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The Culture and Conflicts of the Sephardim, 1958.

The Culture and Conflicts of the Sephardim

Daniel Jeremy Silver

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the history of this group within the Jewish fold as it has been unfolded before you. Permit me, though, perhaps to take a moment or two to rehearse it for you so that all of us may be clear of whom we speak and of the people whose history we are going to attempt to describe.

Jews came to Spain early in Roman days. They remained there through the greatness, then the decline of the Roman Empire. They remained there when the barbarian tribes supplanted Rome and under both the Aryan Visigoth kings and under the Orthodox Visigoth kings Jewish communities continued to grow and to flourish in the Iberian Peninsula. But the truly great period of Spanish Jewry, the period which stamped them as a unique group began in the year 711. It was in 711 that a Mohammedan general led the forces of the crescent across the Straits of Gibraltar and in ten short years quickly freed the peninsula of its Christian rulers. Then for several centuries ^{the} Jewish people of Spain flourished culturally, economically, politically under Islamic rule. And even in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Common Era when the Christian reconquest began, slowly but perceptively and surely the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon began to spread, first from their bases in the Pyrenees southward the Jews continued to enjoy what was for the medieval times a period of relative prosperity. By the middle of the thirteenth century the Christian kingdoms of Spain had displaced the Mohammedans in all but the southernmost sections and the Jews continued to flourish and their civilization and culture to prosper. But as Christianity completed the task of reconquest Jewish life took a turn for the worse.

Beginning in the fourteenth century there were a series of terrible persecutions and riots, pogroms and the like, 1391, 1415 and 1417, 1465 and 1484. Finally, in the year 1492 Jews were given the choice between baptism and exile. Now, these eight centuries under Islamic and Christian rule as a great Jewish community had developed for the Jews of Spain certain unique customs, practices, life attitudes, habits, and when the Jews went into the long and hard role in exile, whenever they took

it they carried with them the imprint indelibly on their souls of this Spanish experience so that whether they settled in Italy or in the Ottoman Empire which then comprised the Aegean coast of Greece and Turkey and Palestine and Egypt or whether they settled along the Barbary coast of North Africa or whether they went later to the Canary Islands and to the new world, to Holland and to England, these peoples continued to practice the ways which their ancestors had practiced under the son and present heir of the Spanish sky. They carried with them Spanish folkways. They retained the Spanish language, the Castilian which they called Ladino. Often they would send delegations to Spain to see how the ancient synagogues of Toledo and Cordoba were built. And if you were to visit the sephardic congregation in Sophia, in Bulgaria, you would see that it is an exact reproduction, stone for stone, archway for archway, of the ancestral's great synagogue of Toledo.

And so these people deserve the title of sepharidim, Spaniard, because though they settled in four continents and a hundred countries they retained this Spanish imprint that marks them all as a community within the body of the whole of Israel but yet a community apart.

I would like to take as my point of departure this evening an attempt to describe for you the distinctive attitudes towards life, what the Europeans would have called the feeling that these people impressed wherever they went, their attitudes towards life, towards birth, towards education, towards morality, towards death, their joys and their recreations, their sorrows, their tribulations. I do not propose to go into the deeper realms of their philosophy, their science or their teaching but simply to try and make you see them as people, to help you put flesh and blood upon the bare facts of history. Now this is, I realize, no easy task. Not only are we dealing with hundreds of thousands of people who lived through twelve centuries of human history but we are dealing with a group which, like every other group which has ever existed, has included rogues and saints, the carefree, the careless, the dedicated, the concerned, the cynics and believers, realists and the tormented. So all I can do is not to give you in particular an impression of

individual sepharidic Jews but to paint for you an overall picture, to show you something of the heart of these Spanish Jewish communities. To do so I would like to try an experiment for all these institutes themselves are like an experiment. I would like to let the sepharidim speak as much as possible for themselves. In addition to the learned tomes, the weighty books which they have inscribed for posterity, we have from the pens of the sepharidim personal letters, dowries, chronicles of the events which were occurring in their day. We have a few record books from their kahal, their community organization, but above all we have their poetry for it was in poetry that these people stand preeminent. Some of their poetry is stylized, formalized but a great deal of it breathes a freshness, a warmth, a full-bodiedness which enables us to see into the windows of their soul. So, bearing in mind that all this poetry must be presented to you in translation, and bearing in mind that much of the style in which these people wrote is inevitably archaic, dated, I still think that perhaps the best way of making you see the sepharidim as people would be to try and let them as much as possible speak this evening for themselves, so if I seem to be reading from a few more papers than usual, bear with me, I simply cannot memorize all of these quotations exactly.

Before we begin I must insist on one other thesis. You know, we tend to take our religious labels lightly. Being Jewish in America does not distinguish us in our cultural life, in our professional life, in our political life. At most it distinguishes us in our religious worship, in public and in the observance of holidays and perhaps of dietary laws in our homes. But our norms of conduct, our personal relationships, our responsibilities as citizens, all these are universal or at least are as broad as the boundaries of our American polity. This was not true of the sephardic Jewish community either in Spain or almost anywhere else that the sepharidim went. Being Jewish, being a member of the Jewish community was the most determinative and distinctive thing in their lives. In the Mediterranean world, especially under Islamic rule, there was no such thing as a central government. There

was justice, there was law, applied equally to all men. There was a ruler, a caliph, but he delegated rule over the various religious groups which comprised his kingdom to responsible individuals from each of those religious groups, and so there was a Jewish nasier, gaon, exilarch who was responsible to the court for the peace and the well-being and the taxes of the Jewish community. And the same was true of the Christian communities and of the Shiite heretic, Islamic community, the Zoroastran communities and the like. Each religious group retained its distinctive religious code of law. Each religious group was allowed to govern itself as long as the peace of the kingdom was observed and taxes were regularly paid. This meant that the law which the Jews had developed in Biblical days which had been continued in Talmudic times was the norm of Jewish behavior. It was meant that the Jew in his everyday acts as far as what would be governed today by our criminal court and our civil court and our courts of equity, our domestic relations courts, was subject to Jewish law and so Jewish ways of life, Jewish habits of thought, Jewish traditions had inevitably a much greater impact or impress upon the average Jewish personality. And if you have ever wondered why it is that our ancestors, hardheaded, realistic people that they were, seemed to spend so much time studying the Talmud or studying the religious code or studying the legal sections of the Bible, it was simply that because these texts were the code of law, the code of practice which they put into their daily lives. It was ^{as} important and vital to them to be studied and to be developed as are any of the digests of law or the histories of law in our modern day. So, in addition to worship, to ritual and to practice, Judaism was distinctive, was the coloration by which the Jews in Spain were known and it was the label which separated them from their Islamic and from their Jewish neighbors. The synagogue was much more than simply a house of worship, a house of study and a house of sociability. It was the central governing body of that particular community in Israel. Here the court met, oaths were administered. Here an individual could come to air his private grievances against another individual. Here the rabbi sat as a

court of appeal, court of last resort. Here the community voted its charters, its basic laws, its proportionate taxation. In short, the synagogue was much more than it is for us in our more modern times.

Now, since the sephardic Jews were governed by a code of law unique to themselves, and since this impressed upon them the stamp of their Jewishness more than it is, say, impressed upon us, it is well to remember that what we consider the traditional patterns of Jewish life were their daily living, patterns of daily living. But we ought to strip from our minds some of the stereotypes which have come to us about ghetto living. The sephardic Jew rarely was forced to live in ghettos. Only in the last few years of his stay in Spain and only in the rare and unusual community outside of Spain was he forced to live in a ghetto by church and governmental decision. Rather, he lived in what was known as the juderia, a Jewish quarter. He lived there by choice as much as by compunction, very much the same way that we live in certain quarters of the city rather than, say, on the west side. It permitted him to visit about, to be neighborly, to take an active part in the Jewish community. And there was another reason and that was a reason of defense. The Middle Ages were turbulent days. Not only was there rampant religious persecution but there was endemic revolt. Always some feudal nobleman was rising up against another or against his leige lord. Times were difficult and riotous. The highways between communities were filled with bandits and ruffians. Town life was rough. Thieves and the like often walked the streets at night and the Jewish community, as did all the religious communities of Spain or elsewhere, banded together for self protection and sometimes so that they could police their own quarters. And indeed the synagogues served the additional function of being the last fortress, the final point of refuge of an attacked or persecuted Jewish community.

I don't know if any of you have ever been to Newport and seen there the beautiful colonial sephardic synagogue which was built in 1768 and is now a national shrine, but if you have you will notice that still here in this only sephardic synagogue, original sephardic synagogue which still exists in America, there is

evidence of the purpose of defense to which a community synagogue is often put because directly in front of the bema on the central altar there is a trap door and a tunnel, and this tunnel leads from the sanctuary of the synagogue across several streets and out into a back alley so that if the people there were ever attacked by ruffians or a mob they could retreat to the synagogue, defend themselves as long as possible there and then escape through this unexpected avenue. The sanctuary of the synagogue was often literally that. It was the most strongly built of all the buildings in the community which were built on a promintory or on a height so it was easily defensible. And time and again the chronicles of medieval Jewry tell of a Jewish community forced to retreat to the synagogue, there putting up its last defense against a mob.

I said that these were tumultuous times. I would like to quote from a letter written in the eleventh century from one Jewish community in Spain to another in which they asked that the next community be charitable to a wanderer on his way to a pilgrimage in Palestine because of certain facts, unexpected reverses which had taken place in his life. I think that these reverses were not unusual in the day.

We wish to inform our brothers about Mr. Reuben, the son of Isaac who comes to us from the city of Rhodéz in the Pyranees. This man, Reuben, was once a very wealthy man. He possessed silver, gold and landed property, but he fell into the traps of the evil men of his country and became their victim.

One day he sent his only son with his servants to work in the field. Suddenly they were attacked in the forest by rude Christian bandits, bent on destruction. They killed the son and the servants beside him. This became known to the father, and he found the dead son in the forest but there was nobody near who could help him. Overwhelmed by this catastrophe, the father broke down and fell into despair.

He then appealed to the governor of the district, but the latter did not reply because they were gentiles and he a Jew. And the governor even became his enemy when he saw this man's misfortune. He robbed him. He deprived him of all his property and he threw him aside like an empty vessel.

He said to him: 'you are an old man and have no son. I shall therefore now take possession of your whole fortune.'

The father, isolated and in despair, left that place on a pilgrimage and has so far come as far as us.

It was hard to make a living in those days. Some became prosperous but that point at which the reversals in life begin was much more dramatic, much more prevalent and much the more expected in life ^{than} of course, we can in our rather secure age. I insisted upon the fact that the Jews did not live in a ghettoized existence because neither culturally nor politically would they behave like a ghettoized people. Dr. Israel Abraham, the noted English author and scholar and researcher in Jewish history, has compiled a list of the documented professions engaged in by Jews in Spain. I'd like to quote to you part of that list simply to show you its variety, to show you that the Jews of the sephardic communities were as much a part of every level of business and professional worlds of their communities as we are in our own. This is the first half of the list: many physicians; carriage dealers, I suppose they're our modern automobile salesmen; clerks; cloth merchants; produce dealers; lion tamers; jugglers; bankers; tailors; professional soldiers. Strange to realize that for two centuries the king of Aragon had a special crack Jewish regiment of 15,000 men who were his special bodyguard; ships' captains and navigators; upholsterers, I suppose that would be our modern decorators; jewelers; apothecaries; major domos; pawn brokers; farmers; teachers; actors; troubadors, a perhaps unexpected profession; butchers; and makers of scientific instruments.

It was not easy then to earn a living. Some men made great fortunes but others found that they had to grub, they had to work at 101 jobs simply to eek out their daily existence. We have a very amusing and sometimes ironic little poem left to us by one of the keenest minds of Spanish Jewry, Abraham Ibn Ezra, in which he tells us of the difficulties under which he earned his livelihood.

'Twas sure a luckless planet
That ruled when I was born -
I hoped for fame and fortune,
I have but loss and scorn.

An evil fate pursues me
with unrelenting spite,
If I sold lamps and candles,
The sun would shine all night.

I cannot, cannot, prosper
 No matter what I try -
 Were selling shrouds my business,
 No man would ever die!

And there's a similar catalog of business woes by an Italian sepharidim, Leone Da Modena, who lists 26 ways with which he unsuccessfully tried to earn a living: by teaching Jewish pupils; by teaching gentile pupils; by simply teaching anyone who wanted to know how to write; by delivering sermons; by writing sermons for others; by acting as a cantor; by acting as a secretary of charitable and other societies; by officiating as a rabbi; by giving decisions in ritual law; by officiating as a judge; by daily lessons in the synagogue; by conferring rabbinical diplomas; by letter writing; by composing music; by composing verses for weddings and tombstones; by translating Italian sonnets into Hebrew and Hebrew sonnets into Italian; By writing comedies; by producing them; by drawing up legal documents; by translation; by printing my own writings; by proof-reading; by teaching the writings of charms and talismans; by selling books of charms; as a commercial agent, and when all else failed as a matchmaker.

I think we will agree that he had his difficulties. I think we will also in this catalog of occupations see the varied experiences possible for a young man who simply couldn't settle down. Now, there were among the sephardic Jews, as we might expect in any community, status professions and those which were sort of looked askance. The positions of teachers, the rabbis who were also in those days judges, these were of the status group. But it is well to remember that these communities had their amateur theatrical societies, their professional operetta groups. In fact, we have been left a rather amusing fourteenth century analysis of the characteristics and the personalities of a prima donna. If you've been reading the great reports of Maria Callas we can understand perhaps some of the feelings which this gentleman, a certain Joseph Ben Me'ir Ibn Zabara, felt about the Bohemians and the actors and the singers of the day. He wrote this to his son:

religious misinformation and ignorance although, of course, many among the simpler

"Beware of singers. They are mostly thieves; trust no words of theirs for they are liars; they dally with women. They long after other people's money. They fancy they are clever, but they know not their left hand from their right; they raise their hands all day and call, but know not to whom. A singer stands on the platform, raised above all other men, and he thinks he is as lofty as his place. He constantly emits sounds which mount to his brain, and dry it up; hence he is so witless.

They worked hard. Times were always insecure. A family fortune could be made as easily as lost. They were in danger of competition from privileged guilds. They were in danger of the enmity of Christian nobles. They were in danger of confiscation by royal power. And yet throughout these years they continued actively to pursue their vocations and their crafts and businesses, all types of businesses for the centralization of Jewish life into financial activities, into pawn broking and money lending and the like which sometimes took place in the back wood communities of eastern Europe under compulsion. It never took place among these people. Throughout their history in Spain we find them as vineyard keepers, farmers, as herdsmen, as craftsmen of all type. They were among the most artistic and able of the silversmiths and the jewelers of their day, and they were often sought after by the rich and noble who wanted some especially fine work done for them.

Now, as the ghetto walls did not exist for them professionally, so intellectually and culturally the sephardic Jew was open and aware of all the secular and humanistic knowledge available to him in his day. Education was definitely parochial. It centered on the religion and the learning of Hebrew, on the mastering of the sacred text; and yet it was never so myopic, so ingrown as to prohibit the knowledge of the Greek philosopher and the Greek and the Egyptian and the Babylonian scientists and physicians. Many of these were encouraged. And among the great intellectual leaders, the great rabbis of Spain, later of their sephardic confreres, you will inevitably see wedded in the same man deep piety, deep learning of tradition, and a profound insight and understanding of the secular sciences. Sephardic Jewry had little truc with superstition; with all the common forms of religious misinformation and ignorance although of course, many among the simpler

the Jew did, and here in this new Christian world he translated for the benefit of his own community and for the benefit of the Christian community most of the great texts of this superior Islamic civilization. It was by means of Jewish translators that the works of Aristotle and Plato and Hippocrates and Galen and Abischenya and Ibn Rusht first became known in the west. The Jew translated them for his own purposes into Castilian, into the Romance languages, into Hebrew but they also served the other purpose of making the west aware of the knowledge of the east. And if you will have studied the history of culture you know that between the eleventh century and the thirteenth century this new culture infused into the west, permitted it to grow rapidly and to break out of the Middle Ages and ultimately make possible the Renaissance and our own modern world. If you want knowledge, the monks used to say, go to the Jews, they were aware of all that was happening in the world about them.

Now philosophy, the knowledge of philosophy, is not always an unmixed blessing. Those of you who have suffered with a young man who is undergoing his first exposure to freshman philosophy will know the doubts, the skepticism which it can often breed. And all the medieval religious communities at one point or another became worried that philosophic knowledge would breed a heresy, would breed a heterodoxy, would breed disbelief. In the thirteenth century both the great world civilizations of Islam and of Christianity were convulsed by major conflicts which raged within by pietistic fanatics against those who felt that philosophy must be studied wherever it led. In Islam the pietists won the day and Islamic civilization was never again to know its primacy, to know its advanced ideas that it had held up to that time. In the Christian world the pietists also held the day for a long time. Aristotle was burned in the middle of the thirteenth century at Paris. The Dominican orders censored education at the universities, but ultimately those who believed in free access to all thought which slowly opened the doors of the Christian mind and to the knowledge of the Greeks.

In the Jewish community there was also a major struggle between those who believed in piety and fundamentalistic attitudes towards religion, and those who believed that philosophy and the secular sciences must be prosecuted wherever they led. But it was on a much more gentle scale. There were acts of regrettable excess, but for the most part the sephardic Jewish communities rejected any and every attempt by a fanatic minority to impose restrictions, to impose censorship, upon the study of philosophy by those who were prepared for that study. The battle was joined over the dissemination of the philosophic works of Moses Maimonides. A man named Solomon Ign Adret from Montpellier attempted to enforce a ban against the study of philosophic works such as this in all the sephardic communities of southern France and of Spain. Much debate ensued and generally he was unsuccessful.

We have a letter by one of the moderates in this battle written in 1304 which I think best expresses the sephardic awareness of the importance of reason and the philosophy and yet of its potential limitations. There is a modern air, I think, to the few lines that I'd like to quote


I admit that there are some detestable ideas expressed in the philosophical writings. But this does not justify your refusal to make ourselves acquainted with the good ideas they contain. Our scientific efforts provide evidence to the nations that we have an open mind and are prepared to understand anything which makes for the good and the beautiful.

By such a procedure the convictions of a people are by no means undermined, at least not ours, for the truth which we possess, free inquiry, offers the best proof. Besides, there is nobody among our followers who wants to dissolve all the Biblical stories into allegories. I do not overestimate the value of philosophy, neither do I underestimate it, and I am thankful to anybody who can give me a satisfactory explanation of one of the great natural phenomenon.

And this must be said, that throughout their history the sephardic Jewish community have never out of hand rejected any of the scientific or humanistic knowledge of their day; indeed, they have been open, eagerly aware of it.

Now what did these people see life to be? You know, if you would analyze the

sermons given from this pulpit you would see that over the years they deal basically with the political and economic tensions of the day, but also^{of} certain recurring themes: the problems of child raising; the problems of marriage; the problems of maturity; the problems of understanding life in the world about us; the problems of facing old age and disease and death. What did the sephardic Jew see life to be? The first thing that must be said on this score is that he was a realist about life. He was not blind to its limitations. He was not unaware of its possibilities. There's a beautiful poem by Abraham Ibn Ezra which presages the great soliloquy of Shakespeare on the seven ages of man in which one of these sephardic minds sees life, touches on many of its problems psychologically, and I think expresses ideas which we would not find outdated or naive. Perhaps you will bear with me while I quote it to you.



Let but the son of earth
remember from his birth
That in the end he shall return
as at his birth he was
So shall he be.
Arise and prosper.
Say ye to him in five years
whose desires rise up a pace
like the awakening sun or regions dim.
He has his mother's breast for resting place
and moves not.
His father's shoulders for his chariot.
Yet, in the end he shall return
as at his birth he was
So shall he be.

How urge he ^{him} of ten years with intent towards instruction,
Yet a little space and he will grow and find his chastisement.
Speak unto him with tender tone of grace.
Joy shall he rouse for him that bear him for his father's house
for in the end he shall return as at his birth he was,
So shall he be..

How sweet the days of him at twenty years.
Swift as a heart he leaps to and fro to hills and scorns reproof
Nor hears the voice of teachers but a graceful doe goodly and fair.
This is the portion for him and his snare.
Yet in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
So shall he be.

Adolescence was a problem even in those days.

At thirty years into a woman's hands he falls
 Rise and look on him and see
 Behold him now caught fast within the strands
 The arrows piercing round.
 The wants shall not be of his life
 Only the wants of children and of wife.
 But in the end he shall return as at his birth he was,
 So shall he be.

He wanders forth subdued, he shall attain forty years.
 He runs his way, behind the light companions of his youth remain.
 And evil be it or sweet, yet shall he find joy in his lot,
 Firm by his work, his charge forsaking not.
 Yet in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
 So shall he be.

The days of vanity, days nothing worth
 remember he at fifty years.
 And mourns because the days of mourning come,
 And earth and all the glory of the world he scorns
 Bearing the fear lest his own time intended be drawing near
 For in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
 So shall he be.

Ask what befalls when sixty years are his.
 Then have his muscles grown like root and bar set to his work.
 Sufficing but for this and rooted that they bend now but so far
 and never they shall move again to rouse him to the prey.
 For in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
 So shall he be.

If into seventy years his life's way wends
 his words are difficult to hear.
 'Tis his fate now to go unheeded.
 Now upon his friends only a burden
 he becomes a weight especially to his own soul.
 Down the path that bears him to his goal.
 For in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
 So shall he be.

At eighty years then is he but a tare upon his sons.
 His heart is no more his nor his thoughts with them
 Only he is there, scorned of his neighbors.
 yes, his portion gall to the brim and wormwood now is the morsel for him.
 For in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
 So shall he be.

And after he is even as one dead.
 Happy the man who deems his own part, that of a stranger
 who has quickly fled, who has no contemplation in his heart
 nor thought nor sense but his soul's afterlife recompense.
 For in the end he shall return as at his birth he was
 So shall he be.

I think with the exception of the fact that old age knows difficult times and lacking the knowledge of geriatrics which we have today, with the exception that old age

was undoubtedly much more difficult and painful. Much of the problems of their life are our problems, certainly many of the psychological adjustments which each decade places upon us were theirs as well as ours.

The sephardic Jew was a warm-blooded person. There was nothing puritanical in his makeup. He didn't believe particularly in aesthetic practice, in monastic asceticism. He knew that he was given life and that as much as possible within the limits of moderation should be much enjoyed and he created a body of nature poetry, the first great body of such poetry since the Bible itself. One of the most thrilling of his artistic creations, he saw life in all of its beauty. He loved to report this beauty and share it with the beauty of words. It is almost spring, so I chose as an example of his nature loving poetry this sonnet by Judah ha Levi. It's called The Earth In Spring.

Then, day by day, her broidered gown
She changes for fresh wonder:
A rich profusion of gay robes
She scatters all around her.
From day to day her flowers' tints
change quick, like eyes that brighten,
Now white, like pearl, now ruby red,
now emerald green they'll lighten.
She turns all pale: from time to time
red blushes quick o'er cover:
She's like a fair, fond bride that pours
warm kisses on her lover.
The beauty of her bursting spring
So far exceeds my telling,
Methinks sometimes she pales the stars
That have in heaven their dwelling.

He was warm-blooded in his appreciation of nature and in his wants in life. Those of you who know the Rubiyat will recognize perhaps some of the spirit of this little stanza titled, The Joy of Life.

A beautiful woman, a cup of wine, and a garden
The song of birds, the sound of murmuring waters;
These are the balm of a lover, the joy to the sad,
welcome to the stranger,
wealth to the poor, and healing to the sick.

He knew how to laugh at himself, the foibles, vanities, at the pomposities of the world about him. Listen to this fourteenth-century advice to bores.

Go not too frequently thy friends to see,
 Lest they grow weary of the sight of thee;
 When rain is scanty, then we pray for more,
 But we do not love a continuous downpour.

At my station in life I can appreciate this little stanza:

I spied a white hair lurking in my beard,
 and straightway plucked it thence. Thou
 art brave, it sneered,
 'gainst a lone scout - quite brave. But wilt thou be
 as plucky when my troop comes seeking me?"

Sometimes love of life leads to excess. He loved expensive things. He loved to dress himself and his women in beautiful brocade and embroidery. He loves the sport, gambling, games of chance were not altogether unknown in these communities. The dandy was as much a problem then as it might be today. A gentleman by the name of Menahem Ben Judah Lonzano, a fifteenth century sepharidim of Italy, spoke of those who love to preen themselves with clothes.

My glory, honor, all depend
 Upon my shirt and cloak and hat.
 Alas! An age that honors clothes
 though worn by horse or ass!

Life was a series of rich experiences to this person, to this sepharidim. Not all of them were enjoyable. Many were trying, many were difficult and many were painful, but like our people in all ages he especially enjoyed intellectual challenge. He enjoyed to exercise his mind in keen competition with another good mind. And Cordoba in the fourteenth century they had to set up a series of restrictions in the synagogue which prohibited public debate of crucial issues within the sanctuary itself because the prohibition read: those who get started seem never to know when public worship has started and it is time to stop.

They loved to play chess much as we do today. Abraham Ibn Ezra has left us in rhyme form a series of instructions on the game of chess. Let me read to you simply the first few lines and the last.

I will sing a song of battle
 planned in days long passed and over.
 Men of skill and science set it
 on a plain of eight divisions,
 and designed in squares all chequered.
 Two camps face each one the other,
 and the kings stand by for battle,
 and twixt these two is the fighting.
 Bent on war the face of each is,
 ever moving or encamping,
 Yet no swords are drawn in warfare,
 they are known by signs and tokens
 sealed and written on their bodies.

Then after he had explained the complete game of chess he says:

Should a king in the destruction
 fall within the foeman's power,
 He is never granted mercy,
 neither refuge nor deliv'rance,
 nor a flight to refuge city.
 Judged by foes, and lacking rescue,
 though not slain he is checkmated.
 Hosts about him all are slaughtered,
 Giving life for his deliverance.
 Quenched and vanished is their glory,
 For they see their Lord is smitten;
 Yet they fight again this battle
 for in death is resurrection.

The sephardic Jew governed his matrimonial relationships by adjustment between families generally without concern to the wishes of the young couple. Marriages were set by the adults. Often the young people who were married seem by our standards to be mere children. The marriage, of course, was often completed for a young couple or established for a young couple who had fallen in love with one another. Love poetry is not unknown to the sephardic Jew. Often a fixed set marriage blossomed into love and often a young people were able to cozen and to badger their parents into permitting such a marriage. I do not know of any collection of poetry of love as rich and as stimulating as that of the Spanish Jew since the days of the Book of Songs from our own Bible. We have this little sonnet by Judah Halevi.

Then, too, in fieryapture, burned my veins,
 but soon the flames had fled. In vain, in vain!
 Ye cannot fill the breach of the rent heart.
 Ye crave a sensual joy, ye strive in vain
 to cheat with flames of passion.
 Or when the sinking sun draws near to night,
 the day's bright cheeks fade, death throes tresses black, my despair,
 Ye laugh - but actually the soul weeps on.
 Ye cannot still the heart's remorse.

Awake, my fair, my love, awake,
 That I may gaze on thee.
 And if one fain to kiss thy lips
 thou in thy dreams dost see,
 Lo, I myself then of thy dream
 the interpreter will be.

They show in their poetry a great deal of awareness of the subtleties of love and of relationships between suitor and the person being sought. Think of the sophistication of these few lines.

Into my eyes he loving looked,
 My arms about his neck were twined
 and in the mirror of my eyes
 what but his image did he find?

Upon my dark hued eyes he pressed
 his lips with breath of passion rare.
 The rogue! 'Twas not my eyes he kissed,
 He kissed his picture mirrored there.

Sometimes, as always in the history of man, love went unrequited.

With hopeless love my heart is sick,
 confession bursts my lips' restraint.
 That thou, my love, dost cast me off,
 Hath touched me with a deathlike taint.

I view the land both near and far,
 To me it seems a prison vast.
 Throughout its breadth, where'er I look,
 my eyes are met by doors locked fast.

And though the world stood open wide,
 though angel hosts filled ev'ry space,
 To me 'twere destitute of charm
 didst thou withdraw thy face.

And is the way of men the abandoned forsaken lover often sought to assuage his woes with wine and as always he found that he sought a solace which is not to be his.

With heavy groans did I approach my friends,
 heavy as though the mountains I would move.
 The flagon they were murdering; they poured
 into the cup, wild-eyed, the grape's red blood.
 No, they killed not, they breathed new life therein.
 Then, too, in fiery rapture, burned my veins,
 But soon the fumes had fled. In vain, in vain!
 Ye cannot fill the breach of the rent heart.
 Ye crave a sensuous joy, ye strive in vain
 to cheat with flames of passion.
 So when the sinking sun draws near to night,
 the sky's bright cheeks fade 'neath those tresses black, my despair.
 Ye laugh - but silently the soul weeps on.
 Ye cannot stifle her sincere lament.

A great deal of poetry has been written about the blessings of marriage, the happy and long period of being together. I know of no more beautiful summation of a marriage than this epitaph which was found on a tombstone in Toledo. The wife has left this for her husband whom she predeceased.

Remember the covenant of our youth,
and knock at the door of my grave
with a loving hand.

One of the unique concerns of sephardic Jewry was the concern with blood, with ancestry, with lineage. They undoubtedly took this over from the nobility whom in so many ways they tried to ape in their actions; but sephardic Jewry, more than any other Jewry which has ever existed, learned to trace the ancestry to many generations and an impoverished family was often prouder of its ancestry than it would have been had a child been able to marry wealth and position. This is not always a noble concern. It can be overdone. Indeed, it was overdone by the Spanish Jew because he often felt himself to be of a superior stock as it were than the rest of the Jewish community. Often, the noble line families of sephardic Jewry would not even intermarry with other less blooded sephardic Jews. Generally, when they lived outside of Spain they refused to intermarry with the European Jewish community. And most unfortunate, sometimes bad blood developed between these communities. There is, for instance, a record in France when in 1789 the revolution seemed to promise equality of citizenship to all Jews. A delegation was sent from the sephardic Jewish community of Bordeaux and Bayon to the estates general in which they pleaded before the estates that they were the true sons of Jacob and that the German Jews who inhabited Alsace Lorraine were of inferior stock, inferior blood and inferior in every way and should not be confused one with the other. It was fine for the estates general to free and give equal citizenship to the sepharidim but not to the Ashkenozi. In time, of course, their numbers dwindled and inevitably their pride had also to dwindle, but probably the least laudible feature of the unique attitudes towards life of this people was this concern with being well-born in the sense of having noble ancestry. Now, the warmth of life,

the love of life which was evidenced by these sephardic Jews spilled over into their relations, to their faith, to their god and to their people. As we have seen, he was at home in poetry. Indeed, no other group of Jews except the psalmists of old and perhaps the authors of our own day, have done as much to enrich the liturgy of our synagogue with beautiful anthems and hymns and expressions of the soul: the familiar yigdal, the adonalam, the lahododei, the shalom ahem which we sing almost every Friday night here at our chapel services, all these were hymns indited for the first time by able, feeling, believing, sephardic poets, by the very same poets who wrote the poetry of love and of love of nature which we read earlier. Their poetry was simple because the sepharidii used a pure, crystal pure, Hebrew. His thoughts were precise. If the meter was complicated, the organization of the poetry often highly stylized, but the thought and the sense was piercing, brittle in its insistence on getting to the point, and stating the exact point to be discovered.

When all within is dark
and former friends misprize;
From them I turn to thee,
and find love in thine eyes.

When all within is dark,
and I my soul despise;
From me I turn to thee,
and find love in thine eyes.

When all thy face is dark,
and thy just angers rise;
From thee I turn to thee,
and find love in thine eyes.

Or this beautiful hymn which is still sung during the worship of our Yom Kippur.

Lord, thine humble servants hear,
suppliant now before thee;
Our Father, from thy children's plea
turn not, we implore thee.

Lord, thy people, sore oppressed,
From the depths implore thee;
Our father, let us not, this day,
dry in vain before thee.

Lord, blot out our evil pride,
all our sins before thee;
Our father, for thy mercy;s sake,
pardon, we implore thee.

Lord, no sacrifice we bring,
Prayers and tears implore thee;
Our father, take the gift we lay,
contrite hearts, before thee.

Lord, thy sheep have wandered far,
Gather them before thee;
Our father, let thy shepherd love
guide us, we implore thee.

Lord, thy pardon grant to all
that in truth, implore thee;
Our father, let our evening prayer
now find grace before thee.

Lord, thine humble servants hear,
suppliant now before thee;
Our father, from thy children's plea
turn not, we implore thee.

I think that the essence of the whole Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement, has seldom been as crystalized, purposes of prayer, as in these seven short stanzas. Sephardic prayer is controlled prayer. It has a definite form, definite meter, definite pattern of organization, a definite set of philosophic presuppositions; indeed, often this prayer is nothing by rhyme philosophy, the rhyme philosophy of our faith. They had little use for ecstasy, for enthusiasm, for what we associate religiously with the revival meeting in our own day. When they prayed they did not shuckle in the sense of weaving back and forward as if building up for themselves a sense of trance, of exaltation. Their prayer was reasonable and reasoned, dedicated, simple and sincere, spoken by the heart, of the needs of the heart. An education on which all of their thought is based was very dear to their heart. They never built a synagogue if a school was needed to be built. The synagogue always had a full program of religious education. Their communities always had an integrated program of education from earliest childhood to the most advanced training. They would have deeply approved, sincerely approved of this type of adult institute which we are now engaging in. They knew a great deal about education. I wonder if some of the gradeless

excesses progressive education might not have been avoided if some of our educators had known Maimonides. He describes quite brilliantly, in a few short paragraphs, the psychology of the student, some of the many ways in which good educational practices can be developed.

Let us suppose that a young boy is brought before a teacher. The purpose of instructing the lad obviously is to enable him to receive knowledge. But the boy is too tender in years and too weak in understanding to appreciate the good which is intended for him and the advantages which he will reap from his progress.

Since the teacher is wiser than the boy, he will encourage his pupil to study by offering such things as appear desirable and worthwhile to the child. He will say: "Read, and you shall have nuts and figs and honey." And then the little one reads with zest, not because he finds pleasure in the book or understands that he will be the better for reading it, but because he wants the sweets which have been promised him, and which mean more to him than all his studies.

When he becomes a little older these first objects of his desire will appear to him insignificant and contemptible; and if he is to be urged to further effort, he must be offered a greater reward. Then the teacher will say: "Read, and you will be able to earn splendid shoes and magnificent clothes." The prize is tempting and the boy works hard. Later the prize is again changed and he is promised a certain amount of money for every lesson he learns.

At last, when he is grown up, these rewards tempt him no longer and the teacher exhorts him, saying: "Study, and you may become a credit to your community, a president or a judge. Then the young man studies, keeping in view the honor and the glory which he may win for himself.

All of this is unworthy, but it is necessary, because the human spirit is narrow and, while acquiring wisdom, hopes for other, more material advantages. In searching for truth, the goal is truth itself.

Our sages say: Blessed is the man who glorifies God and takes pleasure in His commandments and not in the reward which he might expect." This thought is expressed even more clearly in the early Midrash: "Lest you say: I will learn the Torah so that I may become rich, that I may become a rabbi, that I may be rewarded in the world to come, it is written: Love the Lord your God. That is all that you should do. That is the reward for your studies, the love of the Lord your God.

However, since man is accustomed to act or not to act according to the good or the harm which may result, he loses nothing by shaping his conduct with a view to reward and punishment until, by habit, perception and ability, he arrives at an understanding of the truth and learns to serve purely out of love.

We should not then impose upon our children a philosophy of perfection for which they are as yet unprepared.

We have said that life for the sephardic Jew, professionally, vocationally,

politically, was tumultuous and troubled. This is reflected in his prayer. There is a constant concern with the difficulties of the day and the sepharadi casts his hopes not upon being able to build for himself a better future but upon divine intervention, the day when the Messiah will return to the Jew, when Zion under his direction.

This is not the end of the tape - I turned it over but obviously the rest of it was not taped.

Marie



Let us tell about the music - You have heard the music and know
it is very - it is simple & controlled - ^{rel.} - such is the party. Beautiful - honest -
It was also urgent. I have spoken of the unsettled time. Had a great deal
about by ^{some} military pillage, persecution, - a then unexpected turn of events -
nowhere else but this is the note of appeal in these pages (20) (209)

What did the Jews have for help - to divine intervention - becoming of
the messiah - the reestablishment of his kingdom on a Jewish homeland -
The situation was profound & intricate - They looked forward to the
day that the father would drop & they would rule and the nation be
free land - However, unlike the Zionists of our day they could not
see any possibility of the establishment of the state by political means -
Their view was small - the nation too small - So they longed for
the messiah who would bring the Messiah - ^{anybody} they believed
at the time Jesus Christ had come - something like that in
Kabbalistic lore which would allow them to do or
establish something at once.

(A) The music is controlled - it plays a part in the religious philosophy -
Reason was never returned to reality. Jesus was ^{gradually} brought to reality.
They played on this - not in the religious life - would have appeared of
this material.

Real Bible - Talmud - with their eyes - perception mind - connection
among people.

Educational part - religious delegation - even before building the temple
but a great - Private letter to the leaders + leaders of great
teaching - much educational work done - There was educational
guidance education next will provide in the religious
reflection (100)

The Sephardim were a warm blooded folk, marriage was
of course, arranged - but a love match was not unthinkable - Their
poets composed many stylized dialogues for the wedding of real
persons but occasionally the ^{personal} of two fully known persons and
a mind intensely not usual in that formal art. (13)

Sometimes to the poet known - his love was not required (14)

Sometimes he sought other relationships (15)

Sometimes he had been with her but had not been in love (16)

Sometimes the poet could have been expected to be alone (17)

my favorite is the poem in which the lover seems unrequited
because a similar dialogue (18)

There is a great difference between the love of a lover and the love of a friend (19)

And modern is the verse of one who sought the advice of the
group (20)

And unrequited tenderness of the ^{critic} ~~poet~~ which made him
too happy many (21)

The words of feeling for life carried over into the Sephardic
world. He sometimes saw the even at home or party. The Hebrew
language was by him developed into an instrument of new beauty.
In the days of the Bialik and Pessin the group has contributed to
many of the best works to our language. The Yiddish, Galen Olan, the
Shulamit Altschuler & Lecha Dodi are all triumphs of the
poetic spirit of these people. The modern sense on Y.H. is largely of
their doing.

Their nature & structure of their poetry is complicated. Their thought
often resulted in simple (22) (23)

Even in the difficult time ^{and} just made a good living. Others were not so fortunate. The builder and plumber and Baker with whom John Egner has left me a humorous reminder of his person of difficulties in this respect. (2)

In a similar vein the number given East in Madras a left an "Guan
Culebays y jectiles (29)

On these days certainly there were notable protests - modern
 laws - the railroad - include the a lot - prime donors - include things were
 included in the law passed & inclusion. There is a modern way to go
 but 1438 early on ~~on~~ on Paris "down us"

Certainly, the transportation was just putting all in the wilderness,
 mounted, & with the help of the transport was deposited
 on the ground - we found the same horses were brought to the
 Allen stand. The transport at the city (Albuquerque) & we left
 and after the day of the day. There were found the same horses in
 the transport. The same horses and found a horse.
 The day and the day. The same horses and found the same horses
 and horses. The same horses and found the same horses.
 On the same day the same horses and found the same horses.
 The same horses and found the same horses.

One of the most important of language groups to study linguistics is the family of languages of Asia & China which includes the Chinese languages - the most important group of languages in the world today.

[illegible]

Pr. 1. and visited the little colonial negroes who were built there
to September 1768 you would find a small building in front
of the old residence the Temple building across several city blocks -
though indeed the community might accuse if they were attached - a small
remains of the day & years

2) Also on modern times to the present enjoyed in almost any form of
business & professional activity. Dr. David Calverton has collected
a list of vocations specified in contemporary documents as being followed
by the Jews of Spain before exile (a partial record, and one of the
some individuals)

Physicians

Currency Dealer (I supposed to include you astronomer astronomer)

Chairs

Wool merchants

Producers Dealer

Iron Tinner

Jugglers

Bakers

Tailors

Proprietary holders (for a century I include division 30,000 men of
Castile's army under Jews)

Ship Captains & Navigators

Republicans (Dealers)

Journalists

Apollonians

Major Doctors

Pen Builders

Farmers

Teachers

Actors

Translators

Butcher

Makers of & useful instruments

[illegible]

2) Conducted an interview of subject after review of medical records
of yrs. 24 and engaged as of now of present mind & body but
the said subject suffers from (Chronic Agitation - for Rank)

2) Much as I feel in the past I have not been very generous in my help
towards your good work. I have had no special attitude of sympathy - in help
financially when some is needed - and have not been very generous in my help
and not a very willing.

This did not mean that he would not participate fully in the general movement & indeed a lot of us say & would. To the contrary total self reliance ~~is~~ ^{is} only ~~not~~ ^{not} sufficient to shelter a man of judgement in East of England Europe was never less than in danger of this.

The hydrodes gives us in addition sulphuric acid. The quiescence of James' spirit was a realising attainment and the present and for

The United States must make the necessary financial
local action, capital demands, place the money on a
and modern conditions and technical year fully realized
religion, Canada, and make visible. All too often the
to provide sufficient
to assist in new work.

Anders, one of the principal members of the Swedish League for the Deaf. It was held on Thursday - with a small

forward them. In London we
have some letters by the same day. If you have been to Hampden

What shall we study? By reminding ourselves that what distinguished - the
 Jew from his neighbors was that he ^{for ever} its attitudes and its practices
^{devoted} ^{faith} colored all his life and determined his destiny.

This is hard for us to understand. We mean our guilt debt. Except with the Temple and on festive occasions our lives do not differ so widely from those of our neighbors. ^{separates} Judasim ~~makes~~ us from them - engenders the passion of prejudice & persecution are imposed on us.

This was not true of the world as under the Republics lived. There was then no national state under whose jurisdiction all citizens equally came. What ^{central} you ^{marked} existed in the ^{marked} ^{marked} world ruled the nation people under its jurisdiction through the own leaders & laws. Agoras, X¹⁰⁰⁰, Anduin, ~~Anduin~~, ~~Anduin~~, just called our system of laws & by other. Law is developed by related men enforced.

1 pair under the early Klath was maintained as some sort of
practice. You were a member not only of a religious congregation but of a nat.
community. It has now your law. The synagogue was not only
a center for worship & study but the seat of the court and the
center of government.

Gradually the Spanish monarch moved toward a centralizing of all power. Part of the process against the Jews was expedited because they wanted to retain the security of Jewish law. Jewish law was a whole more ^{desirable} ~~profit~~ harmonious rather than subscribe to royal laws. Jews could picture at best a *Schlemiel* in power.

With the acids there few men want to enter such countries - especially
Italy, Greece, the Ottoman Empire, & N. Africa retained their identity &
a general religious ^{-based} community. Indeed, even in Holland & Western
Europe it is only with the ^{spread} of the ideas of the French Revolution that
a new way of life - an equal citizen - opened for the Jew - & that
his identity as a self governing entity.

2) My task in the institute is to explore what you see the way of life with the attitude of low people. This is no simple task. Ireland's history of a few centuries, centuries, and a hundred different countries. The Ireland, like any group on earth numbered handless ropes, brilliant men of the world, crusades and restless wanderers, oppressed and pampered women, organizational sketches, and poetic sense. Some kind of shallow sense. Others thought deeply about life. A cup, of course, not full of gold or silver - ~~only~~ I only would like to give you some impression of the peculiar & unique coloration - the general impression - one recessive when one studies the culture.

To do so I propose an experiment. The Irishman has left us many records. Poems & short histories of his time, legends & books of philosophy which reflect civilization, love letters and personal correspondence - and above all a real ~~transmission~~ of brilliant poetry - which though often formal & stylized - as often beautiful in personal & refreshing spirit - & more than all the learned come over with - offers us a window look into the soul of these men & women.

I propose to let the Irishman speak as often as possible for themselves. Their style may seem dated. The passages will often suffer in translation - but I hope that in the way you will handle to put flesh & bones into the dry facts of history.

Religion demanded a great deal more of the individual than it does today -
let the day 1-2 speak for themselves (21)

Through common sense & honesty a life of peace & security could be
won. Some did indeed undertake careers. Though as an average
self denouncing poem by a convert of 1872 shows it did not always
breed "peace of mind" (22)

Many died as martyrs - many undoubted skills - many remained
as up-to-date - many changed their faith & some as they had had
years and - such indeed is the way of the world.

For the martyrs - the real glory

For the skilled - ~~to some extent~~ for some a new life

For the up-to-date - the cause of the indignation

For the new Christian - equally the cause of the indignation

(which men as much as instrument
of a. consideration as of rel. themselves.)

— — — — —

In return - few have loved & died - second & created -
through & away - contributed much to young & world

Sum up experience - in last poem

(23)

OUT OF LUCK -- ABRAHAM IBN EZRA

'T WAS SURE A LUCKLESS PLANET

THAT RULED WHEN I WAS BORN --

I HOPED FOR FAME AND FORTUNE,

I HAVE BUT LOSS AND SCORN.

AN EVIL FATE PURSUES ME

WITH UNRELENTING SPITE;

IF I SOLD LAMPS AND CANDLES,

THE SUN WOULD SHINE ALL NIGHT.

I CANNOT, CANNOT, PROSPER

NO MATTER WHAT I TRY --

WERE SELLING SHROUDS MY BUSINESS,

NO MAN WOULD EVER DIE!



ON SINGERS by JOSEPH BEN ME'IR IBN ZABARA

by LEONE DA MODENA

My son, beware of singers, for they are mostly thieves; trust no words of theirs, for they are liars; they dally with women, ~~and~~ long after other people's money. They fancy they are clever, but they know not their left hand from their right; they raise their hands all day and call, but know not to whom. A singer stands ~~of~~ the platform, raised above all other men, and he thinks he is as lofty as his place. He constantly emits sounds, which mount to his brain, and dry it up; hence he is so witless.

- 1. Jewish pupils. 2. Gentile pupils. 3. Teaching how to write.
- 4. Sermons. 5. Sermons written for others. 6. Acting as cantor. 7. Secretary of charitable and other societies. 8. Officiating as rabbi. 9. Decisions in ritual law. 10. Officiating as judge. 11. Daily lessons in the synagogues.
- 12. Conferring rabbinical diplomas. 13. Letters written in the names of others.
- 14. Music. 15. Verses for weddings and tombstones. 16. Italian sonnets.
- 17. Writing comedies. 18. Prefacing them. 19. Drawing up legal documents.
- 20. Translation. 21. Frying up one's writings. 22. Proof-reading. 23. Teaching the writings of charity and almsgiving.
- 24. Selling books of charity. 25. Commercial agent. 26. Matchmaker.



by LECNE DA MODENA

Here I wish to write down for a memorial the number of ways I sought to earn my living; and I tried and did not succeed:

1. Jewish pupils. 2. Gentile pupils. 3. Teaching how to write.
4. Sermons. 5. Sermons written for others. 6. Acting as cantor. 7. Secretary of charitable and other societies. 8. Officiating as rabbi. 9. Decisions in ritual law. 10. Officiating as judge. 11. Daily lessons in the synagogue.
12. Conferring rabbinical diplomas. 13. Letters written in the names of others.
14. Music. 15. Verses for weddings and tombstones. 16. Italian sonnets.
17. Writing comedies. 18. Producing them. 19. Drawing up legal documents.
20. Translation. 21. Printing my own writings. 22. Proof-reading. 23. Teaching the writings of charms and talismans. 24. Selling books of charms. 25. Commercial agent. 26. Matchmaker.



All these are the false and fraudulent notions with which priests of old used to mislead the ignorant masses in order to exploit them. It is unthinkable that Jews, who are of a higher mental calibre, should succumb to such superstitions, or see the slightest validity in them. . . . All men of wisdom and culture know with absolute certainty that divination, so explicitly prohibited by the Torah, is nonsensical, and appeals only to the weak-minded. . . .

JACOB OF MACHIR TO SOLOMON IBN ADRET

MONTPELIER, 1304

...IF THESE STUDIES DO DAMAGE TO FAITH, WHY DO YOU ALLOW THEM AT ALL AND ASK ONLY THAT A LINE SHOULD BE DRAWN BETWEEN YOUTH AND MATURITY? IS A MAN OF ADVANCED YEARS, THEN, ENTITLED TO EXPOSE HIS FAITH IN THE VERITIES OF RELIGION WHICH HE IMBIBED IN HIS YOUTH TO THE TEMPTATIONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL SKEPTICISM LATER ON?

BUT I KNOW WELL YOUR TRUE AND SECRET INTENTION TO DENY THE VALIDITY OF SCIENCE ALTOGETHER, BECAUSE YOU HAVE OFTEN SPOKEN IN A DEROGATORY MANNER ABOUT IT AND ITS PIONEERS, AND HAVE EVEN MAINTAINED THAT MAIMONI'S PRONOUNCEMENTS ON COSMOLOGY ARE WITHOUT FOUNDATION. BESIDES, YOU SHOULD NOT GIVE CREDIT TO THE ACCUSATIONS OF ABBA MARI, AND ATTACK EVEN THAT OLD SCHOLAR WHOSE FAME AND LEARNING ARE WIDELY KNOWN, WHOSE WORKS WERE ALREADY STUDIED WITH GREAT ZEAL IN LUNEL IN MY YOUTH, AND WHO HAS DICTATED THE TRANSLATION INTO HEBREW OF MANY WORKS WHICH HAVE BEEN PRAISED EVEN BY NAHMANIDES. IF THEREFORE THE PRODUCTS OF A FOREIGN SPIRIT THEN ENTERED JUDAISM, WHY SHOULD WE BAN THEM NOW?

I ADMIT THAT THERE ARE SOME DETESTABLE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS, BUT THIS DOES NOT JUSTIFY YOUR REFUSAL TO MAKE OURSELVES ACQUAINTED WITH THE GOOD IDEAS THEY CONTAIN. OUR SCIENTIFIC EFFORTS PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO THE NATIONS THAT WE HAVE AN OPEN MIND AND ^{are prepared to} UNDERSTANDING FOR ^{any} ~~EVERYTHING~~ ^{which makes for the good and the} BEAUTIFUL AND GOOD. ~~WE~~ MIGHT EVEN TAKE THESE AS AN EXAMPLE IN THIS REGARD, AS THEY HONOUR THE SCHOLARS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS WHO TRANSLATE THEIR WRITINGS INTO THE LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THE MEMBERS OF THESE DENOMINATIONS ~~EVEN IF~~ THEY CONTRADICT THE NOTIONS OF THE LATTER SHARPLY.

THEN, DAY BY DAY, HER BROILERS DOWN

BY SUCH A PROCEDURE THE CONVICTIONS OF A PEOPLE ARE BY NO MEANS UNDERMINED, AT LEAST NOT OURS, FOR THE TRUTH ~~OF~~ WHICH WE POSSESS ^{free inquiry & free} THE BEST PROOFS. BESIDES, THERE IS NOBODY AMONG OUR FOLLOWERS WHO WANTS TO DISSOLVE ALL BIBLICAL STORIES INTO ALLEGORIES; ~~I MYSELF KNOW VERY WELL THE BORDERLINE WHICH PHILOSOPHY MUST NOT CROSS IN ITS CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE, AND THE MOST ARDENT ZEALOT CANNOT CENSURE ME FOR GOING TOO FAR IN THIS RESPECT. I DO NOT OVER-ESTIMATE THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY, NEITHER DO I UNDER-ESTIMATE IT, AND I AM THANKFUL TO ANYBODY WHO CAN GIVE ME A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION~~ ^{of one of the great natural phenomena.} FOR ONE OF THOSE WONDROUS TALMUDIC LEGENDS. KISSES ON THE LIPS

I WONDER THAT YOU, INSTEAD OF ANNOUNCING A DECISION, TRY TO WASH YOUR HANDS OF US WITH PRAISES WHICH WE NEITHER EXPECTED NOR DESERVE. WAS YOU APPARENTLY INTEND TO WITHDRAW FROM THE AFFAIR, WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU WANTED TO ACHIEVE NOTHING BUT TO MAKE US AFRAID. BUT AFTER HAVING KINDLED THE QUARREL, IT IS FOR YOU TO BRING IT TO AN END, AND TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT.

THE EARTH IN SPRING by JUDAH HALEVI

THEN, DAY BY DAY, HER BROITERED GOWN

SHE CHANGES FOR FRESH WONDER:

A RICH PROFUSION OF GAY ROBES

SHE SCATTERS ALL AROUND HER.

FROM DAY TO DAY HER FLOWERS' TINTS

CHANGE QUICK, LIKE EYES THAT BRIGHTEN,

NOW WHITE, LIKE PEARL, NOW RUBY-RED,

NOW EMERALD-GREEN THEY'LL LIGHTEN.

SHE TURNS ALL PALE: FROM TIME TO TIME

RED BLUSHES QUICK O'ER-COVER:

SHE'S LIKE A FAIR, FOND BRIDE THAT POURS

WARM KISSES ON HER LOVER.

THE BEAUTY OF HER BURSTING SPRING

SO FAR EXCEEDS MY TELLING,

METHINKS SOMETIMES SHE PALES THE STARS

THAT HAVE IN HEAVEN THEIR DWELLING.



ADVICE TO YOKES by ABRAHAM IBN CHASDAI
JOY OF LIFE by MOSES IBN EZRA

GO NOT TOO FREQUENTLY TRY FRIENDS TO SEE,
A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, A CUP OF WINE, AND A GARDEN,
LEST THEY GROW WEARY OF THE SIGHT OF THEE;
THE SONG OF BIRDS AND THE SOUND OF MURMURING WATERS;
WITH RAIN ^{the} ~~of~~ ^{the} WHEN WE FARE FOR FARE,
THESE ARE [^] BALM ~~TO~~ A LOVER, AND JOY TO THE SAD ONE,
BUT LOVE NOT THE CONTINUOUS JAWPOW.
AND WELCOME TO THE STRANGER,
AND WEALTH TO THE POOR, AND HEALING TO THE SICK.



THE FIRST ADVICE TO BORES by ABRAHAM IBN CHASDAI

I SPENT
GO NOT TOO FREQUENTLY THY FRIENDS TO SEE,
AND
LEST THEY GROW WEARY OF THE SIGHT OF THEE;
WHEN RAIN IS SCANTY, THEN WE PRAY FOR MORE,
BUT LOVE ^{we do not a} ~~NOT ONE~~ CONTINUOUS DOWNPOUR.

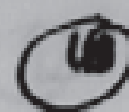


THE FIRST WHITE HAIR by JUDAH HALEVI

THE GENTLEMAN by MEVAHIM BEN JUDAH LOWZANO

I SPIED A WHITE HAIR LURKING IN MY BEARD,
AND STRAIGHTWAY PLUCKED IT THENCE. "THOU'RE BRAVE," IT SNEERED,
" 'GAINST A LONE SCOUT -- QUITE BRAVE. BUT WILT THOU BE
AS PLUCKY, WHEN MY TROOP COMES, SEEKING ME?"





I WILL SING A SONG OF BATTLE

PLANNED IN DAYS LONG PASSED AND OVER.

MEN OF SKILL AND SCIENCE SET IT

ON A PLAIN OF EIGHT DIVISIONS,

AND DESIGNED IN SQUARES ALL CHESS

TWO CAMPS FACE EACH ONE THE OTHER

AND THE KINGS STAND BY FOR BATTLE,

AND TWIXT THESE TWO IS THE FIGHTING.

BENT ON WAR THE FACE OF EACH IS,

EVER MOVING OR ENCAMPING,

YET NO SWORDS ARE DRAWN IN WARFARE,

THEY ARE KNOWN BY SIGNS AND TOKENS

SEAL'D AND WRITTEN ON THEIR BOMBS;

AND A MAN WHO SEES THEM, THINKETH,

EDOMITES AND ETHIOPIANS

ARE THESE TWO THAT FIGHT TOGETHER,

AND THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES

OVERSPREAD THE FIELD OF BATTLE,

AND THE EDOMITES PURSUE THEM.

AND WHEN THE BATTLE BEGINS,

FIRST IN BATTLE THE FOOT-SOLDIER

COMES TO FIGHT UPON THE HIGHWAY,

EVER MARCHING STRAIGHT BEFORE HIM,

BUT TO CAPTURE MOVING SIDEWAYS,

STRAYING NOT FROM OFF HIS PATHWAY,

NEITHER DO HIS STEPS GO BACKWARDS;

HE MAY LEAP AT THE BEGINNING

ANYWHERE WITHIN THREE CHEQUERS.

SHOULD HE TAKE HIS STEPS IN BATTLE

FAR AWAY UNTO THE EIGHTH ROW,

THE GENTLEMAN by MENAHEM BEN JUDAH LONZANO

MY GLORY, HONOR, ALL DEPEND

UPON MY SHIRT AND CLOAK AND HAT;

ALAS! AN AGE THAT HONORS CLOTHES

THOUGH WORN BY HORSE OR ASS!

THEN A QUEEN TO ALL APPEARANCE

HE BECOMES AND FIGHTS AS SHE DOES.

WHEN DIRECTS HER MOVING

ANY QUARTER.

WHEN IT OR ADVANCES,

AS 'TWERE AN AMBUSH;

AS THE QUEEN'S WAY, SO IS HIS WAY,

BUT O'ER HIM SHE HATH ADVANTAGE,

HE STANDS ONLY IN THE THIRD RANK.

SWIFT THE HORSE IS IN THE BATTLE,

MOVING ON A CROOKED PATHWAY;

WAYS OF HIS ARE EVER CROOKED;

AND THE SQUARES, THREE FORM HIS LIMIT.

WHEN HE MOVES O'ER THE WAR-PATH

IN THE SQUARES OR LENGTHWISE;

WAYS OF HIS HE SEEKS NOT,

LET STRAIGHT FORTH WITHOUT PERVERSENESS.

TURNING EVERY WAY THE KING GOES,

GIVING AID UNTO HIS SUBJECTS;

IN HIS ACTIONS HE IS CAUTIOUS,

WHETHER FIGHTING OR ENCAMPING.

IF HIS FOE COME TO DISMAY HIM,

FROM HIS PLACE HE FLIES IN TERROR,

OR THE WIND CAN GIVE HIM REFUGE.

SOMETIMES HE MUST FLEE BEFORE HIM;

MULTITUDES AT TIMES SUPPORT HIM;

AND ALL SLAUGHTER EACH THE OTHER,

WASTING WITH GREAT WRATH EACH OTHER.

MIGHTY MEN OF BOTH THE SOVEREIGNS

(more)



I WILL SING A SONG OF BATTLE
PLANNED IN DAYS LONG PASSED AND OVER.
MEN OF SKILL AND SCIENCE SET IT
ON A PLAIN OF EIGHT DIVISIONS,
AND DESIGNED IN SQUARES ALL CHEQUERED.
TWO CAMPS FACE EACH ONE THE OTHER,
AND THE KINGS STAND BY FOR BATTLE,
AND TWIXT THESE TWO IS THE FIGHTING.
BENT ON WAR THE FACE OF EACH IS,
EVER MOVING OR ENCAMPING,
YET NO SWORDS ARE DRAWN IN WARFARE,
THEY ARE KNOWN BY SIGNS AND TOKENS
SEALED AND WRITTEN ON THEIR BODIES;
AND A MAN WHO SEES THEM, THINKETH,
EDOMITES AND ETHIOPIANS
ARE THESE TWO THAT FIGHT TOGETHER.
AND THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES
OVERSPREAD THE FIELD OF BATTLE,
AND THE EDOMITES PURSUE THEM.
FIRST IN BATTLE THE FOOT-SOLDIER
COMES TO FIGHT UPON THE HIGHWAY,
EVER MARCHING STRAIGHT BEFORE HIM,
BUT TO CAPTURE MOVING SIDEWAYS,
STRAYING NOT FROM OFF HIS PATHWAY,
NEITHER DO HIS STEPS GO BACKWARDS;
HE MAY LEAP AT THE BEGINNING
ANYWHERE WITHIN THREE CHEQUERS.
SHOULD HE TAKE HIS STEPS IN BATTLE
FAR AWAY UNTO THE EIGHTH ROW,

THEN A QUEEN TO ALL APPEARANCE
HE BECOMES AND FIGHTS AS SHE DOES.
AND THE QUEEN DIRECTS HER MOVING
AS SHE WILL TO ANY QUARTER.
BACKS THE ELEPHANT OR ADVANCES,
STANDS ASIDE AS 'TWERE AN AMBUSH;
AS THE QUEEN'S WAY, SO IS HIS WAY,
BUT O'ER HIM SHE HATH ADVANTAGE,
HE STANDS ONLY IN THE THIRD RANK.
SWIFT THE HORSE IS IN THE BATTLE,
MOVING ON A CROOKED PATHWAY;
WAYS OF HIS ARE EVER CROOKED;
MID THE SQUARES, THREE FORM HIS LIMIT.
STRAIGHT THE WIND MOVES O'ER THE WAR-PATH
IN THE FIELD ACROSS OR LENGTHWISE;
WAYS OF CROOKEDNESS HE SEEKS NOT,
BUT STRAIGHT PATHS WITHOUT PERVERSENESS.
TURNING EVERY WAY THE KING GOES,
GIVING AID UNTO HIS SUBJECTS;
IN HIS ACTIONS HE IS CAUTIOUS,
WHETHER FIGHTING OR ENCAMPING.
IF HIS FOE COME TO DISMAY HIM,
FROM HIS PLACE HE FLEES IN TERROR,
OR THE WIND CAN GIVE HIM REFUGE.
SOMETIMES HE MUST FLEE BEFORE HIM;
MULTITUDES AT TIMES SUPPORT HIM;
AND ALL SLAUGHTER EACH THE OTHER,
WASTING WITH GREAT WRATH EACH OTHER.
MIGHTY MEN OF BOTH THE SOVEREIGNS

(more)

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Is
SLAUGHTERED FALL, WITH YET NO BLOODSHED.

ETHIOPIA SOMETIMES TRIUMPHS,

EDOM FLEES AWAY BEFORE HER;

NOW VICTORIOUS IS EDOM:

ETHIOPIA AND HER SOVEREIGN

ARE DEFEATED IN THE BATTLE.

SHOULD A KING IN THE DESTRUCTION

FALL WITHIN THE FOEMAN'S POWER,

HE IS NEVER GRANTED MERCY,

NEITHER REFUGE NOR DELIV'RANCE,

NOR A FLIGHT TO REFUGE-CITY.

JUDGED BY FOES, AND LACKING RESCUE,

THOUGH NOT SLAIN HE IS CHECKMATED.

HOSTS ABOUT HIM ALL ARE SLAUGHTERED,

GIVING LIFE FOR HIS DELIVERANCE.

QUENCHED AND VANISHED IS THEIR GLORY,

FOR THEY SEE THEIR LORD IS SMITTEN;

YET THEY FIGHT AGAIN THIS BATTLE,

FOR IN DEATH IS RESURRECTION.



AWAKE, MY FAIR by JUDAH HALEVI

(TO HER SLEEPING LOVE)

INTO MY EYES HE LOVING LOOKED,
 AWAKE, MY FAIR, MY LOVE, AWAKE,
 MY ARMS ABOUT HIS NECK WERE TWINED,
 THAT I MAY GAZE ON THEE!
 AND IN THE MIRROR OF MY EYES,
 AND IF ONE FAIN TO KISS THY LIPS
 WHAT BUT HIS IMAGE DID HE FIND?
 THOU IN THY DREAMS DOST SEE,

 LO, I MYSELF THEN OF THY DREAM
 UPON MY DARK-HUED EYES HE PRESSED
 THE INTERPRETER WILL BE.
 HIS LIPS WITH BREATH OF PASSION RARE.

 THE ROGUE! 'T WAS NOT MY EYES HE KISSED;
 HE KISSED HIS PICTURE MIRROR'D THERE.



THE MIRROR by JUDAH HALEVI

INTO MY EYES HE LOVING LOOKED,
MY ARMS ABOUT HIS NECK WERE TWINED,
AND IN THE MIRROR OF MY EYES,
WHAT BUT HIS IMAGE DID HE FIND?

UPON MY DARK-HUED EYES HE PRESSED
HIS LIPS WITH BREATH OF PASSION RARE.
THE ROGUE! 'T WAS NOT MY EYES HE KISSED:
HE KISSED HIS PICTURE MIRRORED THERE.



HOPELESS LOVE by MOSES IBN EZRA

WITH HOPELESS LOVE MY HEART IS SICK,
CONFESSION BURSTS MY LIPS' RESTRAINT.
THAT THOU, MY LOVE, DOST CAST ME OFF,
HATH TOUCHED ME WITH A DEATH-LIKE TAINT.

I VIEW THE LAND BOTH NEAR AND FAR,
TO ME IT SEEMS A PRISON VAST.
THROUGHOUT ITS BREADTH, WHERE'ER I LOOK,
MY EYES ARE MET BY DOORS LOCKED FAST.

AND THOUGH THE WORLD STOOD OPEN WIDE,
THOUGH ANGEL HOSTS FILLED EV'RY SPACE,
TO ME 'TWERE DESTITUTE OF CHARM
DIDST THOU WITHDRAW THY FACE.

WINE AND GRIEF by SOLOMON IBN GABIROL

WITH HEAVY GROANS DID I APPROACH MY FRIENDS,
HEAVY AS THOUGH THE MOUNTAINS I WOULD MOVE.

THE FLAGON THEY WERE MURDERING: THEY POURED
REMEMBER THE COVENANT OF OUR YOUTH,
INTO THE CUP, WILD-EYED, THE GRAPE'S RED BLOOD.
AND KNOCK AT THE DOOR OF MY GRAVE
NO, THEY KILLED NOT, THEY BREATHED NEW LIFE THEREIN.
WITH A LOVING HAND.

THEN, TOO, IN FIERY RAPTURE, BURNED MY VEINS,
BUT SOON THE FUMES HAD FLED. IN VAIN, IN VAIN!
YE CANNOT FILL THE BREACH OF THE RENT HEART.

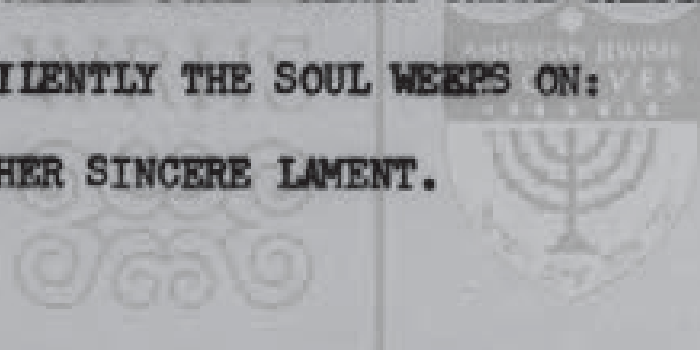
YE CRAVE A SENSUOUS JOY: YE STRIVE IN VAIN
TO CHEAT WITH FLAMES OF PASSION, MY ~~DESPAIR~~.

SO WHEN THE SINKING SUN DRAWS NEAR TO NIGHT,

THE SKY'S BRIGHT CHEEKS FADE 'NEATH THOSE TRESSES BLACK, *my despair.*

YE LAUGH -- BUT SILENTLY THE SOUL WEEPS ON: YES.

YE CANNOT STIFLE HER SINCERE LAMENT.



"FROM THEE TO THEE" by SOLOMON IBN GABRIEL

A DYING WIFE TO HER HUSBAND

WHEN ALL WITHIN by MOSES IBN EZRA

AND FORMER FRIENDS MISPRIZE;
REMEMBER THE COVENANT OF OUR YOUTH,
FROM THEE I TURN TO THEE,
AND KNOCK AT THE DOOR OF MY GRAVE
AND FIND LOVE IN THINE EYES.
WITH A LOVING HAND.

WHEN ALL WITHIN IS DARK,
AND I MY SOUL DESPISE;
FROM ME I TURN TO THEE,
AND FIND LOVE IN THINE EYES.

WHEN ALL THY FACE IS DARK,
AND THY JOINT ANKERS RATTLE
FROM THEE I TURN
AND FIND LOVE IN THINE EYES.



HYMN FOR ATONEMENT DAY by JUDAH HAIBVI
"FROM THEE TO THEE" by SOLOMON IBN GABIROL

LORD, THINE HUMBLE SERVANTS HEAR,
SUPPLIANT NOW BEFORE THEE;
OUR FATHER, FROM THY
TURN NOT, WE IMPLORE THEE.
**WHEN ALL WITHIN IS DARK,
AND FORMER FRIENDS MISPRIZE;
FROM THEM I TURN TO THEE,
AND FIND LOVE IN THINE EYES.**

LORD, THY PEOPLE, SORE OPPRESSED,
FROM THE DEPTHS IMPLORE THEE;
OUR FATHER, LET US NOT, THIS DAY,
CRY IN VAIN BEFORE THEE.
**WHEN ALL WITHIN IS DARK,
AND I MY SOUL DESPISE;
FROM ME I TURN TO THEE,
AND FIND LOVE IN THINE EYES.**

LORD, BLOT OUT OUR
ALL OUR SINS BEFORE THEE;
OUR FATHER, FOR THY
PARDON, WE IMPLORE THEE.
**WHEN ALL THY FACE IS DARK,
AND THY JUST ANGERS RISE;
FROM THEE I TURN TO THEE,
AND FIND LOVE IN THINE EYES.**

LORD, NO SACRIFICE WE BRING,
PRAYERS AND TEARS IMPLORE THEE;
OUR FATHER, TAKE THE GIFT WE LAY,
CONTRITE HEARTS, BEFORE THEE.



Our sages say with **HYMN FOR ATONEMENT DAY** by **JUDAH HALEVI**

LORD, THINE HUMBLE SERVANTS HEAR,

SUPPLIANT NOW BEFORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, FROM THY CHILDREN'S PLEA

TURN NOT, WE IMPLORE THEE!

LORD, THY SHEEP HAVE WANDERED FAR,

GATHER THEM BEFORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, LET THY SHEPHERD LOVE

GUIDE US, WE IMPLORE THEE.

LORD, THY PEOPLE, SORE OPPRESSED,

FROM THE DEPTHS IMPLORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, LET US NOT, THIS DAY,

CRY IN VAIN BEFORE THEE.

LORD, THY PARDON GRANT TO ALL

THAT IN TRUTH, IMPLORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, LET OUR EVENING PRAYER

NOW FIND GRACE BEFORE THEE.

LORD, BLOT OUT OUR EVIL PRIDE,

ALL OUR SINS BEFORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, FOR THY MERCY'S SAKE,

PARDON, WE IMPLORE THEE.

LORD, THINE HUMBLE SERVANTS HEAR,

SUPPLIANT NOW BEFORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, FROM THY CHILDREN'S PLEA

TURN NOT, WE IMPLORE THEE!

LORD, NO SACRIFICE WE BRING,

PRAYERS AND TEARS IMPLORE THEE;

OUR FATHER, TAKE THE GIFT WE LAY,

CONTRITE HEARTS, BEFORE THEE.

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Our sages say with the Psalmist: "Blessed is the man who glorifies God and takes pleasure in his commandments and not in the reward which he might expect." This thought is expressed even more clearly in ^{the} an early Midrash: "Lest you say: I will learn the Torah so that I may become rich, that I may become a rabbi, that I may be rewarded in the world to come, it is written: Love the Lord your God. That is, ^{is. That is the reason for your studies,} all that you do should ~~be done only out of your love for God.~~ ^{the Lord your.}"

However, since man is accustomed to act or not to act according to the good or the harm which may result, he loses nothing by shaping his conduct with a view to reward and punishment until, by habit, ^{perception and ability,} and ~~so~~, he arrives at an understanding of the truth and ^{learns to} serves purely out of love. Our sages of old said: "A man should by all means learn Torah and do good deeds, even if it is only to gain a reward or avoid punishment, for eventually he will arrive at a stage of doing good for its own sake."



At last, when he is grown up, these rewards tempt him no longer and the teacher exhorts him, saying: "Study, and you may become a president or a judge, and people will bow before you." Then the young man studies, keeping in view the honor and ^{credit to your community,} glory which men may bestow on him.

All of this is unworthy, but it is necessary, because the human spirit is narrow and, while acquiring wisdom, hopes for other, more material advantages.

In searching for truth, the goal is truth itself. Torah is truth. The aim in knowing the commandments is the practice of them. Hence the saying: "Do not be like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but rather be like those who serve their master without expecting a reward." This is called serving in the spirit of love.

Let us suppose that a young boy is brought before a teacher. The purpose of instructing the ~~boy~~ ^{lad} obviously is to enable him to receive knowledge, which is the greatest good! But the boy is too tender in years and too weak in understanding to appreciate the good which is intended for him and the advantages which he will reap from his progress.

Since the teacher is wiser than the boy, he will encourage his pupil to study by offering such things as appear desirable and worthwhile to the child. He will say: "Read, and you shall have nuts and figs and honey." ^{And then} The little one reads with zest, not because he finds pleasure in the book or understands that he will be the better for reading it, but because he wants the sweets which have been promised him, and which mean more to him than all his studies.

When he becomes a little older, those first objects of his desire will appear to him insignificant and contemptible; and if he is to be urged to further effort, he must be offered a greater reward. Then the teacher will say: "Read, and you ^{will} ~~be able to earn~~ ^{shall have} splendid shoes and magnificent clothes." The prize is tempting and the boy works hard. Later the prize is again changed and he is promised a certain amount of money for every lesson he learns.

At last, when he is grown up, these rewards tempt him no longer and the teacher exhorts him, saying: "Study, and you may become a ^{credit to your community, a} ~~president or a judge, and people~~ ~~will bow before you.~~" Then the young man studies, keeping in view the honor and ~~the~~ ^{he may win for himself.} glory which ~~men may bestow on him.~~

All of this is unworthy, but it is necessary, because the human spirit is narrow and, while acquiring wisdom, hopes for other, more material advantages.

In searching for truth, the goal is truth itself. || Torah is truth. The aim in knowing the commandments is the practice of them. Hence the saying: "Do not be like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but rather be like those who serve their master without expecting a reward." This is called serving in the spirit of love.

GOD THAT DOEST WONDROUSLY

by MOSES IBN EZRA

(A PRAYER IN THE CONCLUDING NEILAH SERVICE ON YOM KIPPUR)

GOD, THAT DOEST WONDROUSLY,

GOD, THAT DOEST WONDROUSLY,

PARDON AT THY PEOPLE'S CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

FEW ARE ISRAEL'S SONS, AND WEAK;

THEE, IN PENITENCE, THEY SEEK.

O, REGARD THEIR ANGUISHED CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

SOULS IN GRIEF BEFORE THEE POURED,

AGONIZE FOR DEED AND WORD;

"WE HAVE SINNED: FORGIVE!" THEY CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

HEAL THEM! LET THEIR TRUST IN THEE

TURN ASIDE WRATH'S DREAD DECREE;

DOOM THEM NOT, BUT HEED THEIR CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

MERCY, GRACE, FOR THESE LOW-BOWED!

BUT UPON THE OPPRESSOR PROUD,

JUDGMENT FOR HIS VICTIMS' CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

FOR OUR FATHERS' RICHTEOUSNESS,

SAVE US NOW IN OUR DISTRESS;

MAKE US GLAD WITH FREEDOM'S CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

JOIN, O SHEPHERD, AS OF OLD,

ZION'S WITH SAMARIA'S FOLD;

CALL THY FLOCK WITH TEND'REST CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH!

ELIJAH, MICHAEL, GABRIEL,

COME! THE HOPED-FOR TIDINGS TELL;

LET 'REDEMPTION' BE YOUR CRY

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH.

GOD, THAT DOEST WONDROUSLY,

GOD, THAT DOEST WONDROUSLY,

PARDON AT THY PEOPLE'S CRY,

AS THE CLOSING HOUR DRAWS NIGH.

HYMN FOR THE EVE OF THE NEW YEAR

by ABRAHAM GERONDI

(AHOT KETANNAH)

THY STRICKEN DAUGHTER, NOW, O LORD, PREPARES

-- BOWED 'NEATH THE ROD --

HER SONGS OF FERVENT PRAISE, HER TEARFUL
PRAYERS --

HEAL HER, O GOD!

HEAL HER -- DELIVER HER FROM ALL HER WOES --

A YEAR OF SORROWS DRAWETH TO ITS CLOSE!

THE PSALMIST'S LAY, THE PROPHET'S WORD
SUBLIME,

TO THEE PERTAIN;

AND ANCIENT LITANY AND POET'S REYME

PROLONG THE STRAIN.

HIDE NOT THINE EYES, FOREVER, LORD, BUT SEE

HER DEEP DISTRESS, WHO POURS HER SOUL TO THEE,

WHILST TYRANTS SCOURGE HER FLESH WITH CRUEL
BLOWS --

A YEAR OF SORROWS DRAWETH TO ITS CLOSE!

WHEN WILT THOU DRAW THY DAUGHTER FROM THE PIT

OF MISERY,

AND BREAK HER PRISON-YOKE AND BID HER SIT

WITH THEM MADE FREE?

DISPLAY THY WONDERS! FROM THY RUINED FOLD,

DRIVE OUT THE RAVENING BEASTS. THERE, AS OF
OLD,

GATHER THY SCATTERED SHEEP AND GUARD FROM
FOES --

A YEAR OF SORROWS DRAWETH TO ITS CLOSE!

DESPOILED AND MOCKED, SPORT OF THE HEATHEN'S
WRATH,

BUT CONSTANT STILL,

THE FOOT OF ISRAEL SWERVES NOT FROM THY PATH,
NOR EVER WILL.

HER SONG IS HUSHED, BUT ALL HER SOUL ON FIRE

WITH FRUSTRATE LONGING; THOU ART HER DESIRE!

HER BREAKING HEART WITH LOVE OF THEE O'ERFLOWS --

A YEAR OF SORROWS DRAWETH TO ITS CLOSE!

LEAD GENTLY, TO THE BOWER OF BLISSFUL REST,

HER, SO LONG TORN

FROM HER BELOVED; BID THAT ANGUISHED BREAST

CEASE, NOW, TO MOURN.

THY PRECIOUS VINE, WHOSE CLUSTERS RUTHLESS MEN

HAVE STRIPT, THAT BEASTS HAVE TRAMPLED, LIFT
AGAIN;

BEHOLD! EVEN NOW, THE BUDS OF HOPE UNCLOSE --

A YEAR OF SORROW DRAWETH TO ITS CLOSE!

BE STRONG, YE FAITHFUL, JOYOUSLY ENDURE,

FOR WRONG SHALL CEASE.

TRUST STILL THE ROCK; HIS COVENANT IS SURE,

HIS PATHS ARE PEACE.

YET SHALL HE LEAD YOU ZIONWARD, AND SAY:

"CAST UP! CAST UP! MAKE FIRM AND BROAD THE WAY!"

O MAY THE APPROACHING YEAR BEHOLD THAT DAY!

BEGIN, NEW YEAR -- AND BRING THAT JOYOUS DAY!

LETTER BY DON HASDAI CRESCAS OF SARAGOSSA TO THE COMMUNITY OF AVIGNON CONCERNING
THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SPANISH JEWS IN 1391.

On the first day of the fateful month of Tammuz, in the year 5151 (1391) the Lord directed the weapons of our enemies against the prosperous Jewish community of Seville of six thousand to seven thousand families. The enemies burnt the gates and killed a great many of the people, the larger part of whom clung to their faith. Many among them, children and women were sold to the Mohammedans, so that the streets formerly inhabited by Jews now stood empty. Many of them had given up their lives in sanctification of the holy Name; ~~but~~ Some broke the holy covenant, in order to save their lives.

From this place the fire spread and devoured all cedars of Lebanon (the Jewish scholars) in the holy community of Cordova. Here, too, many became apostates and the community was desolate.

And on the day of wailing and punishment on which the sufferings multiplied twofold, on the seventeenth of Tammuz, the wrath of the Lord was poured out over the holy city from which went forth the Torah and the word of the Lord, namely the city of Toledo, and they killed priests and scholars in the sanctuary of the Lord. There many died in sanctification of the holy Name, the Raobis, descendants of the illustrious Rabbi Asher, may his memory be blessed, together with their children and students. Here too many became converts, unable to gain salvation of their souls.

The fate of these communities alone plunged the country into despair, apart from that of other communities nearby, about seventy in number. And withal all of us here were in greatest danger and had to be on our guard day and night. On the seventh day of the month of Ab the army mercilessly destroyed the community of Valencia of about one thousand families and these died, sanctifying the name of the Eternal, about two hundred and fifty men; others fled to the mountains, some finding safety, others becoming apostates...

— (The remaining part of the letter deals with the fate of the communities of Majorca, Barcelona, Lerida, Gerona.) —