, both in Palestine and outside of Palestine, and faced the necessity of making new adjustments to new social and political and economic conditions and new ideas, moral and spiritual. For Judaism is no more the product of one country than it is the product of one age. Judaism is not a precise, formulated creed of some sect or some denomination. It is the emergent spiritual way of life of a people, of an historic people. Many streams poured into the main channel of the religious evolution of Israel, some more decisive than others; some of considerable and others of negligible influence.

It should be borne in mind that Jews never built an iron wall about themselves or isolated themselves intellectually or spiritually, except in periods of direct persecution when they were driven behind walls, or when in a desperate effort to survive from forces which threatened to annihilate them or completely to submerge them, Judaism barricaded itself for a time behind measures of exclusiveness. But at all other times Jews were very receptive to the cultures of other peoples. They freely received and as freely shared spiritual ideas. They were always zealous, of course, to protect and to keep intact what they regarded to be intrinsically, essentially and specifically Jewish.

To expect, therefore, unfailing consistency and unvarying uniformity in this 4000-year-old compendium of Jewish doctrines and teachings, and to expect constant agreement among its teachers on all matters, is to expect the impossible. In the



vast literature of Judaism, one can find opposing opinions on many subjects, mutually contradictory accounts of certain things, considerable controversy and debate over the most basic theologic and ethical concept of Judaism. And if one is eager to do so, one can find stray references and sayings and dicta of Rabbis and sages to prove almost any thesis he wishes to prove.

There were many sects in ancient Israel who differed among themselves sharply and at times, irreconcilably on what they regarded Judaism to be, both in doctrine and in practice. One of the Rabbis of the Talmud declared: "Israel was not dispersed before it broke up into 24 sects of heretics." Numerous sects flourished during the 2nd Commonwealth - that is, between the destructions of the first and the second Temple, during a period of nearly six hundred years. Numerous sects flourished during that period. Some stressed one phase of Judaism and another stressed another phase. Some were strictly literal in their interpretation of the laws of the Bible; others were more liberal; still others were more mystical. Some were influenced by the philosophies prevalent in the non-Jewish Hellenic world of antiquity, and merged Greek or Buddhist or Zoroastrian ideas with their own. Some emphasized otherworldliness in their religious thought, and austerity and asceticism in their manner of life. Still others were confirmed pacifists. Others were taken with extreme ideas of ritual cleanliness and kept themselves away from all contacts which would contaminate them. They had a great variety, a great diversity among our people. But the remarkable thing to remember is that in spite of all this variety, Judaism retained an unmistakable character of its own. In spite of the many by-ways which frequently led off from it, the highway continued clear, steady and undeflected. Judaism never deviated so far from its essential self as to become something else. Its reverence for the past ensured for it an historic continuity. Thus, religious monotheism, the religious monotheism of the Rabbis of the Talmud and their code of ethics, differed in no essential regard from those of the prophets who lived nearly



a thousand years before them, and they differ in no essential regard from those of their successors to this present day. Here and there there is a difference of emphasis, a weightier or a lighter accent. Here and there there is a nuance, significant but not critical. But there is no transvaluation of values.

Judaism was fortunate in what Dr. Schechter called "a happy inconsistency". It never permitted itself to follow an idea, even a good idea, through to its logical conclusion, which very often means a "reductio ad absurdum" - making a thing absurd or ridiculous. For example, Judaism loved Peace. It was the first great religion of mankind that proclaimed the ideal of Peace, "beating swords into ploughshares and learning war no more". Yet it never passed over into pacificism, as some small sects in ancient Israel did, and as Christianity did, because it was clear that the theory could not sustain the practice. Thus, for example, again, Judaism accepted the idea of a Messiah, but it never accepted any Messiah, for the idea was inspiring as a hope but hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfillment, always an anti-climax.

Again, take the matter of the Bible. The Bible was looked upon by authoritative Judaism as the revealed word of God, and in the Bible it was clearly stated that there must be nothing added to it or detracted from it. And yet Judaism, true to the spirit of the Bible and desirous to keep its laws vital, relevant and not obsolete, found ways of interpreting it so that much was added and much was detracted without doing violence to its spirit and its integrity, although there were sects in Israel - some of them very influential sects like the Sadducees, like the Karaites - who clamorously insisted upon the literal interpretation of this law that nothing shall be added to the Bible and nothing detracted from it.



Take again the idea which was very prevalent among our people that man was made in the image of God. Man is called in the Bible the "child of God". "Ye are children unto the Lord Your God." No faith stressed so strongly man's kinship with God, every man's kinship with God - not only that of kings and rulers which ancient peoples likewise stressed. And yet, Judaism rejected every attempt to give a literal meaning to this idea of a "child of God" or a "son of God". It rejected every attempt to call any man divine, or the doctrine that the divine ever assumed the form of a man. It kept sublime and inspiring the religious imagery within bounds.

There is a remarkable balance and sanity and pragmatic quality to Judaism which, while not discouraging deviations - either deviations into spiritual extremes or into the mystical or into excessive zeal - nevertheless kept these in their place, as it were, and reduced their importance to small proportions. The periphery is never confused with the center, with the core; and the surface eddies were never mistaken for the deep carrying channels of Judaism.

And in this regard Judaism differed from many other of the great religions of mankind as sharply as it differed from, say the universal polytheism of the ancient world, which was the early religion in the ancient world, composed of many nations in many ways far superior intellectually, scientifically, artistically from the Jewish people. It nevertheless differed from the whole ancient world on this matter of monotheism versus polytheism; but it differed in many other important regards. There is a quality to Jewish ethics and to Jewish religious doctrine which set it apart in one regard or another, from one or another of the classical religions of mankind.

Take this concept of Salvation, this idea that man needs to be saved. In nearly every religion there is the idea that man needs to be saved. But in nearly every religion the idea takes on a different coloration from what it does in Judaism. In Buddhism, for example, man needs to be saved from the toils of life itself - from



existence; man needs to be saved from his own individuality. It is the will to live that is at the root of all man's suffering and unhappiness. ~~Man~~ Man needs to be saved from the world of the senses, because the world is wholly ill and evil, and therefore, anxiety is always at the core of all existence. Therefore, man should not strive for self-preservation, for self-development, for the integration of his personality; man should strive for self-extinction, self-denial. To be saved is to forego all desire, all ambitions, even good ambitions, to transcend one's individuality and lose one's self in Nirvana, in self-extinction, as a drop of water loses itself in the ocean.

That is one conception of how a man is to be saved. This is not Judaism's conception of salvation. Judaism is a strong affirmation of life. It is a prophetic faith which believes that while there is evil in the life of man and of society, it can by moral effort and exertion be overcome to a degree where man's life upon earth may yield him a large measure of happiness and satisfaction. Judaism does believe in the development of the individual through education and through moral exercise. Judaism does believe in social progress and in the value of social progress. Salvation, therefore, is to be found in action and in living, not in escape or denial. Salvation is to be found in spiritual self-confidence, and not in self-destruction.

In Christianity again Salvation took on another and a very specific meaning. A man is saved only through faith in Jesus Christ whose death upon the cross atoned for the original sin which the first man Adam by his disobedience committed, whose sin was transmitted from generation to generation. And in Adam all mankind sinned and was condemned. And that original sin had to be removed before God could forgive man and be reconciled to mankind, and this was achieved by the sacrifice of Jesus, by his suffering and his death. This was achieved by a vicarious atonement for this original sin. In this sense Jesus is the Saviour, and those who believe in him and accept his sacrifice are saved, and no one else. Salvation is thus achieved not by good works, not by merit, not by self-effort, but by an act of faith and an act of grace.



Man himself has not the strength or the will to save himself. God has to intervene by incarnating himself in the personality of Jesus, and by making the blood sacrifice which reconciles man to him. Salvation is thus a gift of God to sinful man, not the achievement of man himself. Now, this thought is central dogma both to Catholicism and to Protestantism, though in some instances modern liberal Christianity has deviated from it to the point of maintaining that Salvation is achieved through man's embodiment in his life of the life and character, the ideals of Jesus. But overwhelmingly it is the doctrine of Salvation through faith in the attainment after Jesus proclaimed with great emphasis by Paul, the true founder of the Christian church, that is authoritative for Christianity. "Therefore we conclude," said Paul, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Again he said, "As by the offense of one man, Adam, judgment came upon all men to condemn them, even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus), the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

Here again, the idea of man being saved has a specific meaning. Now Judaism rejected this conception of salvation also. To be sure, we do find occasional references in Jewish literature to the idea of original sin, but it never came to hold such a central dogmatic indispensable place in Jewish theology as it did in Christian theology. It was never made an article of faith in which a Jew must believe. It belonged to what we may call Agada, to the non-authoritative and fluctuating popular religious lore of Judaism, which never became part of the essential credo of the Jew. You could accept it or reject it. Your status as a believing Jew remained unimpaired, or for that matter, unimproved.

In the same category with the idea of original sin belonged the idea of original merit, or what is known in our literature as the the Merits of the Fathers, of the Patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacobs, whose good deeds were so great that from their treasury of accumulated merit, a subsequent generation could



borrow towards their own salvation.

Now, the doctrine of inherited sin and of inherited merit is not unknown, therefore, in Jewish religious thought - that men are helped or hurt by their ancestry. In the Ten Commandments, in the Bible we read that God "visits the sins of the fathers upon the children until the 3rd and 4th generation and showeth mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments." Here the idea of transmitted guilt and transmitted merit is accepted, but with a clear statement that the relationship between the influence of merit and the influence of guilt upon subsequent generations is in the ratio of 1000 to 4. Nevertheless, even this Biblical judgment embodied in the Ten Commandments was challenged very early by the great prophets of Israel, by Jeremiah, for example and Ezekiel. Ezekiel says, "Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." If fathers have eaten sour grapes, the teeth of the children will not, therefore, be set on edge.

And the religious leaders of all subsequent times accepted this prophetic view of moral responsibility, of guilt or of merit. Thus, they brush aside the notion of the ~~bygone~~ declaring that it was discontinued long ago in the days of King Hezekiah. The account was definitely closed. "Let not a man say, my father was a pious man; I shall be saved for his sake. Abraham could not save Ishmael, nor could Jacob save Esau."

In other words, Judaism did not hold that man was lost because of any inherited depravity and original guilt from which he had to be saved; nor that his salvation depended upon the vicarious sacrifice of some saviour. Judaism did hold that man is born imperfect and that his destiny is to perfect himself. Man must develop himself mentally, morally, spiritually. Now, he is capable of fulfilling his destiny or of rejecting it. He may make the effort or he may refuse to make it. There are forces within him which urge him to rise through moral effort to higher levels, and



there are also forces which tempt him to sink to lower level in greed, in lust, in indolence. In other words, man can be saved from betraying the best that he is capable of, or from the temptations which beset him, or from the burden of guilt which his sins may have put upon him by his own moral effort, by his own moral aspiration. And if he makes the effort, God will help him. All men are liable to sin, but all men are also free to repent. No one is disabled morally, totally. God is ready to forgive; "God does not desire the death of the sinner but that he should return and live." God is gracious. He is the the God of forgiveness.

God is gracious and forgiving, long-suffering, and full of kindness and of truth. God will do more for man than man deserves if only man makes the initial effort to rehabilitate himself. Man does not require the ~~atonement~~ atonement blood of another to save him. Man does not need saviours. Man needs teachers, guides and his own strong will. Nor is a particular belief, any particular belief a condition of salvation, not even Judaism. Salvation is open to all men, even to those who do not accept Judaism. The Rabbis declared;

"The righteous among the Gentiles will inherit the world to come." If men only avoid the great immoral practices of murder and incest, of adultery, of robbery, of the eating of the flesh of living animals, of idolatry and blasphemy - the so-called 7 laws of Noah - they are in the same category with the most pious among the Jews who observe the 613 commandments.

Judaism maintained that salvation is not had by faith alone or through the mediation of anyone. Man needs help in his struggles, in his efforts - encouragement, hope, confidence. If man needs any help from faith in his struggle to save himself from his lower self and to rise to higher levels, it comes from faith in God Himself.

"I cried unto Thee, unto Thee alone, O God." It is by deeds and good works that a man rises. It is by them that a man is brought nearer to God.

"Your deeds will bring you nearer to God and your deeds will estrange you from God." It is



deeds, it is the good life which make atonement for man.

And here, my good friends, I should like to point out that it is a characteristic of Judaism, that it always laid the greatest emphasis on doing, on conduct, on ~~the~~ practice. Learning is important, but not as important as leading a good life. Thus, one of the great Rabbis said, "A man who has learned much Torah and has good deeds is like a horse which has reins. The man who has the first, but not the second, is like a horse without reins; it soon throws the rider over its head." How true that is of the intellectual and the sophisticated one whose life is not held steady by moral purpose, moral conduct, by sound moral guiding principles. How true that is of our whole world today, so learned, so advanced scientifically, and yet so anarchic morally, and how the rider has been thrown time and again because of it.

Another great teacher declared ~~in~~, "Let a man first do good deeds and then ask God for knowledge of the Torah. Let a man first act as righteous and upright men act and then let him ask God for wisdom. Let a man first grasp the way of humility and then ask God for understanding." Learning is important, but not as important as conduct. Faith is important - faith in God is vital - but it is not the supreme ingredient in the life of the faithful. There is a startling statement of the Rabbis which sums up this entire statement, this entire attitude, this entire outlook, this specific and characteristic outlook of Judaism. God is made to declare:

"Not that they would forsake Me but break My law." If a man has sinned - and what man does not sin - he is redeemed from sin by repentance and by acts of righteousness, by "Teshuba", by "tsedaka". They are the conditions of salvation. It is not acknowledging God or confessing a sin which are the conditions of a man being saved from the consequences of his action, but the changing of his way of life - reparation, restitution, redirection of his way of life. "If a man is guilty of sin," declared one of the sages, "and confesses it and does not change his way, unto what is he like? He is like unto a man who



holds a defiling object in his hand even while he is immersing himself in purifying waters. All the waters in the world will not avail him. He remains unclean because he clings to his defilement."

Sometimes the people of Israel, facing grave dangers, were taught to pray for deliverance in utter humility and complete recumbency on God. "It is not for the sake of our righteousness and the good deeds we possess that Thou wilt save us, but deliver us for the sake of Thy righteousness." This is to be taken not literally again, but as a figure of speech, a poetic way of expressing complete trust in God's goodness and compassion. It is not to be taken as a theologic formula for obtaining salvation. The classic position is that Israel or any people must repent and improve its way before it can enjoy God's favor and help.

Now, you may think I am discussing ancient ideas which have no relevancy to the world today and to philosophy today. You would be mistaken in so believing. The doctrine that man is helpless to save himself reappears in our own day, in the philosophy of what has come to be called Existentialism which received its formulation in the early part of the 19th century at the hands of the brilliant Danish religious philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, and has won many disciples in Christian circles in recent decades, and more recently, even among some Jewish theologians of the type of Martin Buber. A writer by the name of Will Herberg has recently written a book called "Judaism and Modern Man" in which he sets out to give an existentialist interpretation of Judaism. Now, what is this existentialism, this philosophy grounded in deep pessimism and disillusionment, that man is trapped helplessly and cannot escape the predicaments in which his very existence is involved. By his own capacities man cannot redeem himself. He is a bundle of contradictions. Man is the slave of his boundless desires which he cannot satisfy. His mind is constricted by inescapable paradoxes which he cannot resolve. He must make choices time and again, but heredity and environment make it impossible for him to make free choices. Man should be just to his neighbor, and yet his self-interests are in conflict



with his altruism. Man cannot help himself, only divine grace can save man from his evil nature and redeem man from himself. Man needs a redeemer. For the Christians it may be Christ; for the Jew, it is God. This same pessimism and disillusionment, with all scientific, social and political movements of our day, which promise so much for man but which resulted in such fear and anguish and human suffering, underlies the secular branch of this philosophy of Existentialism of the school of Jean Paul Sartre, which really approaches spiritual chaos and nihilism.

It is a very dominant school of religious and secular philosophy today because of a certain ambient defeatism which man experiences today.

Now, all this is rejected by Judaism. Judaism rejects this exaggerated pessimism with regard to man's nature and man's endowments. Man can, by a large degree, make his own world; and man, to a large degree, made his own world. And by and large, in spite of set-backs and throw-backs, it has been a progressive world. Man has moved forward to more knowledge, to higher standards of living, to greater justice, to better health conditions, to greater and more energetic efforts at eradication of poverty, and exploitation in the world. We could take the large perspective on human history and see definite progress, and though the pace is frequently slow and frequently checked and frequently reversed, steadily all along, if you take the long view of history, man has risen from the lowest levels, the jungles of barbarism, of bestiality, to higher levels.

Judaism maintains today as it did all along that man is a co-worker of God in creation . Man is finite and yet not helpless. Man is conditioned; yet he is free to a challenging degree. Man cannot think as God but man can think about God. Man does not know the ultimate answers, but in faith he can work with relative truths and find satisfaction and happiness in his work, provided it is sincere work and well-intentioned and directed towards God and towards man.



"Thine is not the duty to complete the task - neither art thou free to desist from it." "Share your burden with the Lord and He will sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved." Share your burden with God, but above all, work, strive, seek, and as you work, pray. "Establish Thou the work of our hands; yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it." In other words, dear friends, on the subject that a man needs to be saved, Judaism has differed with many, <sup>if</sup> not with all the great religions of mankind. Man need not be saved from any imputed guilt of the past. A man does not require anyone else to atone for him in his sins. A man is saved from his own sins and from his own lower self by moral aspiration, by seeking to lead the good life.

"He who seeks self-perfection, he will be saved."





1. When we speak of Judaism's doctrines and principles - we should bear in mind that we are dealing with a religion nearly 4000 yrs. old. - nearly 2/3 of recorded hist. of mankind.

clearly it experienced changes and modifications thru its long history - changes induced from within and from without. Organic evolution ~~not~~ accounted for some, these changes. Contact with alien cultures and civilizations ~~not~~ accounted for others. Jews found ~~themselves~~ themselves time and again in new environments and <sup>2d</sup> faced the necessity of making new adjustments to <sup>new</sup> social, ~~and~~ ~~religious~~ <sup>even</sup> conditions and to new ideas, moral and spiritual.

For Judaism is no more the product of one ~~place~~ country than it is the product of one age. It is not the precise formulated creed of some sect or denomination. It is the ~~embodied~~ <sup>embodied</sup> spiritual way of life of a people. Many streams found into the main channel of the rel. evolution of Israel, some more direct than others, some of considerable size and others of negligible importance. Jews never built an iron wall about themselves or isolated themselves spiritually or intellectually - except in periods of direct persecutions when they were driven behind walls, ~~and~~ or when in a desperate effort to survive faces which threatened to annihilate or absorb them - they barricaded themselves behind <sup>unmoving</sup> ~~static~~ exclusiveness. At all other times they were very receptive to the culture of other peoples, freely received and as freely shared, spiritual ideas, but always zealous to protect and keep intact what ~~was~~ they held to be intrinsically essential and spiritually Jewish.



(2)

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in the 4000 yr.-old compendium of doctrines and teachings,  
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is to expect the impossible. In the vast liter. of Tvd. one finds  
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There were many sects in ancient Israel who differed  
among themselves, sharply and almost irreconcilably, on what  
they regarded as the ~~and the~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~main~~ as their attitudes  
~~to~~ both in doctrine and practice. One, the Rabbis,  
the Talmud declared: "Israel was not despised before it broke  
up into 24 sects of heretics." Numerous sects flourished  
during the 2nd Commonwealth (but destruction of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple).  
Some stressed one phase of Judaism; others another. Some were strictly  
literal in their interpretation, the Law, the Bible - others more  
liberal. Still others were mystical. Some were influenced  
by Hellenistic ideas and present in the non-Jews, <sup>Hellenic</sup> ~~but~~  
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other-worldliness in their rel. that - and asceticism and  
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firmed practicalists. Others were taken with extreme ideas  
of ritual cleanliness, and kept themselves away from all  
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But the remarkable thing to remember is that in spite of all this variety, Jvd. retained an unmistakable character of unity. In spite of the many by-ways which led off from it - the highway continued clear, ~~and unmistakable and undisturbed~~ <sup>steadily</sup>. Jvd. never deviated so far from its essential self as to ~~reverse for the past period~~ <sup>lose sight of its future consequences</sup> ~~to become something else~~. The rel. ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> Rabbinic, the Talmud and their code, Ethics defined in no essential regard from those, the prophet who preceded them by nearly a millennium - and they differ in no essential regard from those of their successors to the present day. Here and there there is a diff. emphasis, a ~~weightier or brighter~~ <sup>accent</sup>, a nuance, significant but not ~~radically and often critical~~ <sup>radically and often critical</sup>. But no transvaluating values!

Jvd. was fortunate in what Dr. Schurter called - a "happy inconsistency". It never permitted itself to follow an idea thru to its "logical conclusion" - which way of her means a "reduction ad absurdum". It loved peace - but never passed over to pacifism, as some small sects in ancient Israel did - and as Churchland did - her. it was clear that the theory could not sustain the practice. It accepted the idea of a messiah - but it never accepted a Messiah - for the idea was ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~wisping~~ <sup>wisping</sup> as a hope but ~~hopeless~~ <sup>hopeless</sup> as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfilled. <sup>an anti-divine</sup> The Bible - as the revealed word of God - and in the Bible it is decreed that nothing shall be added or detracted from it. And yet Jvd. - true to the spirit of the Bible - and desirous to keep its laws



vital, relevant and not obsolete found ways of interpreting it so that much was asked for and much was detracted without doing violence to its spirit or integrity - altho there were sects in Israel (some of them very large & influential - Sadducees / Karaites / who claimantly insisted upon a literal interp. of the Scripture).

There is a remarkable balance and sanity and pragmatic quality to Judaism, which, while not discouraging deviations, <sup>keeps them</sup> into the extremes, <sup>not</sup> the mystical, the excessive zealers, ~~there~~ in their place, as it were, reduces their importance to small proportions. The periphery is never confused with the ~~center~~ <sup>center</sup>, the surface edges with the deep channels.

↓ Jwd. regarded man as made in the image of God. "I call man a child, God". ~~עוֹלָם הָאֵל / עוֹלָם הָאֱלֹהִים~~ - "No faith shared so things man's likeness - every man's likeness with God - not only kings & rulers.

And yet it rejected every attempt to give a "literal meaning" to it - by calling any man divine - or by accepting a doctrine that the divine assumed the body of a man. It kept ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~Darwinian~~ rel. imagery within bounds.

2f. And in this regard it differed from many other religions - as sharply as it differed from the universal polytheisms of the entire ancient world. There is a quality to J. Ethics and rel. doctrines which set it apart from in one regard or another from one or another, the classical religions, <sup>worlds</sup>.



3/. Talk the concept / Salvation. In nearly every rel. there is the idea that man needs to be saved. — But in nearly every rel. the idea takes on a diff. coloration. In Buddhism, e.g., man needs to be saved from the trials of life itself, of existence of his individuality. It is the will-to-live that is at the root of all man's suffering and unhappiness. A man needs to be saved from the world of the senses. The world is wholly ill, and therefore suffering is at the core of all being. Therefore man should turn not for self-preservation but for self-denial. To be saved is to lay all desires, all ambitions, all to transcend one's individuality. and lose one's self in Nirvana — in self-extinction, as a drop of water loses itself in the ocean.

This is not Jud.'s conception of salvation. Jud. is not strong afterworld of life; it is a prophetic faith which believes that while there is evil in the life of man and of society. it can be overcome by moral effort and exertion, he overcome to a degree other man's life after earth may bring him a large measure of happiness and satisfaction. It believes in individual development through education and moral exercise and in social progress. Salvation is in action and in living, not in escape retreat. — in self-confidence not in self-destruction.

4/. For Christianity, again, salvation took on a specific meaning. Man is saved through faith in Jesus Christ whose death upon the cross atoned for the original sin which the first man Adam by his disobedience committed, when his was transferred from severance to separation. In Adam



all mankind saved. That sin ~~was~~ <sup>had to</sup> ~~could~~ be removed before <sup>God</sup> could justify Man. This was achieved by the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus, by his suffering and death, vicariously atoned for the <sup>original</sup> sin which cursed the world. ~~for this reason Jesus is the Saviour~~ and those who believe in him and accept his sacrifice are saved. - And no one else! by merit - by ~~self-effort~~ <sup>faith</sup>

Salvation is thus achieved, ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> by good works, but by an act of faith.

Man had not the strength or the will to save <sup>in Jesus</sup> himself. God had to intervene, and by incarnating himself <sup>and dying</sup> made the <sup>blood-</sup>sacrifice which redeemed man to Him. Salvation is thus the gift of God - an act of Grace - not the achievement of man.

This that is central dogma both to Cath & Prot. - the in some instances modern liberal Christ. has deviated from it to the point of maintaining that salvation is achieved through the subordination of life and character, the ideas of Jesus. But over whelmingly. It is the doctrine of salvation through faith in the atonement act of Jesus, proclaimed with great emphasis by Paul, the true founder, the Christian Church, that is authoritative for the Church today. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law" (Rom. 3.28) Again "As by the <sup>one</sup> <sup>sin</sup> of one man (Adam), <sup>judgment</sup> <sup>came</sup> upon all men to <sup>condemnation</sup> <sup>through</sup> <sup>disobedience</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>one</sup> man, even so <sup>shall</sup> <sup>the</sup> righteousness of one (Jesus)



the free gift came upon all men unto justification & life." (2)

Judaism rejected also this conception of salvation. To be sure we find occasional references to the idea of original sin also in Jew. rel. literature; but it never ~~came~~ <sup>came</sup> to hold such a ~~prominent~~ <sup>independent</sup> place in Jew. theology as in Christian. ~~Specifically, the idea of~~ It was never made an article of faith - in which a Jew must believe. It belonged to Apocrypha - to the ~~non-authoritative and~~ <sup>popular</sup> rel. lore which never became part of the essential credo; the Jews can accept it or reject it - you status as a Jew remained unimpaired or unimpaired.

In the same category belonged the notion of ~~absc~~ <sup>absc</sup> - the Merit, the Patriarchal ~~which~~ <sup>where</sup> ~~where~~ <sup>where</sup> God dwells men so great and influential that from their heavenly ~~merit~~ <sup>accumulated</sup> subsequent generations could borrow towards their salvation. The doctrine of inherited sin and of ~~inherited~~ <sup>inherited</sup> merit was not unknown in Jew. rel. tho. - men are helped or hurt by their ancestors. In the TEn ~~circumstances~~ <sup>circumstances</sup> idea is accepted, with the clear statement ~~that the influence of~~ <sup>that the influence of</sup> ~~as contrasted~~ <sup>as contrasted</sup> with the influence of guilt is as 1000 is to 1. -

Nevertheless, even this Rabbinic judgment embodied in the 10 Cen - was challenged very early by the great prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel - "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God."



"The soul that soweth I shall die". The son shall not 18  
bear the iniquity, the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity  
of the son. If fathers have laden sons paper - the teeth, the  
children will not therefore be set on edge.

And the rel. leader, all subsequent times accepted the  
prophetic ~~interpretation~~ <sup>vision</sup> of moral responsibility - of guilt  
and of merit.

Thus they broke aside the notion of the merit, the talman  
by declaring that it was discontinued long ago - in the  
days of King Hezekiah. The account was definitely closed.

"Let not a man say, my father was a pious man,  
I shall be saved for his sake. - Abraham could not  
save Ishmael, nor could Jacob save Esau."

Jvd. did not hold that man was lost, because  
of any inherent depravity and original guilt from  
which he had to be saved - nor that his salvation  
depended upon the vicarious sacrifice of some savior.

Man is born imperfect. His destiny is to perfect  
himself. He must develop himself mentally, morally,  
spiritually. He is capable of fulfilling his destiny or of  
neglecting it. He may make the effort or he may refuse to  
make it. There are forces within him urging him to  
rise, through moral effort, to higher levels. There are  
also forces, which tempt him to sink to lower levels  
by in greed, in lust, in indolence. Man can be saved



from hedging the bet that he is capable of - ~~not~~ a from (9)  
the temptations which beset him; or from the burden of guilt  
which his sins <sup>may</sup> have put upon him - by moral effort  
and aspiration. If he makes the effort God will help him.

All men are liable to sin but all men are also  
free to repent. No one is totally disabled morally.  
God is ready to forgive. "God does not desire the death  
of the sinner but that he should <sup>repent</sup> and live." ~~God is~~  
God is ~~merciful~~ - He will do more for man than he  
deserves - if only ~~he will~~ <sup>man will</sup> the effort to rehabilitate himself

Man does not require the ~~atonement~~ blood  
and thus to ~~save~~ <sup>He never thinks</sup> him. Nor is ~~a~~ <sup>particular</sup> belief  
a condition of salvation; Salvation is open to all -  
even to those who do not accept ~~doctrines~~ of Judaism  
~~that~~ adultery, robbery, idleness, blasphemy and eating of  
the flesh of living animals - the 7 laws of Noah - they  
are in the same category with the most pious among  
the Jews who break the 613 commandments

~~But~~ Salvation is not had by faith alone, nor by  
mediation. If any help can come to man, <sup>transferring</sup> in his  
struggle to save himself from his lower self and  
to rise to higher levels it ~~can~~ comes from faith in ~~the~~ a  
living God. Ps. 88.  
~~It is the~~ ~~living~~ ~~God~~ ~~Ps. 88.~~ ~~not~~ ~~faith~~ ~~alone~~



It is deeds - good works - ~~which~~ that a man rises. - It is  
by them that a man is best known to God. Job 22 (Edy. 5.1). It is "deeds which make abundant for man"  
It is a characteristic of our faith that it always has  
the practical emphasis on doing - on conduct - on practice.  
Learning is important but not as important as leading  
a good life. ~~Said~~ "A man who has learned much more and  
has good deeds is like a horse which has reins. The man  
who has the first, but not the second, is like a horse without  
reins; it soon throws the rider over its head" How true  
that is of the intellectual and the sophisticated whose life  
is not held steady by moral purposes and principles.  
principles! How true that is of our world to-day - so  
advanced scientifically, so anarchic morally - and how  
the reins have been thrown over its head!

Declarated another Rabbi - "Let a man first do good  
deeds, and then ask God for knowledge, the Torah; let a man  
first act as righteous and upright men act, and then let  
him ask God for wisdom; let a man first grasp the way  
of benevolence, and then ask God for understanding."

Faith is important and vital - but it is not the supreme  
important in the life, the faithful - 1, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

If a man has ruined - he is redeemed from sin  
by repentance and acts of righteousness. repentance and  
acts are the condition of salvation. It is not



acknowledging God as confessor of sin which are the condition (11)  
of his being saved from the consequences, his action, but the changing  
his way ~~of~~ <sup>- reparation - repentance -</sup> If a man is guilty of a sin, and confesses it,  
but does not change his way, unto what is he like? He is like  
with a man who holds a defiling object in his hand even  
while he is conversing himself in purifying waters. All the  
waters in the world will not avail him. He remains unclean.  
He clings to his defilement.

6). Some times, the people of Israel, facing danger were taught  
to pray for deliverance in utter humility and complete  
remembering on God: "It is not for the sake of our righteousness  
and the good deeds we possess, that thou wilt save us, but  
deliver us for the sake of thy righteousness." But this is to  
be taken as a figure of speech - a poetic way of expressing  
complete trust in God's goodness and compassion - and  
as a theological formula for obtaining salvation. The doctrine  
position is that Israel must repent and improve its way  
before it can enjoy God's favor and help.

7). The doctrine that man is helpless to save himself  
appears in our day in the philosophy of existentialism -  
which received its formulation <sup>in the hands of the 19th C.</sup> at the hands of the brilliant  
Danish rel. philo. Søren Kierkegaard, and has won many  
disciples in Christian circles in recent decades - and more  
recently even among some Jewish theologians, the type  
of Martin Buber. - Will Herberg - "Judaism & Modern Man"



It is founded in deep pessimism - and disillusionment. (42)  
Man is trapped helplessly and cannot escape to predicaments  
in which his <sup>very</sup> existence is involved. ~~By~~ <sup>Through</sup> his <sup>own</sup> ~~capacities~~ <sup>capacities</sup> man cannot redeem himself. ~~He is a bound creature~~ <sup>Man</sup>  
is the slave, his boundaries ~~denies~~ <sup>denies</sup> which he cannot satisfy.  
His mind is constructed by inescapable paradoxes  
which ~~it~~ it cannot resolve. He must make choices,  
but heredity and environment make it impossible for him  
to make free choices. He should be just to his neighbors  
and get his self-interests as in conflict with his  
altruism. <sup>Man cannot help himself. Only divine</sup>  
<sup>can save man from his evil by nature, and the</sup>  
~~force can redeem man from himself.~~ <sup>He needs</sup>  
a redeemer - for the Christian it is Christ. For the  
Jew - it is God. The same pessimism and disillusionment  
with all scientific, social, <sup>pol.</sup> movement of our day which  
promised so much but which resulted in such  
confusion, fear, anguish and human suffering underlies  
the secular ~~travels~~ <sup>Existentialism</sup> of the school of  
Jean Paul Sartre - which approaches <sup>sp.</sup> chaos  
and nihilism.

8/. All this is rejected by Judaism. <sup>Jud.</sup> rejects this  
exaggerated pessimism with regard to man's nature  
and endowment.

Man can, to a large degree, make his world; and man  
has, to a large degree, made his world. - And by and large



in spite of set-backs and throw-backs - ~~but~~ has been a  
progressive world. Man ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> worked forward - to more  
shambled - higher standards of living - <sup>many</sup> better health  
conditions - greater and more energetic efforts at eradication  
of poverty and exploitation in the world - The large perspective  
shows definite progress - ~~even~~ tho the pace is <sup>often</sup> slow and  
frequently checked - and at times reversed.

~~Man~~ Man is a co-worker of God in creation - ~~and~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~God~~ <sup>God</sup>  
He is finite and yet not helpless. conditioned and yet free  
to a ~~very~~ <sup>challenging</sup> degree; He cannot think as God, but  
he can think about God; He does not know the  
ultimate answers, but he can work in faith with  
relative truth and find satisfaction and happiness in  
his work provided it is sincere and well-intentioned  
and ~~for~~ directed God-ward and man-ward.

"There is no duty to complete the task -  
neither art thou free to desert from it." -

"~~God~~ <sup>God</sup> shall give burden with the Lord, and He will  
sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved."

But also all - work - strive - seek - and as you work  
pray: "Establish thou the work of our hands - Yea, the work  
of our hands establish thou it!"

Man need not be saved from the imputed guilt of  
another man and does not require ~~the~~ another man to  
atone for him. - If man is saved from his sins and  
his lower self - by moral ascension ~~it~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~hands~~ <sup>hands</sup> ~~alone~~ <sup>alone</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~hands~~ <sup>hands</sup> ~~alone~~ <sup>alone</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~hands~~ <sup>hands</sup> ~~alone~~ <sup>alone</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~hands~~ <sup>hands</sup> ~~alone~~ <sup>alone</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> 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## WHERE JUDAISM DIFFERS

That Man Should Be Saved

Sermon, The Temple,  
February 10, 1952

~~My dear friends,~~ When we speak of Judaism, its doctrines and its principles, we should bear in mind that we are dealing with a religion nearly 4,000 years old, which has spanned nearly two-thirds of the recorded history of mankind. Clearly, therefore, Judaism experienced changes and modifications through its long history <sup>of</sup> changes which were induced from within and from without. Organic evolution accounts for some of these changes; contact with alien cultures and civilization accounts for others. Jews found themselves time and again in new environments, both in Palestine and outside of Palestine, and faced the necessity of making ~~new~~ adjustments to new social, <sup>to</sup> political, and economic conditions and <sup>to</sup> new ideas, moral and spiritual. For Judaism is no more the product of one country than it is the product of one age. Judaism is not a precise, formulated creed of some sect or some denomination. It is the emergent spiritual way of life of a people, of a historic people. Many streams poured into the main channel of the religious evolution of Israel, some more decisive than others; some of considerable and others of negligible influence.

It should be borne in mind that Jews never built an iron wall about themselves or isolated themselves intellectually or spiritually, except in periods of direct persecution when they were driven behind walls, or when in a desperate effort to survive ~~from~~ forces which threatened to annihilate them or completely to submerge them. Judaism barricaded itself for a time behind measures of exclusiveness. But at all other times Jews were ~~very~~ receptive to the cultures of other peoples. They freely received and as freely shared spiritual ideas. They were always zealous, of course, to protect and to keep intact what they regarded <sup>as</sup> intrinsically, essentially, and specifically Jewish.

To expect, ~~therefore~~, unflinching consistency and unvarying uniformity in this 4,000-year-old compendium of Jewish doctrines and teachings, and to expect constant agreement among its teachers on all matters <sup>therefore</sup> is to expect the impossible. In the



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vast literature of Judaism, one can find opposing opinions on many subjects, mutually contradictory accounts of certain things, considerable controversy and debate over the most basic theologic and ethical concepts of Judaism. And if one is eager to do so, one can find stray references and sayings and dicta of Rabbis and sages to prove almost any thesis he wishes to prove.

There were many sects in ancient Israel <sup>which</sup> differed among themselves sharply and, at times, irreconcilably on what they regarded Judaism to be, both in doctrine and in practice. One of the Rabbis of the Talmud declared: "Israel was not dispersed before it broke up into <sup>+twenty-four</sup> sects of heretics." Numerous sects flourished during the <sup>Second</sup> Commonwealth - that is, between the destructions of the First and the Second Temple, during a period of nearly six hundred years. Numerous sects flourished during that period. Some stressed one phase of Judaism and <sup>others</sup> stressed another phase. Some were strictly literal in their interpretation of the laws of the Bible; others were more liberal; still others were more mystical. Some were influenced by the philosophies prevalent in the non-Jewish Hellenic world of antiquity, and merged Greek or Buddhist or Zoroastrian ideas with their own. <sup>Others</sup> emphasized otherworldliness in their religious thought, and austerity and asceticism in their manner of life. Still others were confirmed pacifists. <sup>Some</sup> others were taken with extreme ideas of ritual cleanliness and kept themselves away from all contacts which would contaminate them. <sup>We</sup> had a great variety, a great diversity among our people. But the remarkable thing to remember is that in spite of all this variety, Judaism retained an unmistakable character of its own. In spite of the many byways which frequently led off from it, the highway continued clear, steady, and undeflected. Judaism never deviated so far from its essential self as to become something else. Its reverence for the past ensured for it an historic continuity. Thus, ~~religious~~ ~~monotheism~~, the religious monotheism of the Rabbis of the Talmud and their code of ethics, differed in no essential regard from those of the prophets who lived nearly



a thousand years before them, and they differ in no essential regard from those of their successors to this present day. Here and there one finds <sup>and finds</sup> difference of emphasis, a weightier or a lighter accent. Here and there there is a nuance, significant but not critical. But there is no transvaluation of ~~values~~ <sup>values</sup>.

Judaism was fortunate in what Dr. <sup>Solomon</sup> Schechter called "a happy inconsistency". It never permitted itself to follow an idea, even a good idea, through to its logical conclusion, which ~~was~~ often means a "reductio ad absurdum" - making a thing absurd or ridiculous. For example, Judaism loved peace. It was the first ~~religion~~ religion of mankind that proclaimed the ideal of ~~"beating swords into ploughshares and learning war no more"~~ <sup>normative Judaism</sup>. Yet ~~it~~ never passed over into pacifism, as some small sects in ancient Israel did, and as Christianity did, because it was clear that the theory could not sustain the practice. ~~Thus, for example,~~ <sup>Again,</sup> Judaism accepted the idea of a Messiah, but it never accepted any Messiah, for the idea was inspiring as a hope but hopeless as a reality. An actual Messiah is always an unfulfillment, always an anti-climax.

<sup>Or</sup> ~~Again,~~ take the matter of the Bible. The Bible was looked upon by authoritative Judaism as the revealed word of God, and in the Bible it was clearly stated that there must be nothing added to it or detracted from it. ~~Yet~~ <sup>of</sup> Judaism, true to the spirit of the Bible and desirous <sup>to</sup> keep its laws vital, relevant, and not obsolete, found ways of interpreting <sup>Scripture</sup> ~~it~~ so that much was added and much was <sup>to</sup> detracted without doing violence to its spirit and ~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> integrity, although there were sects in Israel - some of them very influential sects like the Sadducees, like the Karaites - who clamorously insisted upon the literal interpretation of this law that nothing shall be added to the Bible and nothing <sup>taken</sup> detracted from it.



There was the idea which was prevalent among our people that man was made in the image of God. Man was called in the Bible the "child of God". "Ye are children unto the Lord your God." No faith stressed so strongly man's kinship with God, every man's kinship with God <sup>just</sup> not only that of kings and rulers, which ancient people likewise stressed. But Judaism rejected every attempt to give a literal meaning to this idea of a "child of God", or a "son of God". It rejected every attempt to call any man divine, or the doctrine that the <sup>i</sup>divine ever assumed the form of a man. Judaism kept religious imagery within bounds.

There is a remarkable balance and sanity and pragmatic quality to Judaism, ~~which~~ while not discouraging deviations, either deviations into spiritual extremes or into the mystical or into excessive zeal, <sup>Judaism</sup> nevertheless kept these in their place, as it were, and reduced their importance, ~~to small proportions~~. The periphery is never confused with the center, with the core; and the surface eddies were never mistaken for the deep carrying channels of Judaism.

In this regard Judaism differed from many <sup>other</sup> of the great religions of mankind as sharply as it differed from the universal polytheism of the ancient world, though polytheism was the religious form of many nations <sup>that</sup> in many ways <sup>were</sup> far superior in intellectually, scientifically, <sup>and</sup> artistically to the Jewish people, Judaism never wavered in its faith in monotheism, <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ it <sup>also</sup> differed in <sup>many</sup> important regards. There is a quality to Jewish ethics and to Jewish religious doctrine which set it apart, ~~in one regard or another, from one or another of the~~ <sup>monotheistic</sup> classical religions of mankind.

Take this concept of salvation, this idea that man needs to be saved. In nearly every religion there is the idea that man needs to be saved. But in nearly every religion the idea takes on a different coloration from what it <sup>has</sup> ~~does~~ in Judaism. In Buddhism, for example, man needs to be saved from the toils of life itself <sup>i</sup> ~~from~~ <sub>m</sub>

all meaning clear?



existence; man needs to be saved from his own individuality. It is the will to live that is at the root of all man's suffering and unhappiness. ~~Man~~ Man needs to be saved from the world of the senses, because the world is wholly ill and evil, and ~~therefore~~ anxiety is always at the core of all existence. Therefore, man should not strive for self-preservation, for self-development, for the integration of his personality; man should strive for self-extinction, self-denial. To be saved is to forego all desire, all ambitions, even good ambitions, to transcend one's individuality and lose one's self in Nirvana<sup>as</sup> in self-extinction, as a drop of water loses itself in the ocean.

That is one conception of how a man is to be saved; ~~it~~ is not Judaism's conception of salvation. Judaism is a strong affirmation of life. It is a prophetic faith which believes that while there is evil in the life of man and of society, it can by moral effort and exertion be overcome to a degree where man's life upon earth may yield him a large measure of happiness and satisfaction. Judaism does believe in the development of the individual through education and through moral exercise. Judaism does believe in social progress and in the value of social progress. Salvation, therefore, is to be found in action and in living, not in escape or denial. Salvation is to be found in spiritual self-confidence, and not in self-destruction.

In Christianity ~~the~~ Salvation took on another and a ~~very~~ specific meaning. A man is saved only through faith in Jesus Christ, whose death upon the cross atoned for the original sin which the first man, Adam, by his disobedience committed, whose sin was transmitted from generation to generation. ~~And~~ In Adam all mankind sinned and was condemned. ~~That~~ That original sin had to be removed before God could forgive man and be reconciled to mankind, and this was achieved by the sacrifice of Jesus, by his suffering and his death. <sup>Man's reconciliation to God</sup> This was achieved by a vicarious atonement for this original sin. In this sense Jesus is the Saviour; and those who believe in him and accept his sacrifice are saved, and no one else. Salvation is thus achieved not by good works, not by merit, not by self-effort, but by an act of faith and an act of grace.



Man himself has not the strength or the will to save himself. God has to intervene by incarnating himself in the personality of Jesus, and by making the blood sacrifice which reconciles man to Him. Salvation is thus a gift of God to sinful man, not the achievement of man himself. This thought is central dogma both to Catholicism and to Protestantism, though in some <sup>instances</sup> modern liberal Christianity has deviated from it to the point of maintaining that salvation is achieved through man's embodiment in his life of the character and the ideals of Jesus. But overwhelmingly it is the doctrine of salvation through faith in ~~the~~ atonement as proclaimed by Paul, the true founder of the Christian church, that is authoritative for Christianity. "Therefore we conclude", said Paul, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law". Again he said, "As by the offense of one man, Adam, judgement came upon all men to condemn them, even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus], the free gift ~~of~~ came upon all men unto justification of life,"

Here again, the idea of man being saved has a specific meaning. Judaism rejected this conception of salvation also. To be sure, we do find occasional references in Jewish literature to the idea of original sin, but it never came to hold such a central or indispensable place in Jewish theology as it did in Christian theology. It was never made an article of faith in which a Jew must believe. It belonged to what we may call Agada, the non-authoritative and fluctuating popular religious lore of Judaism, which never became part of the essential credo of the Jew. You could accept it or reject it. Your status as a believing Jew remained unimpaired, or for that matter, unimproved.

In the same category with the idea of original sin belonged the idea of original merit, or what is known in our literature as "the merits of the Fathers", of the Patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose good deeds were so great that from their treasury of accumulated merit, a subsequent generation could borrow towards their own salvation.

that men are helped or hurt by their ancestry,

The doctrine of inherited sin and inherited merit is not unknown, therefore, in Jewish religious thought. In the Ten Commandments we read that God "visits the sins



of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation and showed mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments." Here ~~the~~ the idea of transmitted guilt and transmitted merit is accepted, but with a clear statement that the relationship between the influence of merit and the influence of guilt ~~and transmitted~~ upon subsequent generations is in the ratio of one thousand to four. Nevertheless, even this Biblical judgement embodied in the Ten Commandments was challenged very early by the great prophets of Israel, By Jeremiah, for example, and Ezekiel. Ezekiel says, "Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." If fathers have eaten sour grapes, the teeth of the children will not, therefore, be set on edge.

The religious leaders of all subsequent times accepted this prophetic view of moral responsibility, of guilt or of merit. Thus, they brush aside the notion of "merits of the Fathers" by declaring that it was discontinued long ago in the days of <sup>King</sup> Hezekiah. The account was closed. "Let not a man say, my father was a pious man; I shall be saved for his sake. Abraham could not save Ishmael, nor could Jacob save Esau."

In other words, Judaism did not hold that man was lost because of any inherited depravity from which he had to be saved, nor that his salvation depended upon the vicarious sacrifice of some saviour. Judaism did not hold that man is born imperfect and that his destiny is to perfect himself. Man must develop himself mentally, morally, spiritually. He is capable of fulfilling his destiny or of rejecting it. He may make the effort or he may refuse to make it. There are forces within him which urge him to rise through moral effort to higher levels, and



there are also forces which tempt him to sink to <sup>a</sup> lower level in greed, in lust, in indolence. In other words, man can be saved from betraying the best that he is capable of, from the temptations which beset him, or from the burden of guilt which his sins may have put upon him, by his own moral effort, by his own moral aspiration. If he makes the effort, God will help him. All men are liable to sin, but all men are also free to repent. No one is totally disabled morally. God is ready to forgive: "God does not desire the death of the sinner but that he should return and live." God is gracious. He is the ~~יהוה אלהינו~~ God of forgiveness.

God is gracious and forgiving, ~~רחוק מן העוון~~ long-suffering, ~~רחוק מן העוון~~ and full of kindness and of truth. God will do more for man than man deserves if only man makes the initial effort to rehabilitate himself. Man does not require blood the atonement of another to save him. Man does not need saviours. Man needs teachers, guides, and his own strong will. Nor is a particular belief, any particular belief, <sup>not even Judaism,</sup> a condition of salvation, ~~האמונה באלהים~~ Salvation is open to all men, even to those who do not accept Judaism. The Rabbis declared: ~~הצדיקים יורשים את העולם הבא~~ The righteous among the gentiles will inherit the world to come. If men only avoid the ~~עוונות~~ immoral practices of murder and incest, of adultery, of robbery, of the eating of the flesh of living animals, of idolatry and blasphemy - the so-called seven laws of Noah - they are in the same category with the most pious among the Jews who observe the 613 commandments.

Judaism maintained that salvation is not <sup>achieved</sup> ~~had~~ by faith alone or through the mediation of anyone. Man needs help in his struggles, in his efforts - encouragement, hope, confidence. If man needs any help from faith in his struggles to save himself from his lower self and to rise to higher levels, it comes from faith in God himself. alone, "I cried unto Thee, unto Thee ~~אלהים~~ O God." It is by deeds and good works that a man rises. It is by them that a man is brought nearer to God. ~~מעשים יקרבים~~ <sup>יחזקיהו</sup> "Your deeds will bring you nearer to God and your deeds will estrange you from God." It is

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holds a defiling object in his hand even while he is immersing himself in purifying waters. All the waters in the world will not avail him. He remains unclean because he clings to his defilement."

Sometimes the people of Israel, facing grave dangers, were taught to pray for deliverance in utter humility and complete recumbency on God. "It is not for the sake of our righteousness and the good deeds we possess that Thou wilt save us, but deliver us for the sake of Thy righteousness." This is to be taken not literally again, but as a figure of speech, a poetic way of expressing complete trust in God's goodness and compassion. It is not to be taken as a theologic formula for obtaining salvation. The classic position is that Israel or any people must repent and improve its way before it can enjoy God's favor and help.

Now, you may think I am discussing ancient ideas which have no relevancy to the world today and to philosophy today. You would be mistaken in so believing. The doctrine that man is helpless to save himself reappears in our own day, in the philosophy of what has come to be called Existentialism, which received its formulation in the early part of the 19th century at the hands of the brilliant Danish religious philosopher, <sup>Søren</sup> ~~Søren~~ Kierkegaard, and has won many disciples in Christian circles in recent decades, and, more recently, even among some Jewish theologians

START of the type of Martin Buber. A writer by the name of Will Herberg has recently written a book called "Judaism and Modern Man" in which he sets out to give an existentialist interpretation of Judaism. Now, what is this existentialism, <sup>holding</sup> ~~this~~ <sup>is</sup> a philosophy grounded in deep pessimism and disillusionment, that man is trapped helplessly and cannot escape the predicaments in which his ~~very~~ existence is involved. By his own capacities man cannot redeem himself. He is a bundle of contradictions. Man is the slave of ~~his~~ boundless desires which he cannot satisfy. His mind is constricted by inescapable paradoxes which he cannot resolve. He must make choices time and again, but heredity and environment make it impossible for him to make free choices. Man should be just to his neighbor, and yet his self-interests are in conflict



with his altruism. Man cannot help himself; only divine grace can save man from his evil nature and redeem man from himself. Man needs a redeemer. For the Christians it may be Christ; for the Jew it is God. This same pessimism and disillusionment with <sup>the</sup> all scientific, social, and political movements of our day, which promised ~~much~~ <sup>have</sup> so much for man but which resulted in such fear and anguish and human suffering, underlies the secular branch of this philosophy of Existentialism of the school of Jean-Paul Sartre, which ~~really~~ approaches spiritual chaos and nihilism. ~~It is a very dominant school of religious and secular philosophy today because of a certain ambient defeatism which man experiences today.~~

All this is rejected by Judaism. Judaism rejects this exaggerated pessimism with regard to man's nature and man's endowments. Man can, to a large extent, make his own world; and man has, to a large degree, made his own world. In spite of setbacks and throwbacks, it has been a progressive world. Man has moved forward to more knowledge, to higher standards of living, to greater justice, to better health conditions, to greater and more energetic efforts at eradication of poverty and exploitation in the world. ~~We could take the large perspective on human history and see definite progress. Though~~ The pace is frequently slow and frequently checked <sup>yet</sup> and frequently reversed; ~~steadily, all along~~ if you take the long view of history, man has risen from ~~the lowest levels~~ <sup>and</sup> the jungles of barbarism ~~and~~ bestiality, to higher levels.

Judaism maintains today, as it <sup>has maintained</sup> ~~and~~ all along that man is a co-worker of God in creation. ~~אדם בראשיתו כבודו ואלוהים עמו~~ Man is finite and yet not helpless. Man is conditioned; <sup>i</sup> yet he is free, ~~to a challenging degree~~. Man cannot think as God, but man can think about God. Man does not know the ultimate answers, but in faith he can work with relative truths and find satisfaction and happiness in his work, <sup>E</sup> provided it is sincere work and well-intentioned and directed towards God and towards man.



"Thine is not the duty to complete the task - neither art thou free to desist from it." "Share your burden with the Lord and He will sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved." Share your burden with God, but above all, work, strive, seek, and as you work, pray. "Establish Thou the work of our hands; yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it." In other words, on the subject of whether a man needs to be saved, Judaism has differed with many, if not with all the great religions of mankind. Man need not be saved from any ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ imputed guilt of the past. A man does not require anyone else to atone for him ~~for~~ his sins. A man is saved from his own sins and from his own lower self by moral aspiration, by seeking to lead the good life. ~~THESE ARE THE ONLY TWO~~

"He who seeks self-perfection, he will be saved."



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