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A History of Judaism, Volume I: From Abraham to Maimonides,
manuscript pages, undated.

Ezekiel makes much of the term Kinah in reference to God which suggests Divine passion, zeal, ^{and} jealousy. God plays for keeps. He is zealous to make His incomparable nature and position clear (8:5), a zeal which leads Him to carry out Judah's sentence to the full (5:13). ~~Those who have been driven into exile know that God's power can hit with the full force of a violent storm. Those~~

GENTLE READERS

~~who prefer to consider God only in the gentlest terms are put off by the biblical~~

that loving

Ezekiel's

habit of naming God as zealous and impassioned or relating the bitter length of the exile to God's zeal/jealousy to punish the deserving. But the exile was not gentle and it was because so many had for so long conceived of God as Father and protector and not as the zealous/impassioned Lord who demands righteousness that the exile had been merited. Moreover God's jealousy/zeal is not that of a fanatic, but of God, and He will be just as zealous to save as to punish. God's attribute of zeal encouraged the exiles: "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and show my affection for all Israel and I will be jealous for my Holy name" (Ezek. 39:25). ~~So much in Ezekiel is theological rather than ceremonial.~~

The Temple has fallen. The glory of God which had dwelt in the Temple ^{Ezekiel} departs for points east (11:22). Was this a protest by an exiled priest-prophet

against any attempt by ~~the locals~~ ^{those who had not been exiled} to hold unauthorized sacrifice on the old Temple

site? Was this a suggestion that God's presence is now in the exile and that a

^{or} Temple-like service ^{in Babylon would} ~~will~~ be acceptable ^{there?} The former explanation is the

more likely. The exiles seem not to have ~~attempted to build~~ an altar on which

to offer sacrifices. The institutional form they ^{developed for} ~~gave to~~ their worship cannot now

be reconstructed. Some say the synagogue had its origins in this exile community.

Perhaps ^{since} ~~There are no documents~~ ^{bearing directly on the question} we can only conjecture. Certainly

STET

~~itself worthy of return and of such permanent blessing?~~ God will purge the people of their uncleanness and the land of its idols. There will be a clean start. "I will take the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh" (36:26).

God will put His spirit in the new man, who now will be filled with loathing for the weaknesses of the past (36:27-32). In humanist terms, this ^{MIGHT BE READ:} ~~reader~~ remorse is the high road to repentance and repentance the ^{ESSENTIAL ACT OF PERSONAL AND NATIONAL} ~~first stage in~~ renewal; but Ezekiel was not a humanist and he spoke of a transforming divine act, not of an ordinary program of self-discipline.

What will cause God to offer Israel this new covenant of peace? Have Is-
rael's sufferings atoned for her past? Will Israel become again a people worthy of God's favor? Ezekiel suggests that it makes little difference what Israel does, ^{since}

God acts for His own purposes; "It is not for your sake that I act" (36:22). ^{not the} ~~The~~ people's actions are no longer determinative. ^{of the nation's fate.} God's desire to broadcast His power is. Just as the Exodus had made God's power to save clear to the children of Israel, so now the return would make His power clear to all ~~the children of~~ men. They will see, be awed, and be moved to obey God's law of righteousness. "I will hallow My great name. . . the nations will know that I am the Lord" (36:23-24).

Ezekiel did not ^{JETTISON} ~~abandon~~ the older covenant idiom. Indeed, his words insisted on individual moral responsibility. God rhetorically asks the meaning of an old proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge" (18:1) and goes on to say that this maxim no longer applies; ⁸ ~~man~~ will not perish for any but his own sin (18:3). Each man, and he alone, is respon-
sible for his ~~own~~ conduct (18:5). Some had complained that God is cruel, punish-

verbal form familiar to Ezekiel implies a turning from evil, a turning to God, a re-orientation of goals and priorities. Redemption is never simply given, it has about it an element of self-redemption, ^{the} its achievement ^{of which} begins with turning.

Another exilic prophet put it this way: "Let the wicked give up his ways, the sinful man his plans; Let him turn back to the Lord, and He will pardon him; To our God, for He freely forgives" (Isa. 55:7). Ezekiel said simply: "It may be that a wicked man gives up his sinful ways and keeps all my laws, doing what is just and right, That man shall live; he shall not die. . . ^{Would I} Have I any desire, says the Lord God for the death of a wicked man? ^{Ezek.} not rather that he should mend his ways and live" (18:21-23). There is a straight way, there is a bent way, and there is the possibility of turning back from one's wanderings to the highway. If the power of righteousness is the focus of pre-exilic thought, the power of repentance can be said to be the focus of post-exilic teaching. The Day of Atonement becomes post-exilic Judaism's special and most sacred day.

^{LINE #} ^{About} Two decades or so after the exile began, and shortly before the sweeping victories of the Persians over the neo-Babylonian Empire, an anonymous prophet spoke the word of God to the Judeans in the ^{EASTERN} ~~Babylonian~~ exile. Since ^{his} ~~the~~ ^{words were recorded without attribution,} ^{simply} ~~birth of modern biblical scholarship~~ he has been called Deutero-Isaiah, the second Isaiah, so named because his words were stitched on the scroll of the words of Isaiah, beginning with Chapter 40. He brought words of good tidings. Babylon will be swiftly punished. Cyrus, the Persian, is the rod of God's vengeance. God has ^{decided} ~~determined not only~~ to open Babylon's gates to Cyrus (45:1) ^{Isa.} and to set him on the imperial throne so that he can issue the orders which will ^{rebuilding of the} insure that the Temple will be rebuilt (44:28). God has decreed the return to ^{of the Judeans} ~~the~~ ^{to}

^{their home in} ~~Judah~~ ^{a model state} a Judah which will now be alight with the teachings and customs of God, and therefore a compelling example which ^{to} ~~will lead~~ ^{who will be moved} other nations to acknowledge Him. Deutero-Isaiah is the first publicist of Aliyah. He portrays a safe and easy ^{to Judah} passage (40:3-5) and a glorious, miraculous renewal of the land (49:22-3). Those who are too comfortable to leave ^{the} ~~exile~~ are alternately badgered and encouraged (52:11-12).

Deutero-Isaiah differs from earlier prophets in his insistence that Israel, to use the cliché, had paid her debt to society, indeed, paid it off doubly (40:2). The past is cancelled. God has announced good for Zion and for Jerusalem (40:9). God is no longer the stern hanging judge but a tender, watchful shepherd who feeds His flock, leads them gently, and cradles the young tenderly in His bosom (4:11).

What assurance is there that God has the power to carry out this promise?

Deutero-Isaiah ^{acknowledges no other} ~~glorifies God's power.~~ ~~He insists as does every prophet that~~ ~~God controls all of history, that obviously God had no rival or equal among the~~ ~~gods.~~ In his ^{message} ~~words~~ the glorification of God became the opening gun in a polemic against all forms and manifestations of idolatry. Deutero-Isaiah turns his attention to the paganism of the world in which Judeans ^{found} ~~find~~ themselves. Idols ^{simply} are manufactured and senseless objects, ~~no more.~~ "If they cry out to it, it does not answer; It cannot save them from their distress" (46:7). God is sharply distinguished from such "gods," "There is no one like Me" (46:9). Idols are helpless; only God controls the course of history and proves His power by revealing those things which have not yet occurred (46:10). The eschaton now includes not only granting triumph to Zion (46:13), but placing all nations under the influence of God's proper discipline (42:6-11).

Men want proof of God's power. ~~The Exile hardly provided tangible evi-~~
~~dence of God's power to save. Where then was the proof?~~ ^{LET MEN NOTICE} ~~Proof lay in the fall~~
of Babylon and God's track record for foretelling. "I am the Lord, that is My
name; I will not yield my glory to another, nor My renown to idols. See, the
things once predicted have come, and now I foretell new things, announce to you
ere they sprout up" (42:8-9). He had revealed all, therefore one can only as-
sume that He caused all to happen. "Long ago I foretold things that happened,
from My mouth they issued, and I announced them; suddenly I acted, and they
came to pass" (48:3). He had revealed all, therefore those to whom ^{such} ~~the~~ revel-
ations ^{had been} ~~were~~ made ^{must} ~~can~~ appear as ^{challenges} ~~His~~ witnesses (43:10-12). Witness has a precise
legal implication. God taunts the nations to bring creditable witnesses ^{who might substantiate} ~~to the~~
^{claim} ~~fact~~ that their gods or seers ever had announced what proved to have happened
(43:9). God can, ^{ISRAEL CAN REPORT WHAT THE PROPHETS HAD FORETOLD,} Israel is His witness. Until now the children of Israel have
^{the} had a single responsibility, to serve ^{God obediently,} ~~God as His obedient servants~~. Israel now
has a new role. ^{shall witness to} ~~As witness~~ Israel bears testimony of the truth of God's ^{prophecies,} ~~words,~~
offering not only verbal ^{verification,} ~~testimony,~~ ^{BUT THE TESTIMONY OF FAITHFUL LIVES,} ~~but testifying to the vision of God's power by~~
~~living in a way that is obedient to God's will.~~ When God's spirit rests upon Is-
rael, Israel "shall teach the true way to the nations" (42:1).

Few sections of the Bible exalt God with such powerful imagery or are
so full of the promises men delight to hear, but ^{therefore} the popularity of Deutero-Isaiah
rests less on what Deutero-Isaiah said than on what men thought he said. Nin-
teenth-century Jews, seeking to give meaning to their assimilated existence, de-
veloped a ^{which they} concept labeled the Mission of Israel, for which they claimed a Scrip-
tural warrant in Deutero-Isaiah (42:5-43:11). Israel is to be "a light to the nations"
(42:6), and the light that Israel is to bring is the light of social justice, "Opening

eyes deprived of light, rescuing prisoners from confinement, from the dungeon those who sit in darkness" (42:7). In the era of liberal reform, such ideas were compelling and many found deliverance through them. But the intention of ^{the} exilic prophet was not the same as that of ^{such} nineteenth-century reformers. The mission idea as developed by diaspora Jews ^{was to} read "go out into your cities and fight for child labor laws and every man's civil rights." It was used to justify the continuation of the diaspora, sometimes even seeming to justify attacks on Zionism; how could Jews be the reformers of Europe ^{residing in} from a tiny Levantine state? But Deutero-Isaiah had prophesied the return to Zion, an ingathering of the exiles (43:6). Israel is the place ^{NOT the diaspora} for the example ^{where God's people will set the example} to be set and the source of instruction; others will see and copy. Nation-building, not social crusading, ^{was} his frame of reference.

Among some Christians, the so-called "suffering-servant" portions ^{in Deutero-Isaiah} Isaiah 50:4-11 and 52:12-14 ^{53:12} ~~have been read~~ as a prefiguration of Jesus or, at the very least, as foreshadowing his role as a man of sorrows who redeems others through vicarious suffering. In such a view, suffering ceases to be a ^{present} theological problem (is my suffering merited?) -- and is transformed into a blessing, the mark of saintliness, a supreme justification for one's life. What had Deutero-Isaiah intended? In the first instance, ^{AI} ~~though this is only an historical aside~~, these two psalms ^{actually} ~~were~~ ^{represent interpolations not original to} probably ~~not spoken by~~ Deutero-Isaiah. They are unique in spirit and ^{can not be assimilated to} ~~do not tie to any of~~ his other preachings. That Israel is God's servant is a familiar image, but Israel as a suffering servant whose

pain vicariously atones for society's sins is a unique doctrine found only here in

the Bible. ^{Yet} Whether by Deutero-Isaiah or not, these speeches ~~are in the Bible;~~

~~they~~ are the words of some prophet. What do they mean? In Isaiah 50:4-11, Is-

^{THE NATION} rael is obviously the suffering servant, the image is of a people who suffer in

silence, walk humbly yet fearlessly and hold their ground till righteousness tri-

umphs. It would appear to be a flattering self-portrait by one of the exiles of

himself and his community. ^{AN ENCOURAGING PICTURE OF A PEOPLE WHO} ~~words that encouraged them to believe that they~~ had

acted with steady courage. The second poem is an eulogy. There was a man

whom the mob beat up and scarred, this man had been something of a pariah

"shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease" (53:3). "Our suffer-

ing he endured. . . he was wounded because of our transgressions, crushed be-

cause of our iniquities" (53:5). So far we have a text full of eulogistic hyperbole;

but the lament continues: "He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and

by his bruises we were healed" (53:5). Obviously this man suffered vicariously.

Sin has ceased to be simply human failing, and has become a thing, palpable, a

definable and transferable object.

Exilic and post-exilic faith ^{slowly} lets go of the naturalism of earlier theologies.

A Jewish myth is in the making, ^{neither} not an animistic myth personifying natural

phenomena nor a fertility myth, but one dramatizing the struggle within man to

be obedient to God's law. Sin is not only an act but a taint, a burden. Atone-

ment is not simply a promise to change one's ways and return to God, but a re-

moval of stain, ^{an} being unburdened. ^{sing}

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This objectification of sin is nowhere better seen than in the post-exilic rite of the Azazel, the scapegoat on whom the High Priest on the Day of Atonement placed, carefully and following a prescribed ritual, the sins of the entire community. The goat was then led out of Jerusalem and dashed from a cliff in the wilderness, presumably carrying with him to his death the sins of the community. The community was unburdened, cleansed, able to start afresh.

What shall we make of Isaiah 53:5? ^{It provides a mythical} ~~Probably again little more than~~ a description of the psychological state of the exiles. ^{Having} They bore the agonies and ^{suffered} the consequence of the sins of earlier generations, their punishment ^{They feel} somehow paying off the nation's debt to God and hastening ^{The time when the account with} ~~for future generations the end of~~ ^{can begin} the return to the homeland ~~-- the time when the nation's wounds will be healed.~~ The text is difficult and its role in western thought far outweighs its literary merit.

Again, as in Ezekiel, we ^{think} ~~deal with~~ a language which tends to objectify religious processes. Righteousness is not simply the act of concern but a thing acquired. A man can pass on ~~his~~ righteousness to his children, and no legacy is more precious. How could a generation of no special merit expect God's favors? ^{Have / intended what later generations would call (L.B. 11.76.5. precision)} Fortunately they ~~are the heirs to~~ ^{are} the merits of the fathers. Sin is a burden that can be put on the back of a scapegoat. God ^{places} ~~can put~~ righteousness and sin on the scale of justice ^{and} ~~to~~ measure a man's worth.

The words of the exilic prophets deal with consolation and deliverance. They dwell on God's mercy, ^{and} they look forward to national repatriation. Deuteronomy

Isaiah is the first Zionist, and his text and Ezekiel's were regularly read by those who dreamt of the rebuilding of the Holy City and the Holy Temple. ~~But there is~~ ^{in these writings a new} ~~more here than the drama of national redemption,~~ ^{the new significance} ~~there is~~ ^{of Temple and of Temple ritual,} ~~so~~ ^{quite} different from what other prophets have said on the subject. ~~Here begins a world where~~ ^{Now} the way of redemption requires obedience to covenant law, involvement in a holy community, and participation in the community's redemptive rites. This world is burdened by sin. ^{To be redeemed} ~~It~~ needs not only the covenant that ~~inspires~~ ^{defines} but the altar that atones.

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by Torah law. Esther ate the palace food and Mordecai encouraged her to marry out of the faith. ^{IS NOT RELATED TO NATIONAL GUILT} ~~Neither~~ the imperial sentence of doom nor ^A is Ahasuerus' sudden change of mind ~~are~~ related in any way to the community's repentance. Mordecai, Esther, and what can only be called good luck are the agents of deliverance. Israel is saved. Nowhere is it explicitly said "God saved."

^{THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE,}
~~In the Scroll of Esther,~~ Haman is introduced as a descendant

of Amalek, leader of a nation which had ambushed the tribes of Israel during the wilderness trek (Ex. 17:16). ~~Biblical history indicates that the Amalekites had ceased to exist as a nation in the eighth century (I Ch. 4:43); but in Esther, and in subsequent Jewish thought, Amalek remained alive as the personification of the unremitting arch-enemy. Until the Messianic Age, Israel must be prepared against his treachery.~~ When after World War II a motto was chosen for the stone facade of the Paris memorial to the six million victims of the Nazi Holocaust ~~it was right that it bear the stern warning: "Remember Amalek" (Deut. 25:17).~~

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^{THE EXODUS STORY DETAILS HOW} ~~Amalek had suddenly and without provocation attacked the tribes of Israel as they made their way towards the Promised Land. The Exodus story takes pains to indicate that the tribes had not forced his attack; it was entirely unprovoked. (For all its covenant talk,~~ ^{EVEN} ~~the Torah Bible does not systematically relate every facet of Israel's history to Israel's faithfulness to the covenant.)~~ From time to time an Amalek simply appeared. In the Diaspora, pogrom and oppression often came on as suddenly as a summer storm, and as suddenly subsided. One community might be decimated, another a few miles away spared, yet they lived by similar standards. For his own reasons, "Amalek came and fought with Israel" (Ex. 17:8). Haman had willed Israel's destruction

out of pure spite and cupidity. ~~In neither case was there evidence of any particular act of covenant disloyalty requiring punishment by the tribes of Israel or the Persian Jews.~~ ^{LATER} In Jewish thought Amalek-Haman became code names for ^{ANY} actively pernicious force, ~~whose~~ whose attacks on the community ^{had} bear no relation to the people's sin or righteousness.

Judaism recognized the ~~fact~~ ^{fact} of undeserved suffering.

"For see, they lie in wait for me; fierce men are stirred up against me for no offense of mine, O Lord; for no guilt of mine do they rush

to array themselves against me" (Ps. 59:4-5). But the grip of covenant teaching ^{on people's minds was never fully dissolved,} ~~was strong.~~ ^{There were Jews} After the Nazi Holocaust, ^{there were Jews} who ~~were~~

~~prepared~~ ^{ed} beat their breasts and confess: "We were guilty of falling

away from the traditions of our fathers. God is just." It is a mark

of the ^{Tough moral core} ~~strength~~ of Israel's faith that radical evil, ^{prohibited in} ~~forbidden~~

Satan, ^{while} was kept in the shadows, God, His law and His promise occupy

the spotlight. Satan remains somehow under God's authority. But ^{keep} in the

psyche of the Jew, "Remember Amalek" ^{Remembered as an} ~~was always the~~ emotional counter-

part to "God is truly good to Israel" (Ps. 73:1).

Persian rule was generally bearable and even auspicious for the Judeans. Jews ~~served~~ in the Persian armies, and served loyally. ~~Some~~ ^{how} Many of the records of a fifth-century company of Jewish mercenaries who served the Persian authorities on the island of Elephantine near Assouan in the upper Nile have survived; they indicate that these troops remained loyal to their paymasters throughout the usual quota of local plots and intrigues. Esther suggests that some Jews had access to the imperial court; the recently discovered business records of the house of Murashu, a successful Judean merchant clan in Babylon, indicate that by the end of the fifth century some of the exiles had achieved prominence in that commercial world. Later, for reasons which are not clear to us, relationships between the community in and

around Jerusalem and the Persian imperial government deteriorated, and we hear that Artaxerxes III deported some Judeans from Jerusalem to an area near the Caspian Sea. Jerusalem opened its gates to the Macedonian armies of Alexander the Great (322 B. C. E.) which would indicate either remarkable political sagacity or ^{THE JUDGEMENT THAT GAVE RULE} ~~that the new ruler~~ ^{WOULD BE} ~~was assumed to be~~ preferable to ^{PERSIAN} ~~the old~~. But on the whole conditions were acceptable.

^{When They First Came To Power}
 The Persians ~~had~~ enhanced the peace of their new empire by allowing many groups whom the Babylonians had uprooted and settled ~~en masse~~ ^{ANCESTRAL} to return to their homes. Since they were ^{to be} included, Cyrus' policy was understood by the Judeans as proof of God's power to save, and some were encouraged in the hope ^{THAT THE TEMPLE WOULD SOON BE REESTABLISHED} ~~of a rebuilt Temple~~. The oracle read: "Of Cyrus: 'He is My shepherd; He shall fulfill all My purposes'. He shall say to Jerusalem: 'She shall be rebuilt'; and to the Temple: 'You shall be founded again'" (Isa. 44:28). ^{Plans} ~~were soon afoot, in 536 B. C. E., to rebuild the Temple.~~ ^{SET IN MOTION IN 526 B.C.E.} The plan was not to recreate ^{Judean} an independent state, which the Persians would not have tolerated, but only to establish a ^{NATIONAL} cult center. Despite the oracle and memories ^{AND} ~~of home~~, perhaps because of the modesty of the plans, few Judahites took ^{PART IN THIS FIRST} ~~advantage of the~~ opportunity to go home, and the Davidite prince ^{Sheshbazzar, who led the returnees} ~~who~~ undertook the Temple's rebuilding was not capable of bringing it off. He was followed to Judah ⁱⁿ around 526 B. C. E. by an ambitious nephew, Zerubbabel, who, abetted or encouraged by ^{FRESH}

messianic oracles spoken by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Hag. 2:27-28), ^{recklessly} ~~not only to reopen the Temple but to be an active king in Jerusalem,~~ ~~set out on the reckless road to national independence.~~ ~~The predictable~~ ~~He was quickly removed by Persians who take steps to prevent any further~~ ~~result was an abrupt end to Zerubbabel's career and the forced inauguration~~ ~~Judahite royal ambitions,~~ ~~tion of a new political order designed by Persia to restrain any subsequent royal pretensions.~~ ^{ever} The ~~royal~~ house of David disappears as a fact of life, and what ^{ever} actual power existed now passed to a priestly

hierarchy headed by Joshua ben Jehozadak, who exercised authority as the High Priest. Around 516 B. C. E., with the aid of the Persian court, ^{This} the priest group completed a modest temple in Jerusalem, ^{the place that} ~~the temple~~ remained the geographic and spiritual focus of Jewish life over the next six centuries. "I have come back to Jerusalem with compassion" (Zech. 1:16). Judah gradually became a hierarchy. Priests of Joshua's clan, the family of Zadok, reigned as pliant puppets, cautiously managing the ensuing difficult years, and so surviving and slowly extending their power.

When the opportunity of return was granted to the exiles in Babylon, ^{only} a few went up, ^{while} most stayed. ^{Despite the central importance of} ~~This division was not so much~~ ^{the theme of return in Biblical Theology,} ~~ideological as practical. In the extant texts,~~ there is surprisingly little ^{recognition} ~~condemnation~~ of the stay-behinds. No post-exilic prophet brought words condemning them. Indeed, the Jews who returned maintained warmer relationship with those who stayed in Babylon than with the lower-class Judeans who had not been carted off and had greeted them coldly on their return "home." Those who returned depended for their provisions and privileges on the Persian court, and access to the imperial court by the stay-behinds ^{co-religionists} must have been of cardinal importance ^{in their political plans,} ~~to the re-~~ ~~patriated Judeans.~~ No one pressed for the emptying out of the diaspora; ^{the prevailing attitude can be described as} ~~what was created was~~ a spiritual Zionism which those in Jerusalem and those in the scattered settlements could emotionally ^{be shared by} share. Everyone now had to support the Temple; a head tax for this purpose was collected in every diaspora community [Neh. 11:34] ^{and} the Temple rites were efficacious for all Jews. Everyone benefited from the Temple's redemptive ritual, ⁱⁿ those who actively participated, those who participated vicariously through the recitation of psalms and the celebration of holidays in ways that paralleled Temple worship, and those who sent free will offerings

and the head tax.

Spiritual ^{authority} ~~power~~ returned to Jerusalem, while political power remained in the east. ^{LEADERS RECEIVE THEIR MANDATE FROM THE PERSIAN COURT.} In the fifth century Nehemiah, a Judean layman from the exile community, ^{ASSUMED} became temporarily ~~the supreme~~ authority in Jerusalem because he was ^{EMPOWERED} ~~mandated~~ by "the King's letter" (Neh. 1:9). On that authority Nehemiah made fundamental law, thus he abrogated the ancient rule that creditors could claim ^{AS VANDSMEN} the children of ~~these~~ ^{DEFAULTING} debtors, ~~as-bondsmen~~. A short time later ^{THE LEADERS} Ezra, (c. 430 B. C. E.), ~~another Persian~~ ^{OF AUTHORIZATION} appointed authority, and on the basis of a letter ^{JERUSALEM BASED} of Artaxerxes, promulgated the "book of the Torah" as a national covenant. No High Priest could contest with ^{THE IMPERIAL MANDATE BROUGHT BY} Nehemiah or Ezra, but neither was succeeded by sons or relatives, and at their death ^{DOMESTIC} authority reverted to the priests. The Persian citadel overlooked and dominated architecturally and politically the Temple compound. The law went out from Jerusalem provided it had Persian agreement.

A later rabbinic saying underscores the importance of the diaspora for the religious vitality of Israel: "In ancient days when Torah was forgotten in Israel, Ezra came up from Babylon and re-established it; when the Torah again was forgotten in Israel, Hillel came up from Babylon and re-established it". ^{EXT} ^{FL. LEFT} ^{AND BEAUTIFY} The impetus to rebuild the Temple came ~~stubbornly and persistently~~ from Babylon, not from Jerusalem. The exiles of Babylon provided the prophets (Haggai, Zechariah), the leaders, ^{and} (Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Josiah the High Priest, later Ezra and Nehemiah), the money, and the political support (Ez. 8:29). Local Judeans provided the noisy opposition.

What did the Temple mean to the diaspora? The Temple was the focus of ritual and the place where atonement was made possible for all Israel. The daily burnt-offering, the tamid, was seen as the daily

~~Notwithstanding~~ ~~and~~ ~~entered~~ ~~Jerusalem~~ never completely silent. Throughout rabbinic and medieval times men reported hearing a bat kol -- a divine voice. Minor legal innovations were based on its advice, ^{but} ~~such~~ ^{the} ~~authority was opposed by many, and even a voice's literal name,~~ ^{AGE OF REVELATION had GIVEN WAY TO AN AGE OF INTERPRETATION,} ~~LATER Judaism would grow through ELABORATION,~~ "daughter of a voice," indicates that this is not the full thing.

At this great covenant ceremony Ezra read a collection of laws -- perhaps part of that collection of laws which are now called the Priestly Code. The Priestly Code is really not one codex, but several collections of torot drawn together in post-exilic times, which exhibit a special interest in the Temple cult and sacrifices. The last chapters in Exodus describe the Ark, the tent of meeting, and the priesthood. Leviticus 1 through 7 is cultic and includes, according to its own table of contents, "the rituals of the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the offering of ordination and the sacrifice of well being, with which the Lord charged Moses on Mount Sinai, when He commanded that the Israelites present their offerings to the Lord, ⁱⁿ "in the wilderness of Sinai" (Lev. 7:37-38). Leviticus 11 through 15 is a separate collection which deals with the categories of cleanliness and uncleanness as applied to land, animals, illness, garments, and persons. Purity and impurity are ^{with} ~~treated~~ ^{as} states of being and have their own independent existence. Cleanliness is achieved through confession, cleansings, deodorants, ^{and} sacrifice. Leviticus 17 through 26, often called the Holiness Code, is a varied list of moral and ritual requirements which define kedushah -- holiness, that is, God's nature and way and hence man's obligation. The altar (19:30), land (25:7), people (19:30), ^{and} priests (21:1-15) must be holy because such is God's will and His nature (19:12; 21:6). To us many of these laws seem both bizarre and anachronistic, but we must recognize that nothing sustains the powerless more than the sense that they are fulfilling the will of God precisely, and hence are close

often translated as the Pharisees, but such a designation is not at all certain. Perushim may mean simply separatists and may identify various groups who separated themselves from the larger community to ^{organize} fellowships or havurot in which they lived by stricter rules of diet and ritual purity than the ordinary citizen. There may have been and probably were Pharisees in these fellowships, but not all Pharisees belonged to such groups, ^{the} whose ^{of which} common factor was ritual rigorism, not a particular understanding of ^{The} two-fold Torah.

These havurot paid particular attention to those Torah rules which dealt with the Sabbath, tithes, and ritual purity. A primary purpose seems to have been apocalyptic: the strict regimen of the havurah was obviously pleasing to God and encouraged the rigorist to ^{believe that he would be} ~~expect to be~~ listed among the saved at the End of Time. Such a regimen must have been emotionally satisfying. Through care with diet and in matters of purity one avoided contagion, cleansed one's being and kept it clean. These groups particularly imposed upon themselves ^{Such a regimen suggested high religious status.} ~~regimens~~ ^{rules} which, until this time, had been mandatory only ^{for} on the priesthood. If God had established these rules for those who served at His altar, they were obviously ^{The} appropriate ^{rules for} ~~to~~ all who wished to be holy. ^{moreover acceptance of} ~~It is easy to see~~ these rigors ^{who justified} ~~as~~ part of an ~~ongoing~~ attack on the prerogatives of the priesthood. ^{Their belief was that} ~~The~~ ^{their special rights by their special} purity and holiness, ~~attained by observance of various sacerdotal rigors~~ ~~were among the primary justifications offered by the priests for the~~ ~~maintenance of these special privileges.~~ If others attained holiness, did they not merit similar consideration?

Farmers were in the habit of separating from their harvest ^{biblically required} the annual tithe, but few bothered about other biblically prescribed agricultural dues - the heave offering, the second tithe (which was given four times every seven years), and the poor man's tithe (which was to be given on the third and sixth year ^{of} of the seven-year cycle) - since only

ever been. ~~When~~ after the defeat of Bar Kochba, men abandoned any real hope for a quick end to the nation's ~~galut~~ ^{REVERSAL OF THEIR political situation, and} they looked to Yom Kippur for relief from their private sense of alienation from God. ^{Through defeat, they could through close to God} Teshuvah, ^{hasten to} repentance, ~~remained the prerequisite~~ ^{was} for national renewal, but ~~increasing~~ ^{which} the possibility of Teshuvah as a means of private deliverance ~~was~~ ^{was} emphasized. Though ^{Jew} ~~he~~ could not extricate himself from galut, through repentance, worship, and good works ^{he} man had a chance to set himself right with God ^{thus} and qualify for blessing in this life and in the life to come. "Teshuvah and irenic acts (maasim tovim) provide a shield against punishment."⁹ Repentance was ~~both~~ an act of contrition and an active redemptive force, hope with a capital "H." "The gates of prayer are sometimes open and sometimes closed. The gates of teshuvah are always open."¹⁰ Teshuvah is the way man proves himself to God and the redemptive road that he must take. A thousand, perhaps ten thousand sermons, during these centuries ^{cited} ~~dealt with~~ such classic teshuvah texts as Hosea's: "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled in your evil courses..." (14:2), and answered such questions as these: How does one turn, who permits "turning" and what gives it significance?

~~Teshuvah was an essential part of the moral order.~~ Christians insisted that Christ's atoning death had introduced the possibility of salvation into a world heretofore consigned to a state of unforgiveness. The rabbis rejected this understanding. Teshuvah had been created before Day One. The possibility of moral regeneration ^{is} ~~was~~ implicit in creation, and constantly manifests itself in man's ability to take hold of his life and change it. Teshuvah implied that one could and must bring ^{one} himself

does not effect teshuvah. For transgressions that are between man and God the Day of Atonement effects teshuvah, but for transgressions that are between a man and his fellow the Day of Atonement effects atonement only if he has appeased his fellows. "14/

The transfer of the saving power of the Temple to the synagogue was the popular part of a program which helped sustain Israel's trust in the vitality of God's power to save. ~~But~~ ^{however} the Tannaim ^{but rather} were not primarily synagogue men, they were schoolmen for whom the way of learning, Talmud Torah, complemented and went beyond the way of teshuvah, the way of good deeds and of obedience. Study of Torah was ^{a commandment} ~~an activist~~ ^{whose fulfillment was} ~~enterprise~~ pleasing to God as evidence of man's loyalty. Through study God's rule became explicit and clear. Through study men ^{came} ~~are able~~ to see the real world behind the world of semblance. The way of study offered a wisdom which could clear up all philosophic confusion, resolve all moral doubt, and, by dissolving doubt, so disencumber man's will that he could marshall the power to control his passions and his life. Torah study was also a mystical enterprise which permitted men to draw closer to God, for God was somehow in the revelation, ~~the texts which were studied.~~

^{The rather non-specific text of} Beside Deuteronomy 6:5, "Impress them [these words] upon your children," ^{the text} the Torah does not mention schools or learning; ^{however} but the Tannaim found innumerable ^{proof texts confirming} ~~scriptural confirmation~~ of the redemptive value of Talmud Torah in the wisdom literature, ^{wisdom and Torah were one; so} in their minds, "get wisdom" ~~and~~ implied "study Torah" ~~were one and the same undertaking.~~ The blessings that wisdom promised the devotee were ~~easily and~~ simply transferred to Talmud Torah, ~~which becomes the way a man saves himself.~~ The texts they cited are revealing: "She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; fortunate are they who can hold her fast" (Prov. 3:18). "She offers long life with her right hand and with her left hand riches and honor" (3:16) ^{Prov.} QED; life is given to those who ^{study} ~~do~~ Torah "in this world" →

of its supernatural force. Inevitably, these ^{followers of Torah} law-men came to be seen as holy men. Yohanan had gained Vespasian's favor by ^{predicting} ~~foreseeing~~ that the general would become emperor. His student, Haninah ben Dosa, was a faith healer and intercessor who claimed to know which of those he prayed for would live and ^{which} ~~who~~ would die. ^{These were holy men in an age} ~~These were men of their day,~~ and ^{when} ~~in their day~~ holy men healed, divined, exorcised evil spirits, wrote amulets, called down the rain, and cast the evil eye. ~~These scholars~~ may not have set out to be magicians, but there was an unpublished esoteric curriculum in the schools which enabled ^{scholars} ~~them~~ to tap the Torah's latent and awesome power, for it took them behind the literal meaning of Torah to its mysteries; ^{DI} the secret names of God, the mysterious nature of the universe, the date of the end of time. ^{These scholars would have denied emphatically that they even practiced magic} Torah provided the power to save, but not the power to ^{Tamper with God's plans} ~~oppose God~~. If God willed death or a drought, no amulet or prayer could be effective. ~~Scholarship~~ ^{scholarship} did not automatically empower a student. If God chose to act through a simple, perhaps illiterate, faith healer or rain maker rather than through a scholar, so be it. Of one itinerant rain maker, a sage commented that he would willingly pronounce a ban: "But what shall I do? You importune God and He performs your will."²⁰

The new emphasis on learning seemed to imply that a simple man could not serve God as adequately as a student, and hence was less likely to merit salvation. Talmud Torah talk does reflect the intellectual bias ^{AND SELF-ESTEEM} of the schools, ~~where it was carried on~~, but the best of the sages were conscious of the danger of elitism. "If you have learned a great deal of Torah do not claim credit for yourself, for thereunto were you created."²¹ ^{So far} Formal study was beyond the ability or schedule of the average man, ~~so~~ paragraphs from each of the major sections of the Bible were added to the ~~daily~~ ^{in order} liturgy that everyone would read daily

sufficient text to have satisfied the commandment of study and thus earn merit towards entry into the world to come. The sages taught and most believed that: "It matters not whether much or little (is read) provided man directs his heart to heaven."²²

Torah scholars were not, at this early period at least, tenured academics. They earned their living as artisans, physicians, scribes, tradesmen, ^{and} bailiffs, etc. To have accepted pay for obeying God's will would have been to prostitute their love of God and of His Torah. The Tannaim were not philosopher kings, but working folk who knew that God required study, worship and good deeds. The more pretentious may have encouraged ~~myths of the sage as a holy man whom ordinary~~ ^{THE INSTINCTIVE AWE OF THE UNLETTERED FOR THE SAGE} ~~men should treat with reverence and respect because the world somehow~~ ^{CONTRIVELY THEY SPUN MYTHS WHICH TOLD HOW} depended on their learning. But other sages circulated the legend of the unknown righteous, thirty-six simple folk, who are the guarantors of the existence of each generation. Early in the second century Rabbi Joshua forceably reminded his fellow scholars of their limitations: ^{and dependence on God}

"When the Temple was destroyed, the sages began to be like school teachers, and the school teachers like synagogue servants, and the synagogue servants like people of the land, and the people of the land waxed feeble and there was none to seek and none to supplicate. On whom can we stay ourselves? On our Father in heaven."²³ There was no getting around the fact that the discipline of Talmud Torah required literacy, and that something of a scholar's cult was developing. However, the consecration of learning had one democratic ^{CONSEQUENCE} ~~result~~. By the middle of the second century the Jewish communities of Palestine had organized a relatively effective program of universal male elementary education, ~~in order to obey the edict of Deuteronomy 6:5: "Impress them [these teachings] upon your children."~~ "He has spurned the word of the Lord" (Num. 15:31) was taken to refer to one who studies

Torah, but does not teach it to others. Obedient always, the sages ^{set} went out to "Impress Them [Their Teachings] upon your children" (Num. 15: 31) and ~~out and established the world's first system of mandatory education and~~ popularized the Torah by preaching at engagements, weddings, ^{and} funerals, and on the Sabbath. Where ^{as} other intellectual castes sought to build high walls around their class, the sages tried to turn every ^{boy and} man ~~in~~ ^{into} into a scholar.

The Tannaim worked diligently and long to make their life ^{and values} style universal among Jews. There ^{was} ~~were~~ to be no ^{special class of the} divisions ~~between~~ religious ~~and laity~~. " ' You shall faithfully observe all the instruction': Lest you say these teachings are solely for the scholars or the elite or the prophets. Scripture says 'you shall . . . ' to make it clear that all are equal in their duty before the law."²⁴ It would, nevertheless, be incorrect to say that the ~~Tannaitic~~ ^{of sages} community was a democratic and open society. ^{Learning is a matter of talent} Genealogy ^{remained} ~~was~~ a vital subject. Jews were accustomed to the prerogatives of blood. Yohanan's successor, Gamaliel II, a grandson of the most famous of all the scholar-jurists, Hillel; ^{who} ~~he~~ could also claim to be scion of a collateral line descended from King David, was empowered by Rome with the title of Patriarch, and such was the thrust of blood and lineage that his heirs would hold this authority without contest for ten generations.

After the fall the Romans allowed Yohanan ben Zakkai, who was not of priestly nor Davidic descent and, therefore, not a political threat, to set up an advanced Torah school at Yavneh near modern Ashdod. Other Torah scholars joined him there, and this group formed itself into a scholar's court or bet din which could provide overall direction to Jewish life. Though at first the scholars and their courts had no criminal jurisdiction and could not even levy fines in civil cases without Roman authorization, they considered their council successor to the Sanhedrin and capable of dealing with all issues arising out of the Torah law and they rendered decisions in terms of that

law's justification lay in its divinity rather than its humanity.

Such adjustment of the law ^{To life} required professional mastery of law and the intellectual effort required in mastering Torah must have been prodigious. ~~Defeat and flight often took scholars to places where various scrolls were not available.~~ Scholars had to memorize the basic texts and, generally, not only the Torah but the proper exegesis by which a law was derived from a Torah text and, of course, the oral tradition. ^{THE ORAL LAW WAS JUST THAT - A VAST DEPOSIT OF MATERIAL WHICH EXISTED ONLY IN THE MOUTH OF THE SCHOLARS} The presence of many mnemonics ~~in the surviving material~~ ^{AND ACRONYMS IN THE} ~~texts which subsequently emerged~~ points to such intellectual pressures. The sparse, discrete style of these ~~most texts made them easy to memorize, but~~ ^{WAS AN AID TO MEMORIZATION, BUT INCREASED THE} difficulty to interpret and today their gnarled style discourages any but the most determined. In their work the Tannaim produced ~~a non-literature.~~ ^{THE TANNAIM WERE NOT HELD TO} In fact, there was little writing in the schools. ~~There was an oral tradition complete with all manner of taboos against publishing and~~ ^{AND THE FIRST LAW BOOKS PUBLISHED THEY APPEAR AS THE} When these taboos were broken scholars ~~were more likely to add commentary to the pages of a legal digest than to write their own book.~~ ^{LATER RABBI'S RARELY TREATED SUCH} Compilations of halachic exegesis ~~were rarely treated as completed works.~~ Each generation added paragraphs, ^{CITATIONS} ~~chapters,~~ even extended sections, and no one was loathe to amend or correct a text if he believed he had a better recension.

Glancing at the writings of the Tannaim, one would hardly suspect that their first order of business had been to bring coherence into Jewish life. The age of variety had tolerated laxity in standards ^{AND} confusion in ^{PRACTICE} ~~ritual~~ as well as in theology, and ended in convulsion. ^{IN SOME MEASURE} ~~Galut was punishment for these sins.~~ The sages were certain that there was a right way, a clear way, a clearly described way, the Torah way. The episodic quality of this literature must not mask for us its steady purpose. Through teaching, regimen, and private example the scholar-jurists sought to weave their ^{clearly defined} way and their ^{clear} understanding of the Torah into the pattern of a community's life.

thicket of reeds. What did a clever man do? He cut a path and entered, cut some more and penetrated further. In time he entered the clearing and all began to enter by following his path. "12

The rabbis dealt with sacred, ^a ~~not sociological knowledge~~ ^{NOT a humanist legal system}. The Torah included ^{socially} ~~patently~~ necessary ^{AND INTENTLY} or beneficial laws ^{SUCH AS THOSE} prohibiting murder, adultery, ^{and} incest, but these rules had no greater claim on man than ^{commandments} ~~these~~ which to a modern seem antique, if not superstitious, and ^{functional} defy explanation, e. g., the prohibition of mixing fibers in a garment. Each had its purpose; The Talmud did not exaggerate one class of laws and demean another, ^{but} a full obedience to God's will was required.

As Torah scholars, their ^{rabbis'} primary aim ^{RATHER THAN ORGANIZE} ~~was not to create clear~~ ethical categories ^{which could be defended philosophically} ~~for effective philosophical conversation~~ ^{was} but to clear up remaining uncertainties about the specifics of God's rules and legislation and to understand ^{their} application to specific situations. The Torah is a discrete and limited set of instructions from which the Amoraim set out to establish ~~and~~ all-embracing Godly style of life. In their language, mitzvah, commandment, ~~the~~ covered the category we call good deed. ~~He who observed the mitzvah offered himself of a portion in the world to come. He who studied the Torah text might gain for himself a foretaste of the world to come.~~

Antinomian children of antinomian age, we imagine that an all-encompassing law must be suffocating. We may ^{or may not} be right, we may not. In our rapidly changing world, law is often identified with repression. ^{IN THEIR RATHER UNCHANGING WORLD} To the rabbis law meant redemption. The rabbis welcomed the law as the kindest gift of a kind God; without it life would be hapless and hopeless. Torah gave direction through ^{every day} ~~the~~ confusions of ^{TO RABBI PROVIDED} ~~every day~~ encouragement which was proof against ^{UNAVOIDABLE} ~~every day's~~ practical anxieties. By patterning one's life according to the law one gave it mean-

Insertion correct?
Could you clarify further?

418

Here the common factor is monetary compensation. ^{IN SHORT THERE WAS A} ~~The rabbis~~ ^{at the same time} rabbinic Bible which was the same as ours and quite different, ^{They were less aware of Geography and} ~~less historical and far more suggestive.~~

^{Chasidim and much more aware of legal consequences} ~~There was no biblical criticism and a great deal of biblical commentary.~~ Each

sentence, each phrase, each juxtaposition was significant, holy, requiring ex-

planation. A half-sentence in Daniel (6:11b) reads that after the king had signed

an edict requiring emperor worship ^{OF ALL EMPERORS} Daniel "went into his house - now the windows

were open in his upper chamber toward Jerusalem - and he kneeled upon his

knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did

aforetime." The modern reader discovers here a simple description of a pious

man in an hour of trial. The rabbis found ~~here~~ a rather complete liturgical

rule and the rule is venerable, "as he did aforetime." There are to be three daily

services and they are to be held at separate times. In prayer one should face

Jerusalem, kneel and couple petition with praise. ¹⁸

In the schools the rabbinic consensus ^{might} ~~could~~ become determinative even against the clear biblical intent. Biblical law had ordered the remission of all

debts every sabbatical year. Hillel, as we have seen, had counteracted the ef-

fect of this rule with a legal fiction. No one had any doubts as to the purely ec-

onomic purpose of Hillel's takkanah. The most famous scholar of the first gen-

eration of Amoraim, Samuel, said: "If I am ever in a position to abolish it

(Hillel's ruling), I will abolish it." ¹⁹ He never did, though he well knew that he

could set the Bible's explicit ^{STATEMENT} ~~requirement~~ against Hillel's innovation. The rab-

binic consensus was determinative and the rule was that the authorities of one

Both ideas

AND

ESSENTIAL

STET

Life Teaches us That

Rivalry, passion, and appetite, all that comprises the yetzer ha-ra, cannot be completely suppressed; indeed, these drives have a rightful place in our lives, since they provide the energy, presumably through sublimation, which builds cities and leads men to accept the restrictions, burdens, and duties of marriage and family. Rabbinic thought does not despair of life or of man. The physical is not necessarily evil.

✓ The Law is Torat Hayyim, a law of life, for this life. ~~None of the~~ Torah laws ^{does not} enjoin a regimen of celibacy or ascetic denial. The rabbinic Jew ^{was not conditioned to} ~~never~~ cursed the human condition or became so morose or apprehensive that he ^{despised} ~~loathed~~ life ^{and devoted himself to a search for Nirvana.} Some sages ^{undertook} ~~were tempted by~~ minor forms of ascetic discipline, but none, as far as we know, ^{courted} by self-mortification. Suicide was a sin, and so were unnecessary acts of fasting and denial.⁴ Marriage was a duty, as were many joys: "Rejoicing on a festival is a mitzvah."⁵ Life was a gift of God, who had pronounced it very good; but, obviously, the yetzer ha-tov must become dominant. How could this come about?

The rabbis ^{assumed that} ~~accepted the inevitability of an unmitting tension between duty and desire.~~ Life was a strenuous testing ground in which the wish to obey God struggled with indulgence and appetite. They spoke of the yoke of the commandments, ^{here} a yoke symbolized patient submission; ^{and acknowledged} that young ox ^{is not easily trained to} ~~the yoke of obedience.~~ ^{accept the halter} They did not press the ox/yoke analogy too far, for man was not an animal, but they asked the question, ^{this question} what can induce man to accept the yoke of the commandments; and answered ^{simply:} The fear and love of God. Only the man who trembles in love and fear before God will ^{obey} ~~submit~~ quietly and happily ^{the commands of his Master} ~~harnessed to the yoke of obedience.~~

A life of obedience depends on a submission of will, and no man gives up ^{worldly} ~~his~~ pleasures unless he is clearly aware how much depends on his acceptance. What is at stake? No less than ^{his salvation, his life} ~~God's pleasure in~~ ^{here and the renewal of life beyond the grave} ~~this world and in the next.~~ Even with so much at stake submission did

not come easily. Man is a restless creature of many appetites, but the rabbis suggest that an hour or two of Torah lessons, like a cold shower, ^{can help} ~~will~~ put out the raging fires. "Let a man pit his good yetzer against his yetzer ha-ra; if the good yetzer wins, well and good; if not, let him engage in the study of Torah." ⁶ The benefit lay not so much in the lesson as in what was learnt. ^{ed} He who studies Torah clarifies his ~~A clear~~ sense of the will of God ^{and begins to} removed the clog of doubt and confusion which normally block the channels through which man's vital energy needs to flow. Doubt paralyzes the spirit; Torah study dispels doubt.

The rabbis did not wax ecstatic about man as a noble ^{AND would not have described him} primitive whose natural goodness is distorted by a vicious social order. They accepted man's complex nature ^{AS INHERENT, AND THEY BELIEVED IN} and the necessity of ~~various~~ social and legal restraints. ^{TO CURB EXCESS AND SELFISHNESS} The rabbis ^{were} ~~believed~~ in law and order. Without government, men would eat each other up alive. Since, to ^{the rabbis} them, law and order meant Torah Law and order, justice was an implied category of authority. A Torah-governed community would restrain the powerful from abusing the weak and create an environment in which men would appreciate the justice of God's law and abide it willingly. No one should settle in a community without good laws and effective government. Leviticus 26:37, "They shall stumble over one another" suggested to them the existence of a domino theory involving sin; one man's sin tends to open the door for his neighbor's crime. ^{surprised} The steady rise of modern urban crime would not have ~~surprised~~ them. Conversely, a community ^{UNDER STRICT TORAH ENFORCEMENT} of the faithful restricts the opportunity of its weaker members to fall from grace. Those in authority were called guardians of the city, shepherds. The question of how Israel ought to live so as to be assured of God's approval was given a tripartate answer. "Accept the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, subdue each other in the fear of Heaven"

To recite the Shema publicly was a required commitment whose value was His people. ~~So that tradition emphasized the duty which is implicit in~~
~~emphasized by a scribal tradition~~
~~the Shema~~ In writing a Torah scroll the last letter of the first

word, Shema, "hear," an ayin, and the last letter of the last word, Ehad, "One," a daled, are written large to suggest another word, Ed, which means witness. By professing the Shema a worshipper witnesses to Israel's faith in the one and only God.

Already in biblical times the Shema had developed ^{from} a single rubric ^{into} a selection of three Torah readings (Deut. 6:4-9; Deut. 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41). These portions ^{explain what it means to} ~~emphasize that God is to be~~ loved and ^{obey God and the rewards of love and obedience} ~~faith evidenced in obedience~~. To love God with "all your heart" is to ^{open} ~~turn~~ your ~~whole~~ spirit toward God, to love God with "all your soul" is to love God more than anything else in life, indeed, if necessary more than life itself. To love God with "all your might" is to devote all your substance to God's service. ^{As} ~~When~~ one recited Deut. 6:4-9, according to the rabbis, ^{ONE} ~~it was an act of acceptance~~ ^{ed voluntarily} of the yoke of the Kingdom of God, citizenship in God's community, ~~whose laws are~~ ^{the Torah's} ~~the Torah commandments~~.

~~According to rabbinic understanding, in the subsequent~~
~~paragraphs of the daily liturgy, the worshipper accepts~~ ^{deal with duty and to speak them with} ~~the yoke of~~ ^{to a second yoke,} ~~The~~
~~God's~~ commandments, the specific obligations and ~~duties~~ of citizenship in the ~~spiritual~~ kingdom of God, ~~an undertaking which was publicly con-~~
~~firmed by placing these paragraphs in a mezuzah, "on the doorposts of~~
~~your house and your gates," and in phylacteries, tefillin "a sign on~~
~~your hand . . . and a symbol on your forehead" (Deut. 11:11-20).~~ ^N One
 should obey God with pride, joyously, openly, and engage in the primary
 obligation of group survival which is to indoctrinate the next genera-
 tion to understand, to accept and to obey.

^{As the Shema is a clear statement of the commandments}
 Those who bear the yoke can confidently expect God's pro-
 tection. Reward is certain for an obedient people. "If, then, you

will obey the commandments . . . I will grant the rain of your land in season" (Deut. 11:13-14). Rain, so precious ^{to these people} in that world, was a ^{symbol of many} ~~code term~~ ^{a code name for} blessing in this world and resurrection in the world to come. ^{A CAUTION is coupled to this promise} ~~Here is the promise~~ and a caution. "Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods . . . for the Lord's anger will flare up against you and He will shut up the skies" (Deut. 11:16-17). ^{Finally} ~~The whole~~ ^{promise} ~~and the walking are concluded and~~ ^{you once} ~~undertaking is confirmed~~ by the God who had brought you out of the land of Egypt and is ever ready to deliver again.

During rabbinic times ^{these} the biblical paragraphs ~~of the~~ ^{which compare} ~~Shema~~ were provided with a liturgical commentary which underscored Israel's special relationship with God: God is "our sheltering rock, our protective fortress," "who chose Israel in love," "shield of our salvation." God's love and protection are wondrous and unmerited. We might have stumbled through life, but you offered us the laws of life; truths established and enduring, right and faithful, beloved and precious, desirable and pleasant, revered and mighty, well ordered and acceptable, good and beautiful." ²⁵ ~~For Israel~~ ^{God's covenant} ~~Shema~~ meant certainty, the obligation of obedience, an end to confusion, the promise of salvation; ~~and the Shema taught and expressed all the basic themes~~

The Shema is a liturgical creation, and, therefore, also a statement of need. What is needed? Determination: "The will to study your Torah, to keep its words and to teach its precepts." Insight: "Enlighten our eyes in your Torah," "open our hearts to your commandments." Quietness of spirit: "Trust in God," trust in God's justice and the ultimate fulfillment of His promise. Trust (bittahon) implies patient but confident waiting. For the man of trust Torah is life giving, in this world and in the next. Bittahon meant that as God had redeemed us from Egypt, "so does He now." The Exodus was history and paradigm; a

by their generation to establish primacy and, therefore, pre-eminence; explanations of mnemonic devices and acronyms which appear in the text; shorthand rules indicating which Talmudic master was authoritative on a particular issue; and comprehensive line-by-line commentaries on the books of ^{the} Mishnah and the treatises of the Gemara.

Another line of effort was directed toward editing summaries of complex Talmudic discussions to highlight the operative rulings. An early Gaon, Yehudah ben Napman (eighth century) prepared such a list of effective law, the Halachot Pesukot ("legal decisions"), by simply copying out from the Gemara the law without the surrounding discussion. Three-quarters of a century later a Persian scholar, Simon Kayyara, compiled a somewhat larger code-like anthology, Halachot Gedolot ("the substantial laws"), and the literature includes mention of other similar compilations. ^{They were wrestling with the problem of} ~~An appropriate table of contents be-~~
^{preparing a functional index of the laws} ~~came a major stumbling block.~~ The Mishnah was ^{arranged} organized according to academic conventions rather than as a working jurist's reference book; there was need for a ^{which was better organized for} ~~clearer~~ system of ready reference, particularly for those who had not studied in the academies. A Persian scholar, Hefetz ben Yatzliah, broke new ground in his Book of Precepts by assembling the ^{various} laws under the particular biblical commandment from which ^{they were traditionally} ~~it presumably~~ derived. But this structure, too, was ^{not only both} ~~somewhat~~ artificial. ^{and cumbersome} Scholars were reaching for a functional system and order, but the pressures of tradition and curriculum were hard to shake. It would be another hundred years before Maimonides would publish ^{the first} ~~a~~ purely topical organization of the law.

Such codes as The Book of Precepts were intended for a new type of community leader. The spread of Jewish life in the ^{many} burgeoning cities ^{of the muslim empire and} ~~together with~~ the restriction of ^{advanced} Talmudic training to two major

INSERT
FROM
YES

For 468 centuries
which had gone unchallenged

Ability To handle and ✓
control Talmudic Law

schools undoubtedly reduced the percentage of trained scholars in the population. ^{In these cities a new class of} ~~Many~~ business and civil leaders knew only a smattering of Talmud. They were literate in Arabic but not in Hebrew or in Aramaic, which was no longer the common vernacular. ^{Hefetz's most radical innovation was to edit his code} ~~Hefetz wrote~~ in Arabic, the language commonly understood, which is to say that for many the Gemara had become a book in an alien tongue. ^{He necessarily bent main efforts to maintain the communities} ~~Hefetz chose to ar-~~range the oral traditions under the various biblical laws in order to emphasize the oral law's authenticity. ^{A cardinal assumption of Law, not Judaism} ~~By his time there were the~~ Karaite sectarians, ^{new} ~~who relentlessly~~ claimed that the rabbis had substituted the ^{Talmud} ~~Bible~~ for the ^{Bible} ~~Talmud~~, man-made law for God's law. What better way of underscoring the oral law's credentials than to ST ~~place~~ it all under one or another biblical commandment?

A rabbinic tradition counted ^{six hundred and thirteen} 613 commands in the Torah and taught that all rabbinic law derived from these rules save those extraordinary or emergency takkanot which various courts had introduced. That same tradition broke down these 613 into 365 "you shall not" (equivalent to the days of the year) and ^{three hundred and sixty-five} 248 "you shall" (assumed to be the number of bones and muscles in the body), leading to the obvious sermon conclusion that the Torah law is to be observed every day of the year with every energy a man possesses. The problem here is that because the biblical text is unsystematic and repetitive, there was no agreement on the list of ³⁶⁵ 613 Torah laws, much less the ²⁴⁸ 365 "you shall not" and 248 "you shall". A long-lived, rather precious, academic debate developed among proponents of various lists. Minor poet-scholars waged hymnic war over which list was the proper one, each enshrining his selection in a piyyut or liturgical poem for the Shavuot festival which celebrates the giving of the law at Sinai. Long lists of rabbinic rules make awkward poetry, but these songs drove home the rabbinic insistence that the Talmud had only drawn out the

^{The early centuries of Karaitism,}

various Shiite groups rejected the Sunna or oral tradition and based their way of life on the Koran as interpreted for them by a trusted imam or teacher.

^{Other} ~~These~~ Karaites ~~who~~ came from the scholar class ^{and} had received a traditional Talmudic education; they probably had some economic or personal argument with the Establishment and found it comforting to raise a private quarrel into a public cause against a distant and wealthy Exilarch ~~who was~~ (the fourth official in rank, according to court protocol) and against a Gaonic administration which was often high-handed and demanding, ^{was} and ^{personal} guaranteed exemption from the otherwise universal poll tax.

By the tenth century Karaism could claim the allegiance of some extremely competent Talmudists. Jacob Al-Kirkisani and Japeth ben Ali ha-Levi were so well versed in the Gemara that Karaite historians ~~boasted~~ ^{insisted} that their scholarship was unrivaled. Such claims were exaggerated, but such of Kirkisani's work as survives reveals a first-rate mind, well trained in rabbinic ^s as well as other branches of learning.

Karaite biblicism necessarily led them to affirm "reason." ^{on} ^{ation of} The conventional ^{among Muslims and Jews suggested} definition of "reason" ^{in this cultural world was} the rejection of any literal ^{implications in the various} interpretation of the anthropomorphic descriptions of God in Scripture. ^{of both faiths} Islamic Scholastics found similar descriptions in the Koran equally unacceptable, ^{ed} deeming it unreasonable that a revelation which taught the oneness and spiritual nature of God could have intended such phrases in any but an allegorical or metaphoric sense.

^{But there was more to} ~~In this environment~~ reason ~~meant more~~ than the rejection of biblical anthropomorphisms. ^{Reason denoted} ~~It required~~ a scholastic interpretation of scripture, using the categories and definitions which were the legacy of Greek philosophy to this Arab world, so that Torah ^{or Koran} yielded a coherent philosophic system. It is in this sense that Kirkisani called his colleagues "the disciples of pure wisdom" ^{and for such an end that he} ~~and himself~~, set out to draw

lexicography, which not incidentally contained the rules of Hebrew poetry, and The Book on Language, the first critical biblical grammar to be written in Hebrew. Saadiah possessed a well-organized analytic mind. His biblical commentaries are models of careful organization and clear analysis. Karaism had made everyone conscious of the text's literal meaning and Saadiah generally avoided derash, homiletic commentary, for a scholarly search for the text's exact meaning. Saadiah obviously ~~could not accept the same exegetical logic as the Rabbis.~~ ^{Only} In cases where a literal reading might mislead or suggest a non-traditional interpretation, ^{did} and in such cases only, he offered a figurative or metaphorical explanation, but always on the authority of accredited rabbinic commentators.

In this Scripturalist age there were a very few free thinkers. ^{AND} a certain Persian Jew, Hiwi Al Balchi, ~~also~~ published some two hundred sheelot (questions) which were in reality not questions at all, but references to contradictory Torah texts, or texts which ascribed unworthy or inexplicable actions to God. ~~How could the truth be inconsistent?~~ Hiwi popularized the very questions which would be raised with such delight and pleasure in their inventiveness by Voltaire and his friends at the beginning of the Enlightenment. How could God not know where Adam had hidden himself in the garden? What kind of God would harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he would refuse exit permits to the children of Israel? God's law requires the death penalty for murder, yet, God did not kill Cain. It could be said that God is susceptible to a bribe. ~~How so?~~ In Genesis 12 God promised Abraham and Sarah a son after His messengers had eaten a full and, incidentally, non-kosher meal at which both milk and meat had been served them by Abraham. To an orthodox sage like Saadiah, Hiwi's list ^{REINFORCED} ~~proved~~ the importance of an ^{AND UNBROKEN} ~~inspired~~ tradition of interpretation. As Saadiah saw it, ^{sheer} literalism in

OF ACCEPTING THE RABBINICAL NOTION

was not only sheer folly, but unworthy of so profound a text. biblical exegesis forced the reader into precisely such absurdities. NOT content to make his points in books most Jews might never read Saadiah not only explained each confusing text, but capsuled his explanations in piyyutim so that, through liturgical repetition, the people might ^{learn} know by heart the time-honored ^{rabbinic} ~~explanations~~ explanations of these texts and recognize that the Bible is consistent and true throughout.

Saadiah was no enemy of reason. He was a scholastic, ^{who} He believed that reason and revelation were the obverse and reverse of a single coin, complementary rather than conflicting statements of the truth. His preface to the translation of the Torah concludes with disarming confidence. "This is a simple, explanatory translation written with an eye to reason [aql] and tradition [naql]." If the men of reason can be described as those who were confident that the doctrines of faith can be logically systematized and argued, then Saadiah was of that breed. ^{Insert from 416} Indeed, Saadiah's devotion to reason seems daring when it is placed beside that of his Muslim contemporary, Al-Ashari, the founder of what was to be the dominant scholastic school in orthodox Islam. Al-Ashari argued that one must accept the Koran's phrases without knowing how they are to be interpreted. Saadiah was not so passive. He rejected this appeal to mystery. If the common sense interpretation of a text seemed to violate reason, he argued that a figurative interpretation was obviously acceptable. His example is instructive. (Deut. 4:24) "For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God." "Fire," he explains, "is something created and defective, for it is subject to extinction. Hence it is logically inadmissible that God resemble it. We must, therefore, impute to this statement the meaning that God's punishment is like a consuming fire." ¹¹ In interpreting

such ^{"fine"} ~~attributions~~ expressions metaphorically, Saadiah ^{certainly} did not believe ^{that} he was subordinating reason to revelation. ~~Rather~~ ^{He} was being true to Torah, which teaches that God is beyond representation and incorporeal. Saadiah's use of reason must be seen against its time and as a technique for assimilating the patently useful ideas of the Greek inheritance to a fully accepted redemptive religious tradition.

Saadiah's Tafsir, which is both a biblical translation and popular commentary, ^{helped to make} ~~went to great lengths to make~~ scripture intelligible and intellectually acceptable to an Arabic-speaking community, and to ^{establish} ~~make clear~~ the legitimacy of the rabbinic understanding of biblical law. All anthropomorphic phrases were blunted; all actions which seemed anomalous to God were circumlocuted. Most important, the Tafsir was readable and immensely popular. Through it, ^{could} Jews who did not ^{understand} know Hebrew knew their Bible and learned that reason and revelation are one.

Saadiah was first and foremost a Talmudist. He wrote a methodological introduction to the Talmud and a systematic commentary on the hermeneutic rules, as well as extended digests on the law in such areas as inheritance, testimony and deeds, sales and gifts, ^{and} pledges and the like. These monographs were models of clear organization. Each has a careful introduction defining its area of law, and then numbered sections and paragraphs outlining details and Talmudic proofs. Saadiah, of course, represented the Talmudic tradition as enforced by the Babylonian academies. Though for centuries effective rabbinic power had been centered in Babylon, various Palestinian schools ^{had kept} ~~tried to keep~~ alive the ^{old Talmudic} ~~prerogatives and traditional~~ primacy ^{of} ~~once invested~~ in the schools of the Promised Land. By Saadiah's day ^{Baghdad was no longer the undisputed center of power and} ~~power had begun to move away from~~ Baghdad, and in his day a Palestinian schoolman, Aaron ben Meir, tried to reassert the long-dormant authority of the Palestinian scholars to

God participates in the Exile, cries over Israel's anguish, bends down to hear prayer, rejoices with a bride at her wedding, puts on tefillin and joins in public prayer. The midrash ^{and} innocently and happily speaks of God as father, friend, shepherd, lover, ^{and} avenger. One episode may picture God as guardian protecting Israel, another as sage teaching Torah, still another as shepherd shielding his flock; but a warning will be inserted, kiveyachol, as if one could say, ^{For a fact God is neither sage nor shepherd and} these are not several Gods, but one. ^{and} "The God of the Exodus is the same God as the God of Sinai." In midrash formal theology was subordinated to communication, the God idea to God, the perception of the folk to the formal conceptions of theologians.

In this rabbinic world there was quite a heavenly mob of angels of various grades and functions who sang God's praises and did His will, but in prayer only God was to be invoked. ~~Even in their praises~~ ^{Wait for man to complete his prayers before they could offer theirs} The angels had to ~~accept a role subordinate to man's~~. Commenting on ~~a rabbinic understanding of~~ a verse in Ezekiel, "Then a spirit lifted me up and I heard behind me ~~then~~ a fierce rushing sound: 'Blessed be the glory of God from His place'" (Ez. 3:12), R. Samuel gave "behind me" (aharei) its other possible translation, "after me" (shere). After man has praised God, then the angels respond with the voice of a great rushing. Folklore considers angels a higher form than men; midrash emphasized man's worth. Angels are good by nature, they are above temptation; while man must struggle with himself to do the right. Israel never lost the pride of being human.

There is a special relation between man and God, and another special relation between God and Israel. "Whoever hates Israel is as one who hates God, whoever helps Israel is as one who helps God." I Chronicles 17:21 was mistranslated, "And who is like your people Israel, a nation that is one [singular] in the earth." Deuteronomy 14:2,

His people ^{TO} recite the Shema publically was a required ^{ACT OF} commitment whose value was ^{REINFORCED} ~~emphasized~~ by scribal tradition. In writing a Torah scroll the last letter of the first word, Shema, "hear," an ayin, and the last letter of the last word, Ehad, "One," a daled, are written large to suggest another word, Ed, which means witness. By professing the Shema a worshiper witnesses to ^{his} ~~his~~ faith in the one and only God.

~~Already in biblical times~~ ^{THE} Shema ~~had~~ developed from a single rubric into a selection of three Torah readings (Deut. 6:4-9; Deut. 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41).

These portions explain what it means to love and obey God and the rewards of love and disobedience. To love God with "all your heart" is to open your spirit to God.

To love God with "all your soul" is to love God more than anything else in life, if necessary more than life itself. To love God with "all your might" is to devote ~~all~~ ^{He who loved God in these three ways had} your substance to God's service. ~~As one recited Deuteronomy 6:4-9, according to the rabbis, one~~ accepted ~~voluntarily~~ the yoke of the Kingdom of God, citizenship in God's community.

The subsequent paragraphs deal with duty and to speak them is to accept a second yoke, the yoke of the commandments, the specific obligations of citizenship in the kingdom of God. One should obey God ^{IN ALL THINGS} with pride, joyously, ~~equally~~ and engage in the primary obligation of group survival, which is to indoctrinate the next generation to understand, accept, and obey. Those who bear the yoke of the commandments can confidently expect God's protection. Reward is certain for an obedient people. "If, then, you

biblical exegesis ~~was~~ ^{led to} not only ~~sheer~~ ^{was profoundly} folly, but unworthy of so profound a text. Not content to make his points in books most Jews might never read Saadiah ~~not only explained each confusing text, but~~ ^{OF THE CONFUSING TEXTS} capsuled his explanations in piyyutim so that, through liturgical repetition, the people might learn by heart the time-honored rabbinic ~~explanations of these texts and recognize that the Bible is consistent and true throughout.~~ ^{UNDERSTANDINGS AND TRULY APPRECIATE THEIR TORAH}

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Indeed, Saadiah's devotion to reason seems daring when it is placed beside that of his Muslim contemporary, Al-Ashari, the founder of what was to be the dominant scholastic school in orthodox Islam. Al-Ashari argued that one must accept the Koran ~~without knowing how they are to be interpreted.~~ ^{CERTAIN PHRASES} ^{IN CASE OF DOUBT} Saadiah was not so passive. ~~He rejected this appeal to mystery.~~ If the common sense interpretation of a text seemed to violate reason, he argued that a figurative interpretation was obviously ^{intended} ~~acceptable~~. His example is instructive. "For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (Deut. 4:24). "Fire," he explains, "is something created and defective, for it is subject to extinction. Hence it is logically inadmissible that God resemble it. We must, therefore, impute to

IT WAS BETTER NOT TO HAZARD AN EXPLANATION

determine the calendar. The texts were on ben Meir's side, ²¹⁵ though custom was not. The Bible requires direct visual observation of the new moon, but for centuries the calendar had been set by computation in the Babylonian schools. Vigorously defending that practice, Saadiah still had sufficient clout to block Aaron's bid for power, ^{However} but he was the last of the self-confident representatives of Babylonian spiritual and legal hegemony who had established the primacy of the Babylonian Talmud ~~over Palestine law~~ and the decisions of the Babylonian Gaonate, ~~over all other academies~~.

~~He was also a child of a new age, a man of catholic interests and an original bent of mind. Bibliographers have identified some three hundred Hebrew and Arabic works by his hand, dealing not only with Talmud and Scripture, but with astronomy, poetic meters and rhymes, the proper organization of a prayer book, the rules of Hebrew grammar, and the art of poetry as well as piyyutim. Saadiah was anything but parochial. He was part of a world in which Talmudists read Plato in Arabic paraphrase and Al-Kindi in the original, asked about the purpose of religion as well as its practice, and discussed men's doubts as well as their duties.~~

Intellectual currents do not stop at religious dikes.

Arab theology ~~necessarily~~ had to confront, and quite early, the question of human freedom. The Koran's poetry suggested a doctrine of submission, which many interpreted to mean that man's fate was predestined.

The Mutezilites had challenged this emphasis on fate because another

Koranic doctrine, that of retribution, ^{LOGICALLY} required that man be free to obey or disobey, or else ~~God could hardly be considered just~~. ^{The rewards and punishments which the Koran promised were purely arbitrary and} The Mutezilites ^{were unable to establish a doctrine of human freedom as creed} ~~lost to~~ the dominant Asharite school, ^{which} held views close to determinism. ^{Conditioned by} Jewish scholastics defending covenant theology rejected

God's Justice
WAS BROUGHT INTO QUESTION

determinism, but the issue had been raised, and Judaism, which spoke of God as all-knowing and yet a righteous judge, had to review the whole issue of man's responsibility. The aggadah had proposed various formulations of free will which affirmed both that God is all-powerful and all-knowing and that man is, in respect to the mitzvot, free.

Such discrete Aggadic statements were no longer fully satisfying. The age credited only systematic thought, so theologians like Saadiah dealt systematically with the issue, achieving, one must say, little more than a reaffirmation of Akiva's antimony, "all is foreseen, but free-

dom is given."¹² Thus Saadiah: If men were predestined, God could have had no purpose in revealing the law. We must assume that all

God's actions are meaningful; therefore, man is free in relation to

obedience. Again, if man is not free, the existence of a system of re-

wards and punishments, the fact some will be resurrected and others

will not, would make ^{of} God ~~into~~ an arbitrary autocrat. He is not. He is a righteous judge. Saadiah even offered empirical evidence: "I find

that a human being feels conscious of his own ability either to speak

or to remain silent, or to take hold of things or to desist from them

while, at the same time, he is not conscious of the existence of any

other power that might at all prevent him from carrying out his will."¹³

Saadiah's arguments were not original, but duplicated Muslim Mutazilite views.

Saadiah was, of course, not a Mutazilite, but their ap-
proach and the structure of their argument inform his basic philosophy of Judaism. The Mutazilite scholastics were dialecticians who used logic and linguistic analysis to refute errors and establish acceptable doc-

trine. ^{However, they read the Koran with a mental set born of their scholastic education.} They were men who dealt with Islam, not with a universal phenomenon

called Religion. In determining religious truth, the Koran was their

ultimate proof, rather than religious experience. ^{However, the popular}

Saadia did not present a consistent intellectualist philosophy. Instead of fully developing a system of intellectual mysticism as so many neo-Platonist scholastics would do, he took a more traditional tack. He saw creation as a free act of God's grace and not an act of necessity. God proposed to bless his creatures by providing them an opportunity through obedience of His commandments to gain "complete happiness and perfect bliss"¹⁷ which is to say blessing in this world and life in the world to come. Saadia's proof? ^{w33} Psalm 16:11: "You will teach me the path of life. In Your presence is perfect joy; delights are ever in Your right hand."

Saadia set out to rationalize the law and did so by dividing the commandments between laws which can be sociologically or politically justified by ^{their manifest social utility since they} ~~such explanations as the protection of~~ life and property, ^{or} the enhancing ^{of} human dignity ~~and/or social utility~~ (mitzvot sichliyot) and rules which are beyond explanation but required by the revelation (mitzvot shimmiyot). As a man of reason Saadia did not leave matters here: "one cannot help noting, upon deeper reflection, that they (mitzvot shimmiyot) have some partial uses as well as a certain slight justification from the point of view of reason."¹⁸ The festivals provide relaxation from back-breaking labor and leisure for social intercourse. The laws of purity lead men to think of cleanliness and of the necessity of curbing passion and to recognize as holy those places like the sanctuary which he cannot ^{be} ^{red} enter while defiled. In all cases obedience to the laws witnesses to our submission to God.

The man of reason tries to explain even what he claims cannot be explained. The virtue of the commandments lies ultimately in their usefulness. ~~God did not issue any commandment for man simply to test his obedience. It is not a case of that we require this of~~ ^{God did not issue any commandment for man} man simply to test his obedience. The rationality of life is preserved. Man is

meanings, yet God is alive and active, has power and is wise. Saadiah believed in the God of history and prayed to a personal God, all the while philosophizing about the God who is pure being. The God of action, who is in tension with history and man, somehow blends into the God of pure being, who does not rush to man's side, but has man come to Him through awareness and understanding. Saadiah seems not to have been troubled by any sense of inconsistency; he was ^{supremely} ~~above all else~~ confident of his intellectual powers. God is pure being, hence, self-sufficient. God's self-sufficiency proves that all God does is good, hence wise. God acts in history, listens to prayers, ^{and} performs miracles. God had spoken at Sinai, (revelation is an objective phenomenon), the multitudes had heard and affirmed, and the leaders had preserved the revelation faithfully; all this is argument against Muslim, Gnostic, and Christian detractors who claimed that the Torah had been carelessly handled. Saadiah insisted there had been no forgeries or conscious deceptions, that the prophets were ^{neither} ~~never~~ befuddled or incapable of understanding what they heard. A child of a polemical age, he ^{was always ready} ~~could not let~~ ^{To cross swords with Christian or Muslim Apologists, The Faithful} ~~the inter-religious argument rest, depending on one's faith,~~ the believer insisted that Jesus or Mohammed had performed miracles. These miracles may have happened, ^{but even} ~~if~~ they had, they do not validate the ^{Christian or Muslim} ~~claims of that faith about~~ the authenticity of ^{their} teachings. "The reason for our believing in him [Moses], and in every other prophet, is the fact that he first called upon us to do what is proper . . . if we had felt that the appeal he made at the beginning was not proper, we would not have demanded any miracles from him, because miracles are of no account in supporting the unacceptable."¹⁹

Around his intellectualist ideas Saadiah wove the major part of his work, essentially a reasoned statement of the traditional rabbinic affirmations of God's activities. When he deals with God's unity he is

meanings, yet God is alive and active, has power and is wise. Saadiah believed in the God of history and prayed to a personal God, all the while philosophizing about the God who is pure being. The God of action, who is in tension with history and man, somehow blends into the ^{Active Intelligence} ~~God of pure being~~, who does not rush to man's side but has man come to Him through awareness and understanding. Saadiah seems not to have been troubled by any sense of inconsistency; ^{indeed,} he was supremely confident of his intellectual powers. God is pure being, hence, self-sufficient. God's self-sufficiency proves that all God does is good, hence wise. God acts in history, listens to prayers, and performs miracles. God had spoken at Sinai (revelation is an objective phenomenon), the multitudes had heard and affirmed, and the leaders had preserved the revelation faithfully; ^{These claims pressed vigorously} all ~~this is~~ argument against Muslim, Gnostic, and Christian detractors who ^{challenged} ~~claimed~~ that the Torah ^{Authenticity} ~~had been carefully handled~~. Saadiah insisted there had been no forgeries or conscious deceptions, that the prophets were neither befuddled nor incapable of understanding what they heard. Child of a polemical age, he was always ready to cross swords with ^{AND TO SET JUDAISM WISDOM ABOVE ALL OTHER RELIGIOUS CLAIMS} ~~Christian or Muslim apologues~~. The faithful believer insisted that ^{his} Jesus or Mhammed had performed miracles. ~~These~~ miracles may ^{Taken place} have happened, but ~~even~~ they do not validate the authenticity of Christian or Muslim teaching. "The reason for our believing in him (Moses), and in every other prophet, is the fact that he first called upon us to do what is proper. . . if we had felt that the appeal he made at the beginning was not proper, we would not have demanded any miracles from him, because miracles are of no account in supporting the unacceptable." 19 ✓

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different belief is possible, there is certainty. When you shall have cast off desires and habits, shall have been endowed with understanding, ~~and shall reflect on what I shall say in the following chapters, which shall treat of the negation of attributes,~~ you shall necessarily

achieve certain knowledge of it. Then you shall be one ^{represent To themselves the unity of the name and not one of those who} of those who merely proclaim it with their mouth without

representing to themselves that it has a meaning. With regard to men of this category, it is said: "Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins (Jer. 12:2).

But men ought rather to belong to the category of those who represent the truth to themselves and apprehend it, even if they do not utter it, as the virtuous are commanded to do - for they are told: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still (Ps. 4:5). ✓ 16

By making doctrine precise, Maimonides ^{simply drew out} ~~was only developing~~ the logical consequences of medieval scholasticism, but at the same time he was imposing a theological rigidity on Judaism which was alien to its ~~whole earlier~~ development. ~~Judaism had never had a catechism.~~ The rabbis had thought of theology as insight rather than systematics and had let their thoughts flash out from the comments and illustrations of the Midrash. When ~~various~~ medieval thinkers began to write extended philosophies of Judaism, they offered these as apologetics, not as creedal statements. By adding the Sefer-ha-Madda to his halachic code,

Maimonides had mastered the ocean of rabbinic literature and the sea of Greek wisdom as none before him. His mind sailed serenely over the restless, teeming waters, and his writings made many feel that they had nothing to fear from the deep. He believed implicitly in the Torah as incomparable and immutable, and that ^{"THE WORKS OF ARISTOTLE ARE THE ROOTS AND FOUNDATIONS OF ALL} ~~"Aristotle had arrived at the highest summit of knowledge to which man~~ ^{WORKS ON THE SUBJECT"} ~~can ascend, unless the emanation of the Divine Spirit be vouchsafed to him.~~ . . . and that his ^{own thought} ~~hard thinking~~ and careful demonstration had woven reason and revelation into a seamless unity, and many who read him agreed.

Maimonides' philosophic chef-d'oeuvre, The Guide of the Perplexed, which was to become the most significant text of rabbinic apologetics ever written, is a work best taken on its own terms as a syllabus or study guide to the meaning of scripture for those who have been exposed to the more advanced forms of philosophic speculation and who find their biblical faith challenged and unsettled by some of its assumptions. ~~"[This book's] purpose is to give indications to a religious man for whom the validity of our law has become established in his soul and has become actual in his belief, such a man being perfect in his religion and character, and having studied the sciences of the philosophers and come to know what they signify. The human intellect having drawn him on, . . . he must feel distressed by the externals of the law, . . . as he was made to understand them by others. Hence he would remain in a state of perplexity and confusion."~~

^{IT SHOULD BE READ} ~~The Guide may be seen~~ as a justification of faith for intellectuals ^{TURN TO} who ~~read~~ the Bible with minds conditioned by some of the ^{PREASSUMPTIONS} ~~categories~~ of Greek thought and who are led to ^{CONSEQUENTLY} question the validity of some of the Bible's apparent meanings. Philo and Christian commentary had gotten around this problem by treating the whole of Scripture allegorically. Maimonides eschewed allegory

because it eliminates the specific obligation of each biblical law by reducing the commandments to symbolic acts or techniques for gaining some supposedly higher spiritual or social end. ^{IN LINE WITH THE ROBBINIC TRADITION} Maimonides ~~avoided allegory and metaphor until the~~ ~~literal meaning of a text had been substantiated~~ ^{INSISTS THAT} Each mitzvah was an end in itself and its observance had an absolute value. But, if you insist on the Bible's literal meaning, what are you to do with its anthropomorphic vocabulary? Religious philosophy of the twelfth century insisted on the principle of Yihud, God's oneness, and was scandalized by language which spoke of a God who talks, walks, and changes His mind. ~~Of course~~ ^{THE TARGUMIM HAD AN ELABORATE SERIES OF} The Targumim and Commentaries had developed an extensive set of midrashic explanation and circumlocutions for these phrases; but to Maimonides' orderly mind these seemed to evade the ^{CENTRAL} issue of biblical meaning for they were based on subjective rather than objective criteria. [#] Most of Part I of the Guide is a systematic examination of all the biblical terms which are, or seem to be, anthropomorphic, suggesting in each case their "true" meaning based, not on metaphor nor on derash, but on the laws of language and meaning. His comments to Exodus 33:12-23 are typical and will serve to indicate his approach. In that chapter Moses asks God for a fuller revelation of His nature: "Let me know Your ways, that I may know You." "Let me behold Your presence." God refuses the immediate request, but allows Moses to sense His power. "You cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live. . . . See, there is a place near Me. Station yourself on the rock and, as my presence passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back; but My face

actions were inconstant. ~~He inevitably sinned.~~ Why? Because ^{such a man} he obeyed the law as an animal might its master. The law was not yet part of him, instinctive. Could it ever be? Maimonides believed man could become a living law, ^{and that he became so} ~~if he~~ ^{when he} ~~could~~ ^{so} understand the terms in which God's law was framed and learn to see reality as God saw it. When the mind perceives truly, which to Maimonides meant simply when ~~the mind sees~~ ^{it accepts} reality ^{to be what} as philosophy conceives it, the mind, ~~will~~ ^{inevitably} ~~instinctively lead man along straight paths for it~~ will naturally and ~~easily~~ make righteous and wise decisions.

Maimonides proposed in ~~one section of~~ his Commentary on the Mishnah a thirteen-plank catechism of basic truths which he offered, not as the fullness of wisdom, but as the beginning of wisdom, a first step designed to help men gain knowledge, overcome their blindness, and recognize the ideas they must think about. According to the philosopher, these thirteen articles of faith are:

- 1) the existence of a God, perfect and sufficient and the Creator of all that is;
- 2) God's incomparable unity; 3) God's incorporeality and freedom from all the accidents which occur to corporeal beings; 4) God's eternity; 5) God alone is to be worshipped, and no other; 6) the reality of historic prophecy; 7) the incomparability of Moses as prophet; 8) the revelation of the Torah through Moses; 9) the unalterability of that revelation which will never be superseded or abrogated; 10) God's omniscience and His knowledge of man's deeds and thoughts; 11) God's justice, for He rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked; 12) the ~~future~~ arrival of the Messiah when God determines his coming

appropriate; 13) the resurrection of the dead. His creed became part of the liturgy when Daniel ben Judah of Rome (13-14th cent.) transformed Maimonides' ideas into a hymn, the Yigdal, ^{which is} still sung ^{as part of} ~~each morning in~~ the daily worship.

Maimonides would readily agree that a creed carelessly recited was meaningless;

but he would have insisted that to understand ~~each statement~~ ^{these fundamental principles of the faith} was to ~~rediscover~~

understand

^{the} the nature of God, and ~~to know God~~ ^{to} know reality as opposed to appearances,

~~obviously the duty of the soul is to know reality as opposed to the world of appearances and to know how we can pattern our lives after the nature of reality rather than appearances. It is necessary to love God with a success which is the only way that he will be loved. In him all purposes have become self-purposes.~~

Know, thou who studieth this my Treatise, that belief is

not the notion that is uttered, but the notion that is

represented in the soul when it has been averred of it

that it is in fact just as it has been represented. If

you belong to those who are satisfied with expressing

in speech the opinions that are correct or that you deem

to be correct, without representing them to yourself

and believing them, and still less without seeking

certain knowledge regarding them, you take a very

easy road. In accordance with this, you will find many

stupid people holding to beliefs to which, in their

representation, they do not attach any meaning whatever.

If, however, you belong to those whose aspirations are

directed toward ascending to that high rank which is

the rank of speculation, and to gaining certain knowledge

with regard to God's being One by virtue of a true

WRHS



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