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MENDELSSOHN'S PHAEDON

AND ITS INFLUENCE

ON

REFORM JUDAISM.

Thesis submitted as part
requirement for graduation.

By ARIEL L. GOLDBURG.

1829

I N D E X

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A B R I E F I N T R O D U C T I O N .

It is impossible for a man to write a book without placing somewhere on its pages an indelible account of his own personality. It matters little what type of work it is, be it history or fiction, philosophy or poetry, one intertwines with every written word some part of his own dreams and aspirations, some spark of his dearest and truest hopes and ideals. Mendelssohn's Phaedon, though in part a translation of a similar subject by Plato, carries throughout a clear reflection of the courage and sincerity of the author. Beneath the philosophical language, beneath the long speeches of the principal characters, one can feel the heart beat and the fervor of a Jew, who is confident of the omnipotence of the one God, the universal God, Jahweh.

To appreciate the full significance of the Phaedon, it is necessary to look for a moment at the life history of Moses Mendelssohn. Such a short survey will help us to understand the book in the light of its time, and will aid us in finding many inspiring paragraphs that bespeak the splendid and upright character of the author.

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Moses Mendelssohn was born in Dessau in the year 1729. His father earned a meager livelihood through his vocation as scribe and teacher in his native city. It is probably from his father that Moses inherited his legible hand-writing, which was to aid him in earning his living when he first entered Berlin.

Moses was not gifted with a strong body, but from his earliest childhood he was favored with a remarkable aptitude for study. He was

fortunate too, in having sympathetic teachers who were able to help him develop his innate qualities. According to the custom of the time, his father taught him until he was able to enter a rabbinical school. His first teacher in Talmud was a Rabbi Hirsch, but shortly thereafter, the man who was to do so much to shape the career of Moses, came to Dessau as chief rabbi. He was the famous David Frankel. It was Frankel who gave Moses his first insight into philosophy when he allowed him to read the "Moreh Nebuchim" of Maimonides. This book made a lasting impression upon the studious lad, so that in later years he used to say in jest, "This Maimuni I have to thank for my stunted body; he alone is its cause. But I love him for all that, for the man has sweetened many a sad hour in my life, and hence has repaid me ten fold for what he has done to my bodily frame." Moses had paid the price for his over-diligence with a bent body. He was now a hunch-back.

When Moses was fourteen years old, he was made unhappy by the transfer of his beloved teacher Frankel from Dessau to Berlin. He gave his parents no rest until they consented to his plea that he might go to Berlin to continue his rabbinical studies. One day this ugly, anemic, stoop-shouldered lad set forth practically penniless on the perilous road to Berlin. He suffered untold privations until he reached the Rosenthaler Gate of Berlin. Here he would have been refused admittance, for the number of Jews were limited by law, had he not happily thought to mention the name of his former teacher, Rabbi Frankel. The Rabbi befriended him immediately, obtaining for him odd bits of work as a copyist. Yet the first few years in Berlin were years of struggle and poverty.

In Berlin, Mendelssohn continued his studies. He began to learn from some of his acquaintances French, Latin, Mathematics, English, German and so forth. A Polish Jew, Israel Samoscz, introduced him to philoso-

phy. Through his great diligence, Moses made rapid headway. From a Dr. Kisch, Moses learned Latin. It was here that he read a Latin edition of an English philosopher's celebrated work—John Lock's "Essay on the Human Understanding." Even then he showed his strong leanings toward philosophical studies. Another important friend and teacher was found in the person of Aaron Solomon, afterwards called Dr. Gumpertz. Gumpertz showed him how to study languages and guided him to the best authors. But he did more than teach Mendelssohn grammar and literature, he took him to a Conditorei, where he made him acquainted with a number of intelligent students. Later too, Gumpertz introduced him to that famous poet, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who was to become one of his dearest friends, and was to immortalize him in the character of Nathan in his famous play, "Nathan the Wise".

In 1750, Moses became a Tutor in the home of Isaac Bernhard, a wealthy silk manufacturer. Now his financial worries were over. Five years later he became Bernhard's book-keeper, then his representative, and finally his partner. He did not abandon his books, however, when he became interested in business. He studied Greek so that he could read Plato in the original. He wrote essays that were admired by cultured German thought, essays that were to become leaders in German style. In 1762, he married Fromet Guggenheim of Hamburg and in the same year, he won a prize offered by the Berlin Academy of Sciences, over the great philosopher Kant. In 1763, he became a "Schutz Jude" and moreover, was exempted by the Jewish community from paying Jewish taxes. It was in the year 1767 that Mendelssohn became famous through his Phaedon. He was acclaimed the German Socrates, and was hailed by Jew and Christian alike. Just as we often today see a Shakespearian Play in modern dress, so did the German people see a rejuvenated

Socrates, who was benefited by the Leibnitz-Wolffian metaphysics.

Though Mendelssohn was famous in German circles, he had not done anything yet for the Jews. It was not until the following incident occurred that Mendelssohn assumed his role as champion of his people. Lavater had translated into German a work by the eminent Swiss scientific writer, Bonnet, on the evidences of Christianity. Lavater dedicated this book to Mendelssohn, requiring him, however, either to refute it or to do what Socrates would have done, had he read the book and found it unanswerable. Mendelssohn replied with dignity and calmness. He points out that he still adheres to his own faith; that he had the conviction that the Jewish religion was the right one for him. Lavater was gentleman enough to apologize for his "silly action".

Mendelssohn had the idea that a good literal German translation of the Bible would do much toward teaching his co-religionists German culture. He combined with the translation a new brief commentary ~~in~~ written in Rashi script. His translation was enthusiastically greeted even by a number of old fashioned Rabbis, but a number of narrow-minded ones opposed it. Mendelssohn had to secure the influence of the Court of Denmark to keep the Rabbis from thundering against his translation. Between 1780-1783, the pentateuch was finished. The translation had a great effect in encouraging Jews in Germany to give up Yiddish. From one point of view it was a most conservative production, as there was no Biblical criticism; Mendelssohn insisting on the Rabbinical interpretation of the Bible.

Many other Jewish books were written by Mendelssohn. Perhaps the greatest of these was, "Jerusalem". Kant wrote to Mendelssohn concerning this, "I admire the sharpness, wisdom, and finesse of your remarks". This book too, was widely translated. Through his deistic ideas,

denied monotheism as being only Jewish. He said, that monotheism was demanded by natural religion. Ceremonial law is the link between law and life.

Both orthodox and reform Jews claim Mendelssohn for themselves. The orthodox could claim that he insisted on ceremonial laws. Reformers could point out that to be a Jew, one could believe like Mendelssohn, that he need not be restricted by dogmas. Modern reformers like Holdheim and Geiger attacked him for maintaining the unchangeableness of the ceremonial law. We should, however, judge him in the spirit of the time. He had to emphasize the ceremonial law. He strenuously objected to emancipation at the cost of Judaism. One cannot accuse him of duplicity.

Disciples, in the usual sense of the word, Mendelssohn had none. He had a circle of friends, among whom were, David Friedlander, Marcus Herz and Lazarus B. David. Mendelssohn would have discussion in his home on his rest days. There he would listen to arguments, lead them occasionally, but more often would act as a sort of referee. He was most charming when he was able to converse with his friends on any number of subjects. At the age of fifty-seven, he died. Rich and poor, Jew and Non-Jew, mourned the loss of a great thinker and a true friend.

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Mendelssohn never departed from the orthodox beliefs of his fathers. His main object was to explain religion along rational lines. We cannot expect to find in the Phaedon a radical departure from prevalent views, rather must we find those statements that will help to preserve Judaism. We can trace back to the Phaedon a higher conception of immortality that has been adopted almost universally by the writers of reform rituals.

The principal characters in the Phaedon are identical with those in Plato's Phaedo. They are Echecrates of Phlius, to whom Phaedon tells the story, Appollodorus, Simmias, Cebes, Crito and Socrates. The scene is in the Prison of Socrates at the time preceding his execution. Socrates sends his wife home because she was in tears. Then Socrates begins his arguments, immediately after his chains have been removed. He starts out by giving Plato's doctrine of the alternation of opposites. "My friends, said he, What a strange thing does that seem to be which men call agreeable!" "At first thought it seems to be the opposite of disagreeable, yet no person can feel either of these sensations by means of the senses without being immediately sensible of the other, as if they were joined at both ends together."² Socrates goes on to explain how Aesop would have written a fable about it. At this point Cebes interrupts him and asks him whether it is true that he has become a poet. Socrates explains why he wrote verse as a result of a dream: That he used Aesop's fables as a nucleus because they came first into his hand. Furthermore, Socrates said that he did not want to be considered a rival of Evenus, the poet.³ "If Evenus is wise," Said Socrates, "He will soon follow me." From this, Socrates makes the statement that a philosopher should not commit suicide, but he should die cheerfully. The question is then asked why we are not permitted to take our own lives, and yet we should be willing to die. Socrates answered, "I think if any person is going to travel, he ought to enquire well into the conditions of the country, which he is to visit, that he may form a just idea of it. "The theme for discussion is now brought forth through the question of Cebes, when he asks, "How do you prove that suicide is illicit?"

Socrates' answer covers every possible reason as shown by the following outline: ⁴

- (1) Suicide in every possible case is inadmissible.
- (A) Men are placed on the earth like sentinels, and must not quit their post until they are relieved. As faithful servants it is a sacred duty incumbent upon us to assist the views of our supreme disposer.
- (B) As God is our proprietor, and we are his property, can we doubt whether his providence watches over our welfare? Like a bonds-man should not a person feel sincere joy when he sees the wishes of his master fulfilled through his means.
- (2) When the uncreated work-master made the artificial structure of the human body, and implanted a rational soul in it, didn't he have a good design in doing so; otherwise, he would deny his own being- its self subsisting goodness, if he could associate an evil intention with his own works; what God can renounce his own nature?
- (3) The same God who constructed the body has furnished it with powers which strengthen and preserve it from too premature decay. This power was benevolently given.
- (4) We should not forcibly counter-act the views of the supreme being. (The view stated here is a typical Jewish attitude. The statement that philosophy is the most excellent music, as it teaches us to direct our thoughts and actions, so as to make them accord as perfectly as possible with the views of our master, is a clear Jewish expression.)
- (5) The powers of nature act as servants to the Deity and fulfill his commands.
- (6) There are augurs which announce the will of the Deity. e.g., "An express command has come to me to die this day."

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Cebes is convinced, but goes back to the view that every Philosopher must be willing to die. (Mendelsohn spent so much time here

in the preceding outline in his attempt to prove that suicide is wrong, be-cause at that particular period there were many young men, including Jews, who were swayed by a spirit of skepticism, and were taking their own lives by the score. Mendelsohn's statements here were of great value to that group of men and women who were beginning to lose faith in the benevolent providence of God. Cebes' raised the question, "Should not a prudent man regret to leave the service of a Superior being, who is his best and most benevolent protector. The wise man should be sad and the fool happy at the prospect of death." Simmias agrees with Cebes and calls attention to Socrates apparent unconcern of death. This gives Socrates a chance to speak about immortality.⁵

Socrates has hope that he is going to continue under the care of the same all-kind providence, and he is fairly certain that he will meet the spirits of the departed; that at death all is not over, but another and better life succeeds. Death is a separation of the soul from the body, so that they have no communion with each other. Whatever a man can dispense with, that, the wise do not want, e.g., voluptuous living, eating, drinking, and so forth. So that the Philosopher tries to make himself independent of everything that is superfluous to the body, so that he may be able to attend more constantly upon his soul. He keeps his mind free of the fetters, which sensual passions laid upon it, in order to wean the soul from communication with the body. (Solomon Maimon in his autobiography, described Mendelsohn as a man of strong passions, who learnt to keep them under control by long exercise in Stoical morality.)⁶ Doesn't the body interrupt the soul in her meditations, through impressions of external objects, such as things we see and hear. Mere simple sensations are not truths. What we hear and see is full of labyrinth and darkness. If the soul

depends upon the senses, she is deceived. How then, must the soul proceed if she is to arrive at the truth?

Socrates' answer is the following: Through exercise of the powers of reasoning and reflection do we arrive at the truth. But when is reflection most successful? At the time when we are lost to all corporeal feelings of our existence, and the senses are blind to all external objects; then the soul loses her intimacy with the body.⁷ Collected in herself she considers not the appearance of things to the senses, but their reality; not the impressions, but what the things truly are. To make the matter more clear the question is asked, "Is the all perfect excellence a mere idea of the mind without external existence? Or does it mean a being whose existence is real and independent of us?"⁸ Naturally the answer is given that it is the latter, a being real, unlimited and independent of us. The inseparable attributes of the all perfect being are supreme goodness and wisdom, which are also real. The question is asked, "Who has taught us to know this being?" We have never seen him with our eyes, nor have we heard, or felt him. Through external senses, we cannot form any conception of wisdom, goodness, beauty, perfection, and so forth. Yet who can explain how we come to those conceptions. Cebes gives the illustration taken from Philolaus, that the soul, acquires a knowledge of kindred spirits, by contemplating herself. Socrates is delighted with the information that Cebes has imparted, but raises the question of how the soul can conceive a being superior to herself; then in typical Socratic fashion he gives the answer;⁹

"She, the soul can in general very well conceive the possibility of a being endowed with qualities that she has not, that is, a being more perfect than herself. And she has only this glimpse of thought, this faint conception of the being of the highest

perfection. She cannot comprehend the nature of essence in its full extent, but she thinks of the truth, goodness, and the degree of perfection in her own being, separates it in thought from the defects with which it is mixed, and gains by this means an idea of a being who is all purity, truth, goodness, and perfection. In this pursuit of thought he must not only close his eyes and shut his ears, but banish from his mind all recollection of the pains or pleasures of the senses, and, if possible, forget his body entirely, that he may enter solitarily into himself, and contemplate the faculties of his soul and her operations."

The body with her gross appetites and desires is a hindrance to the soul. It prevents the soul, whenever it can, in her attempt to have free vision. The body is such an obstacle to the soul that Socrates says that he can look forward cheerfully to his journey because the chains of the body will be loosed. The true lover of wisdom has familiarized himself with death, so why should he fear when his time comes. But now Socrates goes into a long discussion about exchanging one thing for another; denying oneself pleasure in order to secure a greater pleasure, is not virtuous.¹⁰ "To exchange one pleasure, one pain or one fear, for another, just as we exchange a piece of gold for many pieces of silver, is far from being the true road to virtue. The only money, which has a true value, and for which we should give all the rest, is wisdom- by means of it, we can acquire all the other virtues, valor, sobriety, justice, and so forth. In general, wisdom is the source of all the virtues and gives us the command of our desires, aversions, and passion. True virtue is a

sanctification of manners, a purification of the heart, no exchange of passions. Justice, sobriety, intrepidity, wisdom, do not consist in the abandonment of one advice for another."

This now leads Socrates to the law of the alternation of opposites. This argument is started after Cebes and Simmias had declared their doubts about the foregoing, by declaring; "That the possibility that the soul after death can still think, that she can still have a will and reasoning faculties, is difficult to be comprehended. This, requires to be proved. Socrates said, "My friends, an inquiry after truth with a pure heart is the most becoming worship of the only Deity who can give us assistance in it. He now continues with a detailed discussion of the process of change- Life to Death. "A change is in general nothing else than the successive existence of the opposite determinations, which are possible to one thing. The great in nature becomes little by means of a gradual decrease, and the little becomes great by means of a gradual increase." There is an intermediate state in all these successive opposites, i.e., night follows day by means of evening twilight, but there is no sharp distinction of processes. While the intermediate state or passage may have no name, yet we know that it must take place. For every natural change three things are required: "

(1) A foregoing state of the thing which is to be changed.

(2) One which follows and is opposite to it.

(3) A passage or intermediate state.

The problem of change is also true in time. There is a discussion of the flux of time, whether it is continuous or ~~dispart~~. The idea of things is continuous; the expression may be perceived by our limited senses as ~~dispart~~, e.g., "Cebes" - Ce-bes. The small-

est portion of time, even, is such a series of moments, and may be subdivided into still smaller portions, which still preserve the same properties of time. There cannot be, therefore, two states so near each other, between which there cannot be conceived a third. And what is changeable is always in the process of being changed. The succession of changes corresponds with the succession of the parts of time.

Life and death are opposite states, and dying is the transition from life to death. (This great change concerns the soul as well as the body, for in this life they have the most intimate connections with each other.) The body has extension, thus, it is still visible to the senses. The soul loses at death the means of being manifest to our senses. 12.

At our first breath, there is a war in the body between death and life. The term health means that the body is being preserved; the term sickness shows that it is in a state of destruction. When the structure (body) falls to pieces, do the particles cease to exist? The answer is no! To be and not to be are two states, which immediately follow each other, but there must be an intermediate state as we have seen before. Nature can neither create nor annihilate.

Since nature can neither create nor annihilate, nothing can be lost at the dissolution of the animal body. The parts that have fallen to pieces continue to exist, to act, to suffer, to increase and decrease, until they become by innumerable transitions, parts of another composition. All changes in nature are members of an uninterrupted chain, a gradual development and envelopement of the same thing. (This is the law of the conservation of energy.) There is no moment of time at which one could say, "Now the animal dies; now it grows sick; now it recovers health. The same must be true of the soul. It does

not suddenly disappear.

When the soul dies, one of two things happen: ^{13.}

(A) Everything disappears in an instant; or

(B) It gradually, like the body, proceeds in a continued series to something.

Annihilation by a miracle is impossible in nature. ^{14.} It is out of keeping with the God idea. Even if the death of the soul were coincidental with the death of the body, we could not find the exact moment at which we could say, now the soul disappears; anymore than we could say, above, now the body dies. Either the soul must be annihilated, and we see that nature doesn't do that, or she must continue. ^{15.} But if the soul continues, can it think, have conceptions without sense organs through which it can receive the sense impression out of which conceptions are made? We must not be limited by the narrow experiences of our petty world. (I believe this argument is weak. We reason because we have sense perception, but how do we know that we would continue to reason without them.) "Our soul triumphs over death and fulfills in a thousand ways the views of the Almighty- but she must aim at the highest degree of welfare and happiness- which to her shall consist in nothing but wisdom, the love of virtue, knowledge and truth- and purely spiritual and aesthetic joys, of order, beauty and perfection.

Socrates closes this first part of the discussion with an eloquent speech: ^{16.}

Call to your memory, my friends, those transporting moments which you have enjoyed so often, while your souls were contemplating a heavenly beauty, when you forgot life and its necessities, and gave yourselves up entirely to sensations, independent of it. What emotions, what inspiration arose from them! Nothing but the nearer pre-

sence of the divinity could produce such ravishing feelings. Every idea of spiritual excellence, therefore, gives the soul a glance of the deity; everything beautiful, regular, or perfect, which we remark and admire, is but a weaker impression of Him who is self-subsisting beauty, order, and perfection. If it is true that, after this life, wisdom and virtue are to be the objects of our ambition, and the study of spiritual beauty, order, and perfection, shall constitute our happiness, our existence will be nothing but an uninterrupted contemplation of the deity; a heavenly joy, which however little we now comprehend of it, will amply reward the steady efforts of the virtuous. What are all the pains of this life compared to the hope of such an eternity! What is poverty, contempt, or the most ignominious death, if we can thereby prepare ourselves for such a change. No, my friends; he who knows he is upright in his conduct cannot possibly be troubled when he sets out on so happy a journey; he only who, in this life has offended God and man, who studies the gratification of brutal pleasures, who has received delight from the deified honor of sacrificing human victims, and rejoiced at their misery, may tremble on the threshold of death, as he can cast no look on the past without repentance, nor any on the future without despair; - - - - - as I have searched for truth unceasingly through life, and loved virtue above all other things, I am overjoyed to hear the voice of the Almighty, who calls me hence

to enjoy in the pure light of Heaven, that which I have striven to know in this orb of darkness. Consider well, my friends, the grounds of my hope; if you think them well founded, congratulate me on my approaching departure, and live so, that when death calls, he may not surprise, or drag you away by force. Perhaps the Deity will assemble us again near himself, to taste sacred and pure friendship in each other's arms. Oh, with what transport shall we then embrace and remember the present day!

This concluding speech of Socrates sums up a fine Jewish enthusiasm for immortality. One can find in many of the prayer books that were written after Mendelsohn's death, the same ideas as are here expounded. In many of the passages that I have selected for the second part of my paper, one will see many terms that are identical with the expression voiced here.

There is now a respite in the argumentation. As the second part of the dialogue takes place, the characters move about and converse with each other regarding the new thoughts that they have heard expressed. Socrates senses an uneasiness, and he calls upon his friends to bring their doubts to him, as this will be his last opportunity to converse with them. Simmias starts out by giving, perhaps indirectly, an added reason for the belief in immortality. In part, his famous speech contains; ¹⁷

If our Soul is mortal, reason is a dream, which Jupiter has sent to deceive a set of wretches; and virtue loses all the splendor, which makes it godly in our eyes. Then whatever we think beautiful, sublime, or moral, is no impression of God's accomplishments; for nothing perish-

able can imbibe or reflect the smallest ray of his perfection. Then we are sent here like the beasts to look about for food and die. Then, in a few days, it will be the same thing whether I have been an ornament or a shame to society; whether I have been endeavoring to increase the number of the happy or the miserable. Then the most reprobate of mortals has the power of withdrawing himself from under the dominion of heavenly power, and a dagger can cut assunder the chain which links men to God. If our spirit is perishable, the wisest legislators of mankind have cheated us or themselves - - - -

My ideas of the deity of virtue, of the worth of man, and of the relation in which he stands to God, do not permit me to entertain any farther doubts of my destiny.¹⁸ The reliance on a future life solves all those difficulties, and brings those truths, of which we are convinced in a manifold manner, again into harmony. It justifies the deity, restores to virtue its nobility, to beauty its luster, to pleasure its allurements, softens misery, and makes even the troubles of this life sacred in our sight, while we compare the brevity of their duration with the perfect and perpetual felicity to which they lead. A doctrine which agrees with so many known and decided truths, which reconciles such a number of contradictions to our mind, we can readily adopt, and it hardly wants any farther truths; for if none of those reasons taken singly, carries with it the greatest degree of certainty, yet, when combined they convince us so forcibly, that every doubt and apprehension is removed by them.

Simmius goes on with his argument, and restates the proof
^{19.}
 of Socrates in a few words, viz.,

- (1) The soul and body exist together in the most intimate connection.
- (2) The body is gradually dissolved into its parts.
- (3) The soul must either be annihilated, or preserve ideas.
- (4) By natural powers nothing can be annihilated.
- (5) Our soul, therefore, can never cease to have ideas.

Then Simmias goes on to infer by similar reasons that harmony must remain after the lyre which has produced it is broken to pieces, or that the symmetry of a building must exist after the stones are pulled assunder and ground to powder. Simmias makes this comparison to life and death. He shows that thinking is closely allied to bodily functions. Ill health and especially stomach disorders are soon reflected in the workings of the mind. 20

Socrates answers the charge that thinking is the product of an artificially formed body, like harmony is a result of certain succession of tones, and symmetry of a certain order of stones, by proving that all proportioned objects which require their various parts to be contrasted and compared together are the effects of the operations of the faculty of thinking. He follows this argument to its ultimate conclusion and shows that every divisible part of a whole has powers of conception inherent in it.

"There is in our bodies a single substance, which is neither extended nor compounded, but is simple, has a power of conception, and unites all ideas, desires and inclinations in itself. Why may we not call this substance our soul? " 21.

Extent and motion will solve every accident, which can happen to the composition. Extent is the matter and motion the source, from whence the changes spring (that is in material composition). But to perceive, to compare, to desire to will, to feel pleasure and displeasure, requires a different capacity from extension or motion, another elementary, and other sources of change. In the acquirement of any knowledge that we make, the thinking being always precedes and the extended being follows: We first experience ideas and from them infer a conceiving being; then we conclude on the actual existence of the body and its property. In whichever way we view the matter, the soul always goes first with her instruction and then the body follows with its changes. The conceiving always precedes the merely conceivable.

We can divide the universal chain of being, proceeding from what is infinite to the smallest atom into three classes: ^{22.}

- (1) Conceives, but cannot be conceived by any other. This is the only one whose perfection surpasses all finite ideas.
 - (2) Conceives, and can be conceived by others. They are the created spirits and souls.
 - (3) Cannot itself conceive, but is conceivable by others. This is the corporeal world.
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Now Socrates is ready to take up the question that Cebes had placed before him. What is the nature of the immortal state? Is it a sleep or a trance, where there is no consciousness? Like Leibniz in his monad degress, Mendelsohn here has Socrates outlined the miraculous growth of man; ²³

Thus from the irresistible tendency and impulse in rational beings to attain a state more perfect, we have ample grounds to believe, their perfection is the final end of the Creation. We may conclude this world has been produced for the existence of spirits, which might elevate themselves by degrees to perfection and feel their utmost happiness in their progress toward it. That these beings are to be stopped, in the midst of their course, not only stopped, but all at once thrown back with the whole fruit of their efforts, into the abyss of annihilation, cannot be the design of the Creator- - - - -. As the ultimate end of the creation, they cannot be subordinate to other ends, nor stopped in the improvement or possession of their perfections. No, my friends, nature has not given us the desire of eternal happiness in vain. Our wishes can and will be satisfied. No man will sacrifice his life for home or country if there is no immortality, for since life on earth will be all, a man will fight with the state and even bomb it, rather than give up this life, which is all he has. All his fellow creatures have the same right. What a general revolt is this!

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The perfection which this simple substance has acquired must, in respect to itself, have an endless progress, and make it still fitter and fitter to fulfill the views of God in nature. Our soul as a being, which is rational, and aims at perfection, belongs to the class of spirits who make the object of the Creation, and can never cease

to be observers, and admirers of God's works.

Their existence commences, as we have shown, with a progress from one degree of perfection to another; their being is capable of perpetual growth and expansion:- - - - -

Whoever adheres to the performance of his duties with fortitude and constancy of temper, and bears adversity with patient resignation to the will of God, will deserve and enjoy at last the recompense of his virtues.

²⁴ Now Socrates comes to the question of where the souls reside. It is a question that he cannot answer. He says that the poets and the mythologists may know better, and that they could communicate their instruction to others. The cause of humanity would receive no hurt from the play of their imaginations. However, with respect to himself, he makes this statement: ²⁵

I am content with feeling a conviction that the eye of Heaven is perpetually upon me; that its divine providence and justice will watch over me in the next, as it has protected me in this life; and that my real happiness consists in the beauties and perfections of my soul. These perfections are, temperance, justice, charity, benevolence, knowledge of the supreme being, unceasing efforts to accomplish his views, and resignation to his divine will. These are the blessed felicities, which await me in the futurity, which now opens before me. Thither I hasten. More I desire not to know to make me set out cheerfully upon my journey.

This modern Phaedon is brought to an end in the same way that Plato ended his Phaedo. Socrates takes his poison cheerfully, follows the instruction of the prison-keeper, and allows his soul to depart to the next world. The self same expression that has puzzled so many students of Plato is retained here. Socrates requests Crito to offer a cock to Esculapius, as he owed him a sacrifice. ²⁶

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Mendelssohn, in his work combines the thought of Plato with the modern trend, as expounded by the Leibnitz-Wolffian School. In part, the dialogue is merely a paraphrase, but many of the Platonic superstitions are omitted. The Monad theory of Leibnitz, is the ground work upon which the whole structure of Mendelssohn's reasoning is built. Leibnitz' ²⁷ theology places God as the highest Monad, the Monad of Monads. The principle of continuity demands a highest monad at the end of the series of forces. Leibniz defines monads as eternal substances. He says that God created the monads and that God alone can destroy them. God as a monad as an individual, a person. But he transcends all monads, he is supernatural and superrational, the most perfect and most real being. Man cannot form a clear conception of God because man is limited. Man, however, raises the qualities, which every monad possesses to the highest power, and attributes to God omnipotence, omniscience, and absolute goodness. God being perfect does not undergo change. He is reality realized. He created the world according to a plan. He chose this world as the best of all possible worlds. His choice was determined by the principle of goodness, that is, by moral necessity.

Although Mendelssohn was not an original thinker, his work was of great value in his time. He had a remarkable German style which made him very popular with all classes of people. He was able to present Philosophy in such a manner that almost anyone could read him. Through his German translation, of the Phaedo, Mendelssohn

brought Plato to many people, who could not read the Greek original.

P A R T T W O

It is a difficult matter to find Mendelssohn exerting through his Phaedon, a direct influence on Reformed Judaism. His thoughts were so well taken up by his fellow men, that they do not point out in many instances, their source. It is only indirectly for the most part, that we can find definite innovations that we may trace directly to Mendelssohn.

In the second part of my Thesis, I have collected various Prayer Books and Catechisms that show to a great degree the new trend of thought, in regard to the immortality of the soul. We do not find any more, so much emphasis being placed upon the resurrection of the dead, rather do we see, that life is but a preparation for the world to come; and in this new world, the soul is freed from the burden of the body.

In all things change is a gradual process. We will find that in the Prayer Book of the latter of the nineteenth century, there is more Mendelssohnian thought, than there is in the ritual of his own period. But even today there is not in Reform Judaism any clear statement about the immortality of the soul. In the platforms of Reform Judaism, however, we find these statements regarding immortality:

"The belief in the bodily resurrection has no religious foundation and the doctrine of immortality refers to the after existence of the soul only."^a A more thorough going platform was adopted by the Pittsburg Rabbinical Conference in 1885, under the leadership of Kaufmann Kohler.^b

^a Conf. at Phil. 1869. Article 6
^b Article 7.

Dr. Kaufmann Kohler is one of the few Reform Jewish Scholars, who has given Mendelssohn the credit that he deserves. In his book (Jewish Theology Systematically and Historically Considered) Kohler makes this complete statement:¹⁸

"With Moses Mendelssohn, who in his Phaedon tried to translate Plato's proof of immortality into modern terms, a new attitude toward the nature and destiny of the soul arose in Judaism among both the philosophers and the educated laity. Mendelssohn not only endeavored to prove the immortality of the soul through its indivisibility and incorporeality, as all the neo-Platonist and Jewish Philosophers had done before him; he also attempted to show from the harmonious plan, which pervades and controls all of God's creation, that the soul may enter a sphere of existence greater in extent-content than the little span of earthly life, which it relinquishes. The progress of the soul towards its highest unfolding unsatisfied in this life, demands a future growth in the direction of god-like perfection. At this point the philosopher enters the province of faith, and thus furnishes for all time the cardinal point of the belief of immortality. The divine spirit in man, which is evinced in the self-conscious, morally active personality, bears within itself the proof and promise of its future life. Moreover, this corresponds with the belief in God as One, who rules the world for the eternal purposes and aims of perfection, who cannot deceive the hope of the

human heart for a continued living and striving onward and forward, without thereby impairing his own perfection. For we all close our lives without having attained the goal of moral and spiritual perfection for which we strive; and therefore, our very nature demands a world where we may reach the higher degree of perfection, for which we long. "

Kohler in discussing immortality in the light of modern investigation, shows that body and soul are indissolubly bound together by a reciprocal relation, which either benefits or impedes them both.²⁹ He says, "Yet it is just in periods like ours, when the belief in God is weakening, that the human spirit is especially solicitous to guard itself against the thought of the complete annihilation of his god-like self-conscious personality. - - - It is, therefore, all the more important to base the belief in immortality solely on the God-likeness of the human soul, which is a mirror of Divinity. Just as one postulate of faith holds that God, the Creator of the world, rules in accordance with a moral order, so another is the immortality of the human soul, which, amidst yearning and groping, beholds God. The question where, and how, this self-same ego is to continue, will be left for the power of the imagination to answer ever anew. - - - - Whoever still sees God's greatness revealed in miracles, that is, through interruptions of the natural order of life, may cling to the traditional belief in resurrection, so comforting in ancient times. On the other hand, he who recognizes the unchangeable will of an all-wise, all-ruling God in the immutable laws of nature must find it impossible to praise God according to the traditional formula as the "Reviver of the dead," but will avail himself instead of the expression used in the Union Prayer Book after

the pattern of Einhorn, "He who has implanted within us immortal life."

Kohler followed the ideas of Mendelssohn to their logical conclusion. He was a consistent admirer of his philosophy, and made use of it everything that he wrote. In the Catechism that Kohler wrote for children, he brought in this new conception of immortality. (But I will take this up when I come to the classification of Catechisms.)

N.S. Joseph in his book (Religion, Natural and Revealed) has this statement to make about the soul: ³⁰

Who can talk of annihilation of the soul, especially in these days, when philosophers declare even matter to be indestructible, and force, by the conservation of energy, to be eternal in its effects. Shall physical force be ever-lasting, and the soul which, by the power of the will, gives life to force, itself lack immortality.

Reverend Morris Joseph in "Judaism As Creed And Life" presents the following views, which are influenced by the author of the Phaedon: //

Judaism teaches that death is not the cessation of life, but only an incident in it. Human existence continues after death, but under different conditions-conditions that favor the growth of the soul. Life enters on a newer and higher phase. The captive spirit escapes from the prison house; the bird, liberated from its cage flies heavenward; man breathes an ampler air- - - The body is dust, it goes back to the earth from whence it came; "The Spirit" in like manner, has returned to God who gave

it. - - - Judaism, when at its best, has steadily kept before it this idea of the spirituality of the future recompense. Such notions as that of the resurrection of the body, of physical torments for sinners and so forth, have found place in certain phases of Jewish doctrines, but they have been rejected one by one by the best Jewish Teachers."

For the modern Jew, punishment in the future life effects the soul only. Morris Joseph then summarizes his remarks, by saying, "Content with the assurance of our immortality, let us yield ourselves to absolute trust in our Divine Master, who in the next life, as in this, will assuredly order our destiny in perfect wisdom and love. This is like the statement in the Phaedon, where Socrates says "As for myself, I am content with the conviction that God's eyes are ever upon me, that his Providence and Justice will follow me into the future life, as it has protected me in this.

32

In the Jewish Encyclopedia, there is an article that summarizes Kayserling's view about the influence of Mendelsohn's Phaedon: Moses Mendelssohn revived by his Phaedon, the Platonic doctrine of immortality, and asserted the divine nature of man by presenting new arguments in behalf of the spiritual substance of the soul.

In the same article there is also this statement made about Reform Judaism: Thenceforth Judaism,

and especially Reform Judaism, emphasize the doctrine of immortality in both its religious instructions and its liturgies; while the dogma of resurrection was gradually discarded, and in the Reform Rituals, eliminated from the Prayer Books. Immortality of the soul, instead of resurrection was found to be an integral part of the Jewish Creed and the logical sequel to the God idea, inasmuch as God's faithfulness seem to point not to the fulfillment of the promise of resurrection given to those who sleep in the dust, but to the realization of those higher expectations, which are sown, as part of its very nature in every soul.

Dr. H. Graetz in his "Geschichte Der Juden von Beginn der Mendelssohn'schen Zeit bis in die Neueste Zeit"³⁵ has this statement to make about Mendelssohn: "Mendelssohn war ebenfalls in dem Gedanken befangen, das die Würde des Menschen mit der Unsterblichkeit der Seele steige und falle - - - Er arbeite einen dialog "Phädon" oder die Unsterblichkeit der Seele aus. - - - Es sollte ein Volksbuch, eine Neue Heilslehre für die unglaubliche oder zwerfelnde Welt sein."

(Mendelssohn was biased by the prejudice that the dignity of man, stands and falls, according to the belief in the immortality of the soul - - - He wrote a dialogue called the Phaedon or the Immortality of the Soul. He wanted it to be a popular book, a new doctrine of salvation for the unbelieving or skeptical world.) Graetz shows that Mendelssohn's point of departure

in the proof of the immortality of the soul was the existence of God, which he regarded as the most absolute certainty. The soul is God's work, even as the body; The latter does not perish in the real sense of the term after all, upon its dissolution, but changes into other elements; "The soul, this simple substance, is still less capable of dissolution and destruction. Were our soul mortal, then were reason a dream, which Jupiter sent to beguile us wretches, then were we like cattle, here to feed and die." Every innate thought of man that inspires him with bliss, must therefore, also be true and real.

One finds little positive material about Mendelssohn's influence in the work of Graetz. Graetz is so busy using his beautiful expressions and similes, that he fails to present a clear picture of Mendelssohn's importance. He says that twenty years after the *Phaedon* had been published, it was relegated to the rubbish heap, that no one thought of reading it. He admits, however, that when the book first appeared, it was enthusiastically greeted by the multitude. He shows too, that Mendelssohn brought a new light, a genuine rebirth, to the Jewish people. He helped the outside world rid itself of the poor impression that the Jews in the preceding generation had made by their many and nasty controversies.

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THE FOLLOWING PRAYER BOOKS INDICATE
MENDELSSOHN'S INFLUENCE ON REFORM JUDAISM AS SHOWN
IN VARIOUS PASSAGES ON THE IMMORTALITY
OF THE SOUL:

Probably the oldest prayer book we have, written for Reform Jewry in the famous Hamburg Prayer Book, called the "Ordnung der Offentlichen Andacht fur die Sabbath and Festtage des ganzen Jahres. Nach dem Gebrauche des Neuen Tempel Bereins in Hamburg". It was compiled by S.J. Frankel and M.J. Bresselau, and it was published in the year 1819. Changes and omissions in the ritual show that the old belief in the Messiah is giving way to the doctrine of the Messianic era. One could not pick out any special reference to a new belief in the Immortality of the Soul, because of the number of contradictions that are contained in this Prayer Book. The greatest innovation that Bresselau made, was, that he substituted for the traditional Rabbannim Kaddish, the one found in all Reform Prayer Books, beginning with *שְׁמִינִי* (May great peace and life in the world to come, and mercy and love in the presence of the Lord of the heaven and earth rest upon Israel, the righteous, and upon all who departed this world, in accordance with the will of God. Say ye Amen.)

The Hamburg Prayer Book in comparison to the Reform Prayer Books now in use would be considered quite orthodox. It was written not for the sake of change in the ritual, but to preserve the faith

of the people.

A more radical Prayer Book was used by Dr. Holdheim. It was called, "Gebete und Gesänge für das Neujahrs und Persöhnungsfest" published in 1859. Holdheim in his various services for mourners departs from the idea of resurrection and emphasizes only the immortality of the soul. The following passage is a good illustration:

So hast Du, O Gott, durch deine Stimme in uns Selbst und in Deiner heiligen Schrift uns belehrt, wie wir nur durch Sünde vergänglich sind wie Erdenstaub, durch Tugend aber Theilhaber Deiner Ewigkeit werden Können Siehe, sprachst Du, ich gebe Dir das Leben und das Gute, den Tod und das Böse: wähle das Leben und das Gute. Zweien Welten angehör- end, ist unser irdischer Leib und alles Begehren und Verlangen, das ihm entstammt, der Vergänglichkeit preisgegeben, unser Geist aber, wonach er sich sehnt und was ihm dauernd befriedigt, das, wie er selbst Göttlicher Abstammung ist, unser Geist ist ein Bürger im Reiche der Ewigkeit!

(So hast Thou, O God, through Thy voice which is within us, and through Thy Holy Scriptures, taught us that we through sins, are perishable like earthly dust, but through virtue, however, we may share in Thine Eternity. Behold, Thou hast spoken, I give you life and good, death and evil, choose the life and the good. We belong to two worlds; Our earthly life, and the desires and longing that spring from it, prizes the transitory life; our soul, however, about which it longs, and of what it is always pleased, is that it itself is of Godly descent,

our soul is a citizen in the Kingdom of Eternity.)

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In the Prayer Book published by the Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston, S.C., one finds that the idea of Resurrection still remains.³⁷ However, in their book of Hymns one finds seven hymns about immortality. The last verse of Hymn Forty-two reads:

Man's spirit by divine decree,
The stroke of death defies;
And from the bounds of death set free,
Immortal shall arise.

In this Prayer Book, the following is also found:

O Thou, who dwell'st in heights supernal,
God! self existent and eternal.
What traveller shall reach Thy mountain?
What thirsting spirit taste Thy fountain?

Mortal? in Thee resides the power
Of gaining access unto each;
But he who would to Heaven tower
Must first the height of virtue reach.

In the portion that deals with prayers that are to be offered in the House of mourners, we find this paragraph that is consistent with Mendelssohnian views;

The death of the upright is the beginning of eternal life, for this world is a state of probation; and the Lord rejoices in the purity of his creatures- - -
Return into thy rest, O my soul! and glory in the name of thy redeemer; for he is the everlasting God, by whose mercy, I stand firm.

Dr. I. M. Wise in his *שְׁמֵי שָׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ*, and his "Hymns Psalms and Prayers" gives a modern conception of Immortality. Like Mendelssohn, he shows that no creature is subject to annihilation, that the spirit of man is everlasting. (I will take up the views of Isaac Mayer Wise in more detail, when I discuss his Catechism.) Naturally, Wise's book gained great popularity and exerted much influence on Reform Judaism in America.

Perhaps a Prayer Book that was of equal importance in America, was the *שְׁמֵי שָׁמַיִם*, by David Einhorn. It was translated by Emil G. Hirsch. In the memorial services, the following is found:

Loosed is the silver cord that hath held spirit and body together.

The prayer continues with a passage taken from Job 14 verses 7 to 9, that fit in with the general expression of the text, so that the continuity is not broken. I give here the most essential part of the prayer: *See page 203 of this prayer book.*

If a tree be cut down, it will sprout again,
and the tender shoots thereof will not fail to
bush anew; Though the root wax old in the earth,
and its stock be dead above ground, yet, reaching
out after quickening moisture, it will draw new
sap and bring forth fresh leaves and green spray
like a young plant. (Job 14:7 ff.) The rock may crumble,

but its growth is not checked, nor are its uses ended.

The prayer discusses the speedy flight of man, and then continues with:

But this Speedy flight of our days shall not affright us, nor the thought of the dark grave fill us with terror, nay, it shall teach us wisely to place our hope in Thee, who wilt not suffer Thy loving ones to see corruption. For only the dust returneth unto the dust it was; the spirit which Thou hast implanted within us is Thine, it returneth to Thee, the everliving Author of its being.

- - - - When we have reached the last rung, and attained unto a more perfect union with Thee, the ladder may fall, the one Angel may sink downward, the other, his companion of the ascent, Thine own image, Thou wilt receive into Thine, a father's embrace. Under the shadow of Thy wing, the spirit re-born- made new- will abide in peace, everlasting- as is Thy love.

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From a number of Prayer Books, I have taken extracts, that show Mendelssohn's Influence in the idea of Immortality. Many of these extracts are only a sentence or two, but they have been taken from larger portions found in their various memorial services. They are the following: ³⁵

The מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּדְּוָה , Meditation and Prayers, translated and adapted from the French "Prieres d'un Coeur Israelite", published by the Societe Consistoriale de Bons Livres.

The God of Truth and Love has not created
us for annihilation.

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A book of Prayer by Rabbi J. Leonard Levy: ³⁶

May we so live that we shall always be prepared to answer Thy call, whenever Thou shall take us unto Thee. In that supreme moment may we be found worthy of entering into rest with Thee, and may our lives have been such that they shall be worthy of the remembrance of our posterity.

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37.

The Service Ritual by Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf:

If matter is indestructible, if force is persistent, shall life principle, superior to them all perish in the grave?
There are innate with us latent capacities, which are prophetic of a future, but unattainable in our present state.

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The American Jewish Ritual as instituted in Temple Israel, Brooklyn, New York, by Reverend Raphael, D.C. Lewin. In the prayer for departed parents:

Hearken to the prayer of a child, who fervently implores Thy favor on behalf of the soul of his departed father. May it be received by Thee into the communion of those who enjoy everlasting life; May it be numbered among the souls of Thy faithful servants, and when, my time shall come, may my spirit be united with these, in a life, which is eternal and glorious, even the life of immortality,

in the boundless realms of Eternity.

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תפילות ותפילות The order of Prayer, revised by Dr. L. Merzbacher
and Dr. S. Adler: 38

Oh! that loving heart beats no more; it is
crumbling into dust; yet the spirit is still
alive that animated it, replete with warmth,
life and love.

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תפילות ותפילות A Book of Prayer for Jewish Worship by
Dr. Edward Calisch: 39

The souls of men are not subject to time,
and the kiss, that wafts them heavenward,
knows naught of years.

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We now come to a consideration of תפילות ותפילות
THE UNION PRAYER BOOK FOR JEWISH WORSHIP; a ritual that is used in
almost every Reform Congregation in America and Canada. Contained
in the two volumes is the best that has appeared in earlier Prayer
Books. By this time the belief in the resurrection of the body has
entirely disappeared, and the Kaddish and Memorial services are de-
voted entirely to the Soul of Man. After the lapse of more than
one hundred years we can see presented clearly and definitely the
high and spiritual idea of Immortality held by Moses Mendelssohn.
It is true, however, that we cannot select any particular thing
and say, "This is Mendelssohn's " for the years have added here and
there some changes.

I have selected some passages from both volumes of this

Prayer Book, which contain beautiful sentiments about Immortality.

In the Adoration for the Sabbath Evening Service:

Only the body has died and has been laid in the dust. The spirit lives and will live forever in the shelter of God's love and mercy. But in this life, also, the loved ones continue in the remembrance of those to whom they were precious. Every act of goodness they performed, every true and beautiful word they spoke is treasured up and becomes an incentive to conduct by which the living honor the dead.

In the Adoration for the Sabbath Morning Service:

Let us call to mind those who have finished their earthly course and have been gathered to the eternal home. Though vanished from bodily sight, they have not ceased to be, and it is well with them; they abide in the shadow of the Most High. Let those who mourn for them be comforted.

In the Adoration for the Evening Service for Festivals:

O God, our heavenly Father, who usherest Thy children into life and recallest the soul to Thyself in Thine own good time, we thank Thee for the sweet memory of those dear to us, who have been gathered to their Fathers. - - - - -

In filial submission to Thy will and in joyous hope of life everlasting, we praise Thee in whose hand are the souls of all creatures and the spirits

of all flesh.

In the Adoration for the Morning Service for the Festivals:

Death is not the end. Though earthly body
vanish, the immortal spirit lives on with
God. In our hearts, also, our loved ones
never die.

In the paraphrase of the Kaddish, found in all services:

To the departed whom we now remember, may peace
and bliss be granted in life eternal. May they
find grace and mercy before the Lord of heaven
and earth. May their souls rejoice in that in-
effable good, which God has laid up for those
who fear Him, and may their memory be a blessing
unto those who treasure it.

In Volume Two of the Union Prayer Book is found the
Memorial Service for the Day of Atonement. It is here that one
finds many statements regarding Immortality. I have selected
several to illustrate:


Our days on earth vanish like shadows. But
the speedy flight of life, and the gloom of the grave
should not dismay us, but should teach us wisdom.
It should prompt us to put our trust in Thee, who
wilt not suffer Thy children to see destruction.
For only the dust returns to the dust; the spirit
which Thou hast breathed into us, returns to Thee,
its ever-living source. And they who walk here in
the light of Thy countenance and sow good seed,

though in weeping, go home to Thee, laden
 with sheaves. They who sow but wind may well
 tremble at the whirlwind which they must reap.
 He who toils but for vain things and boasts of
 his might, must dread the grave. He trusts in
 his house, it stands not; he lays hold of it,
 it endures not. Though he join house to house
 and add field to field, his place denies him
 as soon as he has vanished, saying: I have not
 seen thee. O, that we might die the death of the
 righteous and our end be like theirs. - - - - -
 It cannot be that Man, fashioned in Thine image
 is doomed to annihilation. It cannot be that
 Thou hast endowed us with mighty yearning after
 the infinite, with an unceasing dissatisfaction
 with the world, its treasures and charms, only to
 disappoint us at last, and to give us over to
 nothingness after a life of struggle, anxiety
 and pain. Thou hast put eternity into our hearts;
 Thou hast filled our souls with a longing for life
 beyond the grave; Thou deceivest not, Thou God of
 truth. - - - - -

Grant, O Lord, that when the time of our departure
 comes, we may look back without sorrow upon the
 life we leave, and with trust in Thy mercy enter
 that life which Thou hast prepared for the righteous.

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From all the foregoing references in the Prayer Books, we can see that Mendelssohn exerted an influence for good in the ritual of the people. The prayers for Immortality gave comfort and solace to thousands of people. The Jewish mourner was separated from his beloved with a deep feeling in his heart, that God in His justice had gathered up His soul. This belief took away the sting from death; yet at the same time the Mendelssohnian views were so worded, that no one would think of suicide. The Jew learned to trust in God, who would call him at the appointed time.



THE FOLLOWING CATECHISMS INDICATE
MENDELSSOHN'S INFLUENCE ON REFORM JUDAISM AS
SHOWN IN VARIOUS PASSAGES ON THE
IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL:

Joshua Van Oven, Esquire in his Manual of Judaism, which was published in 1835, makes the student recite the Maimonidian creed, which expresses the belief in resurrection. Yet this statement is found in his book: ⁴⁰

Through their (The Prophets) aid it is that we are enabled to understand that the Soul is Immortal, and when the body dies, it departs to join the spiritual world, whence it was taken; moreover this spiritual soul or active portion of our being, has complete liberty to direct the actions of the body by its own free will. - - - - -

The weakness of the human mind, however, being deficient in the power of comprehending the precise nature of spiritual existence, can, ofcourse, have no correct idea of the actual mode in which the retribution is effected.
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In the אֵלֹהִים וְיֵשׁוּעַ and the אֵלֹהִים וְיֵשׁוּעַ of Benjamin Szold, the belief in the personal Messiah is changed to a belief in the Messianic age. There are many sentences about Immortality, as illustrated by the following:

I have Body and Soul. The Body will return unto dust after death, and the soul will return to God- - - - -.

The happiness which the moral and religious man enjoys, does not terminate here on earth.

The God-like soul in Him is Immortal; it continues to live after the dissolution of the body, and enjoys eternal felicities in the presence of God.

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The *סידור קריאת התורה*, Catechism of the Faith and Moral obligations of An Israelite by Dr.S.Herxheimer, contains:

The second chief article of belief is, that the soul of man is immortal, and continues to live forever after the dissolution of the body, when it will receive the deserved reward or punishment from God. - - - - - God, being kind, would not have implanted in our hearts an ardent desire for eternal life, only to disappoint us, but he will most assuredly realize our expectation-----.

God being Holy, and wishing also for man to become holy, there must be a future state, where man can really become holy, as in this life, even those that do not die young, cannot arrive to a perfect state of holiness- - - - -.

Our knowing that we shall have eternal life, diminishes our fear of death, because, if we have done good, death is only a transition to a happier state.

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"Elements of Jewish Faith" by Rabbi S.I.Cohen, is written in the "Question and Answer Style". The Rabbi asks the question and the Student returns a memorized answer. From the portion on immortality, the following is taken: 41

(Q) Are we induced to obey the precepts of the Law, from the desire of reward, and the fear of punishment only?

(A) It is proper that we do good and love truth from the actual affection we feel for them, and not from the desire of reward, or the fear of punishment.

(Q) Do you believe that the soul is immortal?

(A) I do most sincerely believe that the soul dies not with the body, but lives forever- - - . The souls of the righteous will be delighted in the glory of the Divine presence, and enjoy a sweet and plenary happiness in a world of complete perfection: They will rejoice in the cognizance of the Deity, and the knowledge of truth, which constitute a rapture and ecstasy beyond what mere mortal sense can possibly have a due conception of: It is somewhat similar, though infinitely beyond that refined pleasure, which a parent feels at hearing a high reputation of his son, and observing his wisdom and excellent conduct.

Judaism: Its Doctrines and Duties by Issac Mayer Wise contains the following: 42

On earth, the perfection attained in wisdom and righteousness, is the only source of true happiness - - - -. In life eternal, being a continuation of this life, the perfection attained in wisdom and righteousness must be the main source of true happiness to the pure soul; as the consciousness of guilt and criminal self-neglect must be the main source of grief and remorse - - - -. Man's soul is immortal because:

- (1) It is in the image of God- Gen. 1:27, 9:6.
- (2) It expects to be immortal- Job 11:18, Jer. 21:17.
- (3) God has given it desires which cannot be realized and qualities which cannot be exercised on earth- Deut. 3:23; Ex. 23:17-20.
- (4) The mental and moral qualities of good men increase steadily as their physical energies decrease- (Last hours of Jacob, Moses, Elijah, and Elisha).
- (5) Intellect is as indestructible as every other element. - Job 28.
- (6) God being all wise would not destroy the intellect He created, being all good, He would not disappoint the highest hope with which He has impressed us, and being all just, He could not have commanded man only to subordinate his carnal inclination to his spiritual welfare, if the soul were not destined to everlasting life - Ps. 16:8; 49:16; Ecc. 12:7; Daniel 12:2, 3. Deut. 6:24..

Issac Mayer Wise in his little book called the "Essence of Judaism" shows that man must take care of his life:

The first duty man owes to himself is the preservation of his life, health and limbs, which God in His mercy granted him, and He alone might take away.

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43

Rabbi Juluis H. Greenstone has written a Catechism, called the "Religion of Israel". This book has been very popular in Sunday School instruction. The ideas of Immortality are the following:

The Body is merely the frame in which the spirit dwells. The body dies, decays and is no more. It dissolves into its elements and then enters new combinations to form new bodies. But the soul is immortal, subject to no change. This world is merely a place where we are to prepare ourselves for the next- - - - -.

Short as our life is here, we must not waste a minute in useless action. All our time must be employed in refining our natures and purifying our souls.

- - - - -

44

M. Friedlander is his Text Book of The Jewish Religion, refers to the resurrection of the dead in these words:

The soul of man continues to live after its separation from the body; New life is thus given to man after his death, and the transition into the new life is called תחיית המתים .

Whether the soul will enjoy a second life on earth united with body, and if so, how and when this reunion takes place, is unknown to us- - - - . The belief that soul continues to live after man's death is also called the belief in the Immortality of the Soul. -- - - -. Our existence does not end with death. Two elements are combined in man- body and soul. The soul is the nobler and better element. In death the body returns to earth, whence it came, and the soul returns to God who put it into the body.

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Reverend Joseph Krauskopf and Reverend Henry Berkowitz, collaborated in writing several Catechisms. In the Second Union Hebrew Leader and in their book, Bible Ethics, one finds these quotations:

Men live the number of years allotted to them and then they die. But this is not the end. Our souls live on. This truth God has revealed to us by His voice within us, by the works of nature about us, by the higher hopes and aspirations, which he has implanted in our hearts and to realize which fully this life is too short. God being all wise would not destroy the intellect. (There is now given part of the statement used by Isaac Mayer Wise). See article 6, as shown above.

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Dr. K.Kohler in his "Guide for Instruction in Judaism" definitely shows that there is no resurrection of the body. He shows the value of the belief in Immortality by saying: ⁴⁵

The thought of the immortal nature of our soul must prompt us to use this earthly life and all it offers us, only as a preparation for the higher life of godliness and righteousness, which lasts forever, and not to spend it on vain things.

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There are Catechisms without number. Every Rabbi and Religious Teacher; it seems, has written some sort of manual for the instruction of children. These various books have very little value. They are written in a language and style that is devoid of interest for the young intellect. Unlike the Prayer Books, they have never become part and parcel of the Jewish Worship.

While we can see Mendelssohn's influence in most of these Manuals, it is to be doubted if the children using them acquired his conceptions.

These Catechisms are of use to us only insofar as we can find, beneath the cumbersome verbage, the beliefs of the authors.

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A WORD OF CONCLUSION: Moses Mendelssohn, pious, orthodox, firm in his belief, became the "Godfather of Reform Judaism".

While it is true that his influence was an indirect one, yet Reform Judaism might not have come into existence for many years, if it had not been for the character of Mendelssohn. It has been a difficult matter to show definitely the influence of the Phaedon on Reform Judaism, for many of the changes may have been caused by the entire "Aufklärung" period in Germany. Yet no one can deny that Mendelssohn was a firm part of the rationalistic movement that began in his generation; And moreover, it was after the appearance of the Phaedon that there was a clearer idea of Immortality. The memorial services in the Ritual began to be emphasized more and more.

Today in our modern Temples and Synagogues, there are many people who come to the services for the word of consolation they may hear from the Rabbi in connection with the Kaddish. I wonder, how many of them, when their spirits are uplifted by the cheerful message of the preacher, think of Moses Mendelssohn, who first stated in his Phaedon the principles that make the Ministers words possible. In time of woe and sorrow, we might well thank Moses Mendelssohn for the burden he has lifted from our shoulders. If we are convinced, by his reasoning, that the Soul is Immortal, we may face death bravely, confident that there can be no annihilation, assured that our souls will continue to exist throughout Eternity.

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NOTES.

1. Kayserling's Mendelssohn, Page 5.
2. Cullen's Translation of Mendelssohn's Phaedon, Page 10.
3. Ibid. Page 14.
4. Ibid. " 16.
5. Ibid. " 23.
6. Murray's Tr. of Solomon Maimon's autobiography. Page 223.
7. Cullen's Tr. of Mendelssohn's Phaedon, Page 30.
8. Ibid. Page 31.
9. Ibid. Page 37 ff.
10. Ibid. Page 46.
11. Ibid. Page 52 ff.
12. Ibid. Page 64.
13. Ibid. Page 71.
14. Ibid. Page 74.
15. Ibid. Page 81.
16. Ibid. Page 87 ff.
17. Ibid. Page 94 ff.
18. Ibid. Page 97.
19. Ibid. Page 99.
20. Ibid. Page 102.
21. Ibid. Page 138.
22. Ibid. Page 147.
23. Ibid. Page 159 ff.
24. Ibid. Page 201.
25. Ibid. Page 202.
26. Ibid. Page 212.
27. Thilly's History of Philosophy. Page 373 ff.
28. Kohler's Jewish Theology. Page 295

29. Ibid. Page 296 ff.
30. Joseph's Israel's Faith. Page 156.
31. Morris Joseph's Judaism as Creed in Life. Page 107 ff.
32. Kayserling's article in J.E. Page 567. Vol. 6.
33. Graetz Geschichte der Juden. Volume 5, Page 17 ff.
34. See Page 41 of Charleston Prayer Book. "May he raise him at the end of days, and cause him to drink at the brook of his pleasures."
35. Page 240.
36. Page 16.
37. Page 10.
38. See Page 345.
39. See Memorial Service.
40. Page 56.
41. Passages in Chapter on Immortality. Chapter 20.
42. Paragraph 68 ff.
43. Greenstone was a conservative, but shows influence of Mendelssohn.
44. Friedlander was of the orthodox faith, but also shows Mendelssohn's influence.
45. Page 36 ff.

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