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TOWARD A COURSE FOR THE REFORM JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL ON PERSONAL VALUES THROUGH RABBINIC LITERATURE

By Mark N. Goldman

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1967

Referee, Professor Sylvan D. Schwartzman

DIGEST

This thesis is presented with the hope that it may some day assume the form of a published textbook for the High School of the Reform Jewish Religious School. It is the crude beginning of a future realization. It needs to ultimately decide for itself the age level in the high school to which it wishes to devote its energies. Then, it will require "test readings" and experimentation before it may achieve its goal and find its niche.

Rabbinic Literature is vast in its scope and abundant in its detail. The rabbis demonstrated their creative intellect in the pages of the Talmud, Midrash, and Codes. Actually, there exists no precise and concise philosophical or theological statement in these works. However, the student of Rabbinic Literature may leave his sincere confrontation with this body of tradition with a keen awareness and a thoughtful understanding of exactly what the rabbis were endeavoring to say. He may glean for himself what comes to be a noble personal value system, readily applicable for the Twentieth Century.

With an awareness of the confusion of the present age, and with somewhat of a recognition of the needs and the problems of young adults, this proposed textbook seeks to derive from Rabbinic Literature a point of view, a perspective for living, a personal value system that may be applied to the awesome business of meaningful living. This "book" has as its primary aim the rendering of Rabbinic Judaism in such a way as to make it useable, beneficial, and up-to-date.

It is desired that the student will discover that Judaism is not something for only library shelves and worship services.

We learn first that man is holy, a sacred being, consecrated to live and govern his existence with the knowledge that he is "in the image of God." Each human being has within his essence a spark of divinity. Man is inherently noble; he must realize this potential. Man has dignity and individual worth. His recognition of these facts should influence his own personal behavior as well as that of his fellow creature.

We need to learn that we must share life with others, that life may be ultimately meaningful. Therefore, what occurs between man and man is highly significant. The interchange and interplay that are involved in human relationships may be termed "ethics or morality." Concerns of mankind become mutual with this perspective.

Thus, man must live in a manner that might be termed "holy." Because of a peculiar confrontation with God, because of a covenantal agreement with Deity, the Jewish people has an obligation to all of mankind. Consequently, every human relationship requires the prescription of a valid system of personal values for group living. The goal of this value system is the sanctification of life.

The family setting provides a crucial environment for the young adult, the "future man." Moreover, within the family man may realize his potential and find true meaning in life. What happens herein may serve further to govern man's behavior as he goes forth into society.

Society affords the next opportunity for man to realize his God-given potential. Man, as a social being, brings meaningful existence to the doorstep of others. Every transaction in his life, whether in business or pleasure, should bespeak a commitment to the inherent holiness in human life. Humility, charity, and kindness should fulfill themselves in man.

One of the highest of all personal values is "truth." "Truth," if upheld, elevates man's total existence. Its effects are far-reaching and dramatically moving. "Truth," "honesty," "sincerity" are like nighly-polished sterling silver; their brilliance brings luster to the world.

Man is a complex being. He is made of many forces, and he experiences many inner directives. He is born with both good and bad inclinations. When he rebels against a personal value system in his own life, he gives rise to something called "sin." "Sin" cheapens and desecrates human existence. Man's potential may be fully realized through thoughtful repentance. For repentance leads man back to a commitment to his personal value system. Such a commitment, held as dear by society, can hasten the arrival of a Messianic Era at long last.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

D E D I C A T I O N

To My Nanny, Celia Goldman,
Who first impressed me with the necessity
for a value system in one's personal life...

And to My Rabbi, Sylvan D. Schwartzman,
Who is an idealist without being a
Utopian...a realist without being
a cynic...

Introduction

During my sojourn of nine years in Cincinnati, much of my energy has been deliberately exerted in the area of the education of Jewish youth. Because of the opportunity presented to me by (Congregation) K.K. Bene Israel, known as the Rockdale Temple, where I served in the capacities of Youth Group Advisor, High School Principal, and Intermediate Department Supervisor, I became increasingly aware of some of the religious problems facing our Reform Jewish youth. They are searching for something definite to grasp in their religion. They desire to know exactly who they are and just what they must be. They seek a value system in personal living and in human relationships. Often a former student would write or telephone me in quest of a religious truth or an ethical ruling. "What does Judaism have to say?" he would impatiently inquire.

And I would perforce ask myself the very same question. We had taught our children the Bible. We had presented an introduction to the Talmud and to the Midrashim to our religious school students. We had even explored the problems of boy-girl relationships during the teen years. But we had never really presented a concrete and concise personal value system for our youth. Usually after Confirmation and occasinnally after High School, our future Reform Jews left us, still unaware of the guidelines they might use for a personal code in living. There existed a gap in their education and in our own efforts.

Coming to the conclusion of my seminary career, and beginning now my study for the Reform Rabbinate, I look back upon my years of

training at the College-Institute. From all the text courses and assignments, out of Talmud class and Midrash class, from the voluminous literature of the codes of the rabbis comes the realization and the seedling awareness that rabbinic tradition was trying to say something. Perhaps, there did not exist a precise theological statement. Sometimes all the text material became overwhelming in its intricate technical data. But from the treasure house of rabbinic literature and tradition arose a value system. It was personal. It was precise. It was intimate. It was in fact useable.

This is not an introduction to Rabbinic Literature. This is not a course on the Talmud, Midrash, and Codes. Rather, this attempts to become an introduction to a way of life, a manner of living, a methodology of approach. Given life as it exists in the here and now, in the time-place of modern man, the Space Age, if you will, we glance backwards over our left shoulder for the perspective of the rabbis of tradition in order that we might go forward. Maybe the cultural, political, social, and economic environment of the rabbinic period was different from our own. Indeed it was. But the rabbis endeavored to live according to a specific value system. They possessed a philosophy of man. They governed their lives with rules and regulations. And there emerges from their encounter with reality a personal value system, motivated by their peculiar confrontation with God. This is an attempt to glean from their efforts something that we and our Reform Jewish youth might use today.

M. N. G.

CHAPTER I

WHO AM I?

I

Who Am I?

Rabbi Akiba said: "Dear (to God) is man, in that he was created in the (divine) image; still more dear in that it is known to him that he was created in the image, as it is said, In the image of God he made the man." (Abot 3, 14)

Background.

We live in a confused age. Did you ever visit New York City? Chicago? Detroit? Picture yourself standing there on a main street. Watch the people. Observe the rush of the automobiles. Notice how people become engulfed in the overall traffic scheme. Who are they? What are they? Where are they going?

Or...the alarm clock rings angrily. With resentment you turn over in your comfortable bed, protected by the industrially-woven fabrics that confine you. "Gosh!" It is already 7:45 A.M., and you have an appointment at the University at 8:30 A.M. Having rushed to the campus, you discover that you have been assigned a number to stand in the lengthy admissions line to await your turn. You achieve, perhaps not willingly, some degree of anonymity. Who are you? What have you become?

The Rabbis reply.

You are man. You recall what you heard in the Temple only last Friday night. How does it go? "O Lord, what is man that Thou art

mindful of him...he is but little lower than the angels...crowned with glory and honor..." Hardly! Even the prayerbook was not quite sure. What is man? You know you are of the species. But what does it mean?

Rabbinic Judaism teaches.

Man is holy, or so we have been informed. Furthermore, as we are admonished in Leviticus 19, we should behave in a manner that is holy. We are to be holy for the Lord, Our God, is holy. This is it in a "nutshell." Positing that God is God, and because He is God, He is Holy; and mentally having some type of conception of the Sovereignty of God, the Kingship of God, the Rulership of God, we begin what you might call a "logical deduction."

The rabbis did this too. They believed in what Dr. Samuel Belkin calls a "democratic theocracy."[1] Belkin writes: "It is a theocracy because the animating force of Jewish morality is not the protection of the state or community in the abstract, or of any mundane form of government. The entire system of Jewish morality derives from and is founded upon the concept of the sovereignty of God. It is a democracy because, unlike any other legal system, the rabbinic code places all emphasis upon the infinite worth and sacredness of the human being." Accepting the premise that God is the Spiritual Ruler of the Universe, (and this is surely not an attempt to define exactly what we mean by "God") we then assert and insure the sacredness and the native dignity of individual man.

What Is Man?

Man is holy. Man has dignity. That which man is somehow is sacred. The Hebrew word for "holy" means "something set apart," something special, something different from what we experience in the

everyday round of life. Man is both physical being and mortal matter, a finite being. But man is more. It is not, now understand this, that man is composed of two sides or characteristics. Man is not what we might term dualistic. But rather man is made of a recipe that indicates certain specific ingredients. Although man is of the world and made of flesh, man is also a spiritual being. For he is a composite of emotions and intellect too. He has a mind for thinking and discerning. He has a heart for understanding and compassion. What does all this mean? Well, my friends, I suggest to you that what our rabbis were trying to tell us was that man has infinite worth, though he is a finite being.

Man is Not Perfect.

A human being has limitations. He reaches termination points in his abilities and talents. He cannot do everything that he would wish to do. He may desire to be a great scientist or a world-famous athlete or a glamorous motion picture queen. However, it soon becomes apparent to him that he may not have been born with those abilities and endowments which would enable him to do all that he wished. He is finite.

A human being is certainly not perfect. He becomes ill. His body may succumb to a common head cold or intestinal cancer or heart disease. He would desire not to be ill. He would wish for perfect health. But something seems to get in the way. Man has physical limitations. It is frustrating and even upsetting. Ultimately, man is faced with death, and the grave seems to abruptly interrupt man's finest and most infinite aspirations. A human being has imperfections.

Man's Potential.

But man has infinite worth. He is capable of engaging in a process which we might call "ongoing perfectability." Man can continually improve himself. Man can always, through personal effort, achieve a greater degree of what he may desire. Through the miracles of modern science, he discovers cures for his maladies. Through diligent practice and training, he may become an Olympic Games star. Through intellectual pursuits, he may attain a high degree of prominence in the academic world. As our rabbis of the Midrash and the Talmud believed and taught, man has possibilities. He is of significant worth.

Do you remember from your studies of Judaism the discussions which you had about the meaning of the Ten Commandments? Remember, if you will, the confusion and the disagreements in which you became involved when you and your classmates tried to interpret the meaning of the commandment that suggests that man was created in the "image of God." As a youngster, you probably thought that you, as a human being, were supposed to look something like God! No doubt, when you heard the word "image," you thought of "physical likeness." The rabbis of our tradition understood this commandment in a different way.

In His Image.

The rabbis of what we call "Rabbinic Literature" taught that this commandment concerned one of the most important precepts in all of Judaism. For when the rabbis heard or read "in his image," they understood these words to mean that somehow man participated in some-

thing called "divine holiness." Every human being has a "spark," a small fraction, of the holiness of God. This is the manner in which a man can be like or similar to God. Man is holy. Man is sacred. Man has infinite worth. Why? Because you and your fellow human beings were created in the image of the Spiritual Ruler of all creation. This is what makes you special. This is what sets you apart from the rest of Creation.

The Mishnah teaches that God created only a single man at first in order to instruct mankind that whoever destroys a single individual God considers him as if he had destroyed the entire world, and whoever saves or respects the life of one man God looks upon him as if he had regarded the entire world with the highest kind of esteem (Sanhedrin 4,5). The rabbis herein were not really worried about the legendary character of Adam and Eve. Rather they were endeavoring to present to their people Judaism's awareness of the inherent worth of the individual human being.

Thus it is that as one confronts the Talmud, he recalls over and over again that the human being was considered as being created in the image of God. This teaching lies at the basis of the Rabbinic teachings concerning man. This realization lends to man the fact of his own supreme importance in the Universe at large. Since men are formed in the image of the Deity, they must bear that knowledge always in mind in their relationships with one another. The purpose of the Creation was to give man an opportunity to glorify the Creator. Life must therefore be understood and conducted with that insight. It is incumbent upon man to strive to accumulate during his lifetime, rather than strictly material possessions, a wealth of worthy and meritorious actions.

The Nature of Man.

It should be remembered that man's kinship with God lies in his possession of the human soul. Thus, the character of a life depends upon the care which the individual devotes to keeping his soul pure and unstained. There was inherent the belief that in every man there are two urges or impulses, one to evil and the other to good. Thus, the character of a man is determined by which of the two impulses he allows to become dominant within himself in terms of his overt actions. Man is in control of his ship, so to speak, and it is up to him what choice and what decision he makes in life.

We must continually bear in mind in our approach to the values that are inherent in Rabbinic Literature that it is through the idea of the one God that man in Judaism gains his religious significance. Created and called by God, he is not only A man, but Man, the One man that lives in all men. That is to suggest that man, not merely one particular individual, but man generically, is capable of manifesting the divine. This, by deduction, implies a new principle of humanity, a new dignity and unity of the human race. It also conceives of the status and the value of every human soul, its uniqueness and personality. This awareness of being made in God's image, of being the child of God, constitutes the supreme injunction that is placed on every man. This is the pressing need and obligation to show oneself as divine. The utmost is required from every individual.[2] Let us be a bit philosophical. In you and your fellow human beings there is a unity, or if you would rather, a totality, that corresponds to the unity of God. And so, from you is demanded a mode of life that is exclusively related to God.

There are those amongst us who would wish to impress upon our minds the idea that man is nothing more than an animal. After all, they might suggest to us, man is composed of merely biological drives and animalistic instincts. However, in the mind of the rabbis of tradition, the conviction of man's creaturehood was always balanced by the other characteristic conviction, that man is a moral being. He is blessed with the capacity for action and called upon to exercise it in certain specified directions. Human conduct and behavior is in this manner filled and replete with meaning, and life itself becomes a methodology of approach to God. Man, according to the rabbis, is distinctly an ethical personality.

The Significance for us

What does all of this impressive dialogue mean for us as modern Jews? Can the rabbis possibly have anything to say to the Space Age Man? But most certainly! We learn that man is not only a creature, but a creature with a moral personality. He can and ought to do something in his life's work as regards God. He should serve God (or his ideal) actively, and not sit passively, exhuberant with emotion. The significance that the Deity has granted to human life must be reinforced by the effort and energy that man gives to his own life and the lives of others as a natural consequence.

Man is sacred. Man has dignity. Man has inherent worth. The rabbis, perhaps, did not know much about psychoanalysis or sociology; but somehow they knew the truth about each other. Maybe God willed it that they should be, shall we say, clairvoyant. Maybe they were blessed with the gift of prophecy. Whatever the case was, they knew that you

and I, we, together, because of our potential holiness as human beings, would foster that long yearned for Messianic Age on earth. Knowing what God is for man, they prescribed what man should be before God. Man, on whom is laid the injunction to become holy, has the responsibility of deciding to live his life in the presence of the one holy God, Who created him.

What is man? Man is a potentially holy being. But it is his own making what he inevitably becomes. He writes the score. He is his own pilot. It is man's necessary task to remind himself that he is a being, with heart and soul and mind, created in the image of the Creator Himself. Thus, if we have any wits about us at all, we would then have to say that man should "walk in all His ways" (Deut. 11:22).

> "Those are the ways of the Holy One, blessed be he; as it is said: 'The Lord, the Lord, God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..." (Exod. 34:6); and it is said:
>
> "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered" (Joel 3:5).
>
> But how can a man call on the name of the Lord? Rather: as the Omnipresent is called merciful and gracious, you too must be merciful and gracious, and give freely to all. As the Holy One, blessed be he, is called righteous, as it is said: 'The Lord is

righteous in all His ways' (Ps. 145:17) you too must be righteous. As the Holy One, blessed be he, is called kindly, as it is said: 'And kindly in all His works' (ibid), you too must be kindly.

(Sifre on Deut. 11:22)

CHAPTER II

I NEED YOU

II

I Need You

Rabbi Yohanan said: "Every distress that Israel and the nations of the world share is a distress indeed. Every distress that is Israel's alone is no distress." (Deut. Rabbah II. 14.)

Recapitulation

Do you feel good? Haven't you been complimented? Your ego must be shining brightly! Look at you, all the world, you are a creature in the image of God. You can be holy. In fact, according to the rabbis, you must be! That is because you have inherent worth as an individual.

We need to share life

This is an age of confusion. We are all rushing here and there. Remember when you were scurrying to make that 8:30 A.M. appointment at the admissions office of the university? If you will recall correctly, you scampered on home in disappointment after you discovered that there was no room for you in that biology "lab," the class that you had wanted to share with your buddy. "Ah! the telephone!" You hurried to make that ever-important phone call to your understanding friend, so that he might participate in your calamity with you. You told him all. And he empathized. How wonderful!

Thinking Beyond Oneself

How wonderful that he listened? How wonderful that he understood? Or, rather, how wonderful that he was there to listen and to

understand! Evidently, you could not possibly have faced it alone. You needed someone to share in this mishap with you. It may sound "corny," but you "needed" the other fellow. At this point, life would have been too rough to "go it alone."

And what's more, this is nothing new. The rabbis of the Midrash, Talmud, and Codes knew this too. Maybe they did not have a telephone to aid them in communications. Perhaps they were not faced with the difficulty of the admissions line at a university. But the rabbis of tradition knew full well the value of human relationships. Moreover, they realized the necessity for having them.

The Need for others

It is the rare human being indeed who can face life head on all alone, by himself. Man is just not made that way. He needs others. Did you ever study for an exam alone? Probably you would have preferred to venture into this task with a fellow student. And though it may seem obvious, it might be well to point out that it certainly would be a troublesome thing to try to play a baseball game without fellow team members. The game of life is no different. Humanity at large must be on the "team" if life in general is to be a success.

The rabbis knew this. They wrote Midrash upon Midrash. They engaged in Talmudic dispute upon dispute. They compiled codes and laws and halachic rulings. Admittedly, sometimes they got a bit carried away. Some of the rabbinic legislation is involved and intricate. Some codes elude our ready comprehension. Some Midrashim go beyond the bounds of strict reason. Some Talmudic conflicts are often worse

than a problem in algebra or logistics. But underlying all of the volumes and pages of rabbinic writ, there is the sweeping conclusion and overwhelming motivation that man needs man. We need each other.

Meaningful Existence

Life, to be meaningful, requires our participation and sharing with other human beings. There seems to be no room in Judaism for the hermit or self-exiled human. From primary family relationships, through precious friendships, and extending into the Family of Man of the world's great societies, the rabbinic dictum concerning the necessity and sanctity of human relationships holds sway. There was a famous Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, who said that all real living is in meeting. We meet each other in the daily round of life. We share a sacred moment together at a Sabbath service. We experience joy together at a football game. We feel the pride in a friend's accomplishment. We are pervaded with a sense of happiness when another human being cares for us. Life consists of man's confrontation with man.

What the rabbis realized

This is a personal value from the pages of rabbinic literature. Personal it is because it concerns us foremost and directly. A value it is because it can determine the nature of our lives as we decide to live them. Valuable...indeed! No matter where we go or what we do it will be the people with whom we share our portions of life that make it all count. The rabbis were not mystics nor dreamers like Joseph. They were wise men and sages. Their sagacity derived for them the lesson that the lines of communication among human beings,

the relationships, the associations, the partnerships, all guaranteed the sanctity of life. These were the vehicles that insured the dignity and the worth of the individual man. What transpired between man and man was of ultimate consequence.

The rabbis did not say all this as we have stated it. They did not organize precise formulations of the doctrine of man. They did not compose treatises on theology or philosophy. Rather, they declared what they were compelled to utter in the form of aggadah or Midrash. A list of laws or halachah, if studied with perspective, would yield the overriding value system that belonged to the rabbis. If one immersed himself in the lore of rabbinics, one would withdraw from this confrontation with an awareness and an understanding of the mentality of the rabbis.

We call it ethics or morality

What took place between man and man might be termed "ethics." We mean by this the science of morals or of human duties and obligations. Conduct between man and man becomes paramount because human relationships are vested with the sanctity of that which is holy in life. A business transaction may involve the exchange of monetary means or material items. However, what occurs between the people engaged in the transaction is actually what is most crucial. Human dialogue and intercourse must be legislated and controlled. At least, some guidelines should exist to enunciate equations for decent living.

The ethics of the bodies of rabbinic literature reflect the fundamental concepts and teachings of Judaism. The origin of these might be traced to the Bible, for we find in much Biblical data the

seedlings or fertilizers of much of rabbinic thought. The entire rabbinical system of ethics is based upon humanitarian laws of righteousness. In the tractate of Sanhedrin we learn: "Rather than commit any one of the three capital sins - idolatry, adultery, murder - man should give up his life." The ethics of rabbinic Judaism encompass the Jew, and every man. One of the main principles of rabbinical ethics is that the very essence of God and His law is moral perfection. Religion and ethics are intimately interwoven because it is the motive which decides the moral value, the good or evil character of the action involved.

The Wisdom of the Rabbis provides the literary background

The Talmud, Midrash, and Codes are a veritable library of Jewish knowledge and intellect. Whatever moved the Jewish people in the way of intellect, morals, judicial, and religious matters seems to be included in rabbinic creativity. The literature of the rabbis comprises a storehouse of wisdom, of common sense, of witty and subtle insight, of inspiration, and of ethical genius. There is present an amazing degree of keen psychological insight. Our teachers of tradition have much to say with regard to the art of human relations, and they offer good counsel to members of the family of mankind. Rabbinic literature naturally came to include a large number of legal decisions based upon a body of customs and traditional practices, which grew throughout many centuries of Jewish experience in life. Granted that these are complex and technical, but they are filled with a profound sense of humanity and justice. The rabbis required the highest possible standards of human character and conduct. "If a man walks in

the ways of the Lord, but transgresses by accident, every creature below and above helps to conceal it." "When the time comes for an accounting of a man's deeds, it is too late to do anything." "When man appears before the Throne of Judgment, the first question he is asked is not - 'Have you believed in God,' or 'Have you prayed or performed ritual acts,' but 'Have you dealt honorably, faithfully in all your dealings with your fellow-man?'"

So that Judaism and the Jews might attain the great aim of the perfection of man, there had to be formulated the high ideals and noble principles that would be applicable and practical in daily life. The legislators and the teachers of the law set themselves the task of making the prophetic ideals real, by applying the noble principles taught by the prophets to the actual conditions of life. The rabbis believed that the prophets had reached the highest summit in ethical ideas. They, therefore, concluded that all that remained to them was to realize these ethical teachings in daily practice. They realized that the main thing is conduct and not just theorizing. Study is valuable only because it is conducive to good deeds. The rabbis tried to lead men to a realization of these visions and ideals by training them in the exercise of such good deeds as are expressive of high ideals. The end was to make man know the Lord and walk in His ways.

It was the opinion of the rabbis that the aim and the purpose of all the commandments of the Torah were to establish peace and friendly relations between man and man. Thus, they interpreted the Torah in such a way as to make all of its laws the expressions of ethical ideals, to promote righteousness, peace, and love among all

men. They sought to give all a moral and religious aspect, and they were guided at all times by ethical considerations. They based their rulings and decisions on good moral and ethical principles. In dealing with the laws of the Torah, the primary concern of the rabbis was to discover the underlying ethical purposes. They endeavored to find the ethical purport of numerous Biblical laws. Their conviction was strong that a moral purpose was inherent in every law. They always remembered that the legal enactments and ritual laws of the Torah were merely a means to an end, that of moral perfection. Before them conceptually was the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

I Am For You

We now have some awareness of what it means to exist and to live life as a being created in the image of God. We have some conception of what we are as man. Our natural inclinations influence us to seek others so that we might enjoy meaningful living. We discover that we were not created to live alone. In fact, according to rabbinic Judaism, we are transgressing the basic teachings of our tradition if we attempt to remove ourselves from the "greater round" of life. Knowing our own needs now, and coming to grips with a clearer understanding of ourselves, we now begin to sense that other people must be similar to us.

If we are as we are, if we know what makes us "tick," then certainly other members of the Family of Man must operate in like manner. Granted we are all different as human beings. Personality traits are as varied as the grains of sand on the seashore. Abilities are present in one man that may be lacking in another. Nevertheless, there are definite common bonds that unite all men. The "human being" coexists

in all men. Metaphorically, then, I am like you; and you are like me. We have the same desires and needs and frailties.

If this is true, then I need you to supplement my own existence. I don't want to live alone. I cannot. I find it difficult to solve the problems of life by myself. Life seems to have no real meaning without others. At the beginning of Creation, if you will remember your reading of the book of Genesis, all was formless and void. Emptiness was the state of the Universe. However, when God added to Creation, when he made man, Creation began to have significance. Our own lives, if we may use the above Scriptural suggestion as did the rabbis, become increasingly meaningful and richer as we add the experience of others to our own. In order to live as a Jew, to be a Jew, you must correctly respond to your native need for other human beings.

As a result, the need to share with others implies that our concerns will be mutual. If I need you, then your needs become mine. If your being there is a requisite for my own existence, then your existence takes on importance for me. In short, because I need you for myself, I care. I care who you are. I wonder how you are. I act because you are important to me. If something happens to you, this happening affects me. The vibrations of your life cause the strings of my own instrument to respond. Our meeting becomes living, and our living becomes real, and we find meaning in and through each other. Life ceases now to be chaotic and void.

Because human beings must live together

Because human beings must live together, because we confront what life has to offer as partners, we need certain rules and regula-

tions for living. Now, after all, we are "liberal religionists." Certainly, I am not suggesting that we have a code or a rule book to consult as an absolute authority. We are sophisticated twentieth century man. Who is it that has any right to tell us what we must do? Yet, we want something to grasp. We desire to have some type of formulations for our approach to living. Maybe, we are not quite so smart as we might have thought.

Whether we verbalize it or not, we are in search of a value system for everyday living. What is important to me must be important to you. But how do I guarantee that you will receive what you deserve? How may I insure your existence? Who or what will be my resource for supplying the guidelines of the insurance policy which I would like to have in my possession on your life? From the rabbis, I have learned that what is hateful to me, I had best not do unto you. And out of a love and respect for myself, according to the rabbis, I have learned that I must love and respect your being. My worth is like unto your worth. My dignity is like unto your dignity. My sanctity as an individual is like unto your sacredness of personality. My inherent potential is your own potentiality. From a knowledge of myself and who I am, I proceed to a knowledge of you and who you are. My caring for myself becomes my caring for you. My concern for my own well-being becomes my concern for your welfare. My egotism and my self-centeredness becomes my altruism and selflessness.

But still, I question how I may successfully go about this process of maturation. The answer again lies in the treasure house of rabbinic literature. For as we have suggested earlier in this conversation, underlying all of the minutiae of this literary tradition

was a principle of ethics and morality, a value system for living. Rabbinical ethics and morality provide the key, then, for solving this dilemma. Before we go out into fruitful living, we must possess some knowledge of the basis of this value system for personal living.

CHAPTER III

TO LOVE MAN

III

To Love Man

God said to Moses, "Go and tell the Israelites, My children, as I am pure, so be you pure; as I am holy, so be you holy, as it is said, 'Holy shall ye be, for I, the Lord your God, am Holy.'" (Leviticus Rabbah, Kedoshim, XXIV, 4)

"Test your words before you utter them, and make your deeds conform to proper behaviour, and let your footsteps lead towards actions which bring merit. Acknowledge always the justice of God, and refrain from murmuring." (Derek Eretz Zutta; III, 1.)

"He who does a moral act associates himself with God in His creative work." (Shabbat, 10a.)

"Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward; rather be like servants who serve their master not for the sake of receiving a reward." (Abot; I,3.)

An understanding of ourselves as individuals is now a part of our conscious awareness. We have begun to know who we are. Moreover, using this awareness of ourselves, we have initiated the task of learning who others are. We acknowledge our need for other people and their need of us. However, now we are met by a strange problem. It is perplexing.

The problem

How are we to implement these novel awarenesses? All right, so we recognize the dialogue that must become an integral part of living, meaningful existence. The words seem bland on our tongues. The ideas tend to be sterile. We are supposed to act with a consciousness of our own inherent divinity and with an active, not passive, realization of the divine spark that ignites every human soul. All this seems very lovely. It would even make a good sermon. But we want something concrete. Let's talk about the real world. Theorizing is for the intellects and the bookish scholars!

What does Judaism Mean?

What value system does Judaism bring to your mind? This was the precise interrogation that I posed to a small congregation in northern Georgia. A revealing response ensued. Remember, these are "common folks," just like you and me. No scholarly sophistication was present, just sincere thoughtful remarks. The congregants replied: "It can give you a code of living...I look to Judaism to hear what Judaism is and to reinforce what I do...to tell me what I should do...Ethics and a pattern of living, a moral code, speaking of myself in relation to other people with whom I come in contact...(then, another congregant disagreed) She expects to be told how to act. No, I don't, but to act knowing I am acting justly. I do want to make my own decision and to know I am doing rightly... (Another man remarks) To me it brings out Judaism as a way of life...Judaism is an ethical code, ethics for living..." The congregants in this small community were enthusiastic and forthright. They spoke what they

really thought. They apparently looked to their religion for a methodology of approach to life. They live real lives. They know the exhaustion of a week's work in the department store or in the furniture factory. They know the problems of family living. They turn themselves in prayerful posture towards the teachings of their tradition in order that they might receive answers, concrete replies.

Rabbinic tradition says

Notice the quotations presented at the beginning of this chapter. Of what are they speaking? To what do they refer? What key insights do they offer to the adherent? The first quotation suggests that man must live in a manner that could be termed "holy." The premise accepted is the existence of the One Living God of truth and justice. To proclaim an idle belief in Deity is not enough. One's actions must betray this belief and faith. To imitate the attributes of God is to sanctify His Name and to glorify Him on earth. Jews need to be holy simply because the Lord is holy, say the rabbis. Purity of person is the requisite of moral perfection.

But how to be holy? Think about the second quotation. What emanates from one's mouth as well as the behavior which one manifests are keys to holiness. The total human being is involved. Forethought is required for religious living. Consider the subsequent effect of your words and actions upon other human beings. Be cautious in living. Do all this because of the justice of God.

Will this please God? Is this what Judaism asks? Just to be a decent fellow? The third quotation concisely states the spirit of the rabbis. Attitude is most important. We perform as we do because we feel as we do. Man's role in the world is necessary and

bound up in the ongoing work of Creation. And he who acts with righteousness, he who does a moral act, participates in the holy work of Creation. Creation is an everyday occurrence, not just when a baby is born or when a flower blooms. Creation happens every moment that I share a part of life with you...in school, at work, or at play. Creation occurs in family living. Creation takes place in business transactions. The moral act, the ethical deed in all of the varied vicissitudes of living, of ongoing Creation, brings man closer to an actual awareness of the Divine. Moral and spiritual perfection in human interchange is possible as part of the creative aspect of each human personality. God is reached or attained in this manner.

Why should you do it? Wouldn't it be easier to move and march along life's highways just as personal whims motivate one? Why bother oneself with these time-honored platitudes? They are but a display of watered-down easy ethics. But maybe there will be some reward for a job well done. If you are a "good boy," maybe God the Father will reward you or compensate you for your trouble. Now, consider the last quotation above. The motive or the intent behind the deed, according to the rabbis, is as important as the deed itself. What you feel and think and experience privately and personally before you act and while you perform is as important as what you are doing. Man is not compartmentalized or departmentalized. He operates as a total unit. His powers and capacities are unified. The structure of man is composed of the physical and the spiritual, the mental and the emotional. All work in unison with each other. What is going on, on

the outside of man, must conform to what is occurring on his inside. The package cannot just be wrapped in pretty ribbon and colored paper. The contents of the human being are as significant as his outer garb and public display. Weren't the rabbis amazingly intelligent? Wonderful! How aware they were of the nature of man. Their awareness and keen understanding of human nature led them to enact laws and legislation. What emerged was a code for living.

Ethics and Morality

What does all this mean? It means, my friends, that we must get ourselves involved in the problem of ethics and morality. Each human relationship requires the beneficial prescription of a system of values for living. Isn't all this a bit complicated? Aren't we getting too philosophical for comfort? No. This can be all brought down to earth and concretized for us soon. First, though, let us examine what we are talking about.

The aim or goal of all morality, all concern for the incorporation of ethics, is the sanctification of life, the perfect moralization of human society. For you and me, sanctification means a serious and profound view of life. Many things take on importance, holy things become the most important. Whatever, in our estimation, is good and valuable we place on an ethical pedestal. The interest that we exert in life, or the standard by which we rate what we do, varies greatly; it is a scale with numberless degrees, but that which man considers holy occupies the highest point of the scale. The holy has the most value for man.[3]

Usually, we consider a world of the holy and a separate world of that which is profane. Our job is to make all of life part of the world of the holy. You may consider as holy a Torah or a Mezuzah or a Sabbath service. The Bible, for you, may be holy. Human life may be holy. Beyond the world of what we may call "holy objects" like these, there is the world of ethical holiness. This is removed from, and in rabbinic Judaism has more priority than, the world of ritually holy objects. The world of Holy objects like those listed is merely symbolic of something higher and better. Not as a symbol, but as a genuine and real higher world, the moral sphere, that which takes place between man and man, assumes its stature in the natural world, the world that we all know and in which we live. The idea, the notion of ethical holiness derives from the holiness of God; and this becomes the aim of all morality in Jewish living.

According to the rabbinic conception of Judaism, the idea of the ethically holy cannot be separated from everyday human existence. Ethics are not just for books or "bull sessions." Ethics are not only for the Temple. Ethics are not only a part of the contents of the Union Prayerbook. Necessarily, ethics are bound up in all of living and in all of human life. From the Jewish point of view, religious holiness, that is, perfect religiousness, cannot be conceived apart from the moral life. Our very consciousness of God is based upon moral notions.[4]

In rabbinic literature and teaching, the Divine Being, and therefore the knowledge of His moral attributes, combined with man's endeavor to emulate them in man's own way. "In a word, the funda-

mental doctrine of Judaism reads: Because the moral is divine, therefore you shall be moral, and because the divine is moral, you shall become like unto God. It may be said that the highest form and ultimate purpose of human life is likeness to God, and the ethical ideals are conceived as attributes of God, in whose image man was created, and whose copy and image it is man's task to strive to become."[5] Rabbinic literature is but a manifestation of the outpouring of the Jew's heart. There exists actually no formal statement of ethics in Judaism. But through a study of rabbinic literature, one comes to deduce what the ethics of Judaism are.

The Ethics of Judaism are Social

The ethics of Judaism are characteristically social in nature. They can be universal in application. One need not be a Jew to be able to perform them. But to perform them, to heed them, to walk in their ways, indicates that one is acting with a Jewish consciousness. Moral knowledge, according to the rabbis, was not created for the Jews alone. But it became the Jewish responsibility to bring the morality and system of ethics to the world of man. The body of ethical teachings of rabbinic literature comprise an overwhelming social consciousness. The Jew was taught to be aware of and concerned for his brother. The social nature of life dictated the nature of what became the Jewish way of life.

The thought that God is the Creator, not only of the Universe, but also of man, of all men, and all are descendants of a single couple created by God, the rabbis of tradition turned to ethical use.

The unity of mankind is an important consideration of their teaching. America's "all-men-are equal" slogan of Independence days was not a novelty to Judaism. The rabbis knew it long before. Akiba taught "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Ben Azai claimed that the sentence, "This is the book of the generations of man," contains a more comprehensive principle. The words, "of man," mean all men in their unity and equality, for, as the same verse continues, all are created "in the likeness of God."

We have mentioned that the rabbis enacted often rigid legalism in their fervent effort to create a proper system of ethics for the Jew. The purpose of divine legislation, so the rabbis taught, is realizable only through the whole of mankind. "God gave Israel the Law that all nations may be made happy by it." (Tanchuma Devarim) The rabbis rejected national limitations and insisted on universality.

The Sanctification of Human Life

The goal of ethics in rabbinic Judaism is the sanctification of all of life. Man is a potentially holy being, created in the image of God. Society is potentially holy, if it mirrors the divinity of Creation. The task of ethics is to define ethical holiness, its character and content. This demands the highest and most exalted form of human conduct. Morality has to be absolutely unconditional. We cannot wait for a rainy day, so to speak. We may not act as the spirit moves us. All times and all places become the realm of the system of ethics that we would promote. No one, no place, no moment is alien to the domain of ethics and morality, in Jewish thought.

The rabbis sought to veritably permeate the atmosphere of living with ethical values and considerations. Why? Only because human life merited it. Simply, to be alive, to exist, merited the highest kind of morality. The elevation of human living to the highest possible level is the true aim of rabbinic Judaism.

The aspirations of the Jewish people, especially of the intellectually elite during rabbinic times, has remained the same -- the highest possible perfection in the art and the science of life. There needs to be, say the rabbis, a healthy respect for learning, piety, and good deeds; the conviction that no matter how difficult man's fate on earth, mortal life is eminently worthwhile.[6]

The society of the rabbis had "no need for a systematic theology based on verbalized assumptions and theories of contemporary science, and built up with logical precision and coherence. The verbalized doctrines to which one appealed in moments of particular temptation or distress were valid independently of their logical relationship to one another. The concepts were real and the propositions true, because without them life, as it was lived, made no sense."[7]

The rabbis explored their theories of ethics amidst the throngs and throes of study and piety. For them, study was more than a method of worship, although it is also that. Study, for the rabbis, was more than a means of acquiring information about their tradition, although it definitely was that too. Most important, study is a method of developing sensitivity to the moral element in the complex issues of human life. In the law of Judaism, in rabbinic

legislation, in Hallacha, we find the mind and the character of the Jewish people exactly and adequately expressed. Laws which bear on the daily round of life of man must be appropriate to express his wishes, being in harmony with his feelings and fitted to satisfy his religious ideals and ethical aspirations.[8] Morality, to be perfect and ideal, must be the expression and the incarnation of holiness. It needs to occupy a unique position amidst all of the other purposes of man. To be holy, the ethical ideal must be independent and absolute. Then, and only then, can it be expected to exert and assert itself with the highest degree of clarity and benevolence. This kind of morality, in rabbinic Judaism, must operate as a total unity.

Man and Ethics

Man enters earthly existence with the native potentiality for holiness. He may become holy through a dynamic self-initiating process or sought-for moral perfection. He does not become a holy person, or a holy being. God alone is holy. Man's obligation, ethically speaking, is to strive for holiness in personal living. His personal value system should reflect qualities of holiness. Sanctification is an ongoing, almost infinite, task. It is never really completed. With each ethical achievement, the labor is renewed and enhanced. The rabbis taught in this regard: "Virtue is the reward of virtue." Improvement, the movement, the progression from the "good" to the "better" is the goal of rabbinic ethical teaching. My father was never quite satisfied with my own academic accomplishment. I recall that when I brought home a report card, while I was still

in high school, my father looked it over and then admonished me: "Can't you do any better?" The report card was "straight A's!"

Man, as the pilot of his own vessel, shapes his life into a complete whole, and if planned according to rabbinic writ, into an impressive work of art. There is true art in ethical living. It takes talent and skill; one must be adept in the area of human morality. Life itself is considered a vocation. The aggregate of a man's activities must form a unit that can be termed decent living. The sanctification, the perfect moralization, of life requires, therefore, that the good in man shall be more than an impulse; it must be an enduring attribute, a constantly active force.[9]

We speak easily and often glibly of "the good" in life and "the good" in man. But this abstraction called "the good" became a dominating force in the rabbinic code of living. The idea of "the good," the conception of morality, must incorporate itself into the individual, they taught. The "good" and the man become one and the same in rabbinic thought. They are synonymous. Man, as the personification of "the good" can then find it in his power to contribute "good" acts to the art of living. The "good man" becomes manifest in "good deeds," or ethics. Because fire is fire, it is hot and it burns. Because water is water, it is wet and it soaks. Because man is man, he is good and does good.

How Man May be Ethical

One needs only to quickly examine the enormous body of rabbinic teaching in order to comprehend that the rabbis achieved ethical living through the legalization of morality. What was legal could

guarantee what was ethical and moral. Right living became insured in law. Law restricted immorality and prescribed ethical living. Rabbinic literature is permeated with law and custom, tradition and folkway. Throughout this massive literary creativity there was a sense of ethics bound up in the law. Man observed "the law"; he practiced ethics because of a willingness of heart and mind. He desired to do all and as much as was humanly possible to attain unto perfect moralization in his own life. Obedience to God was a religious obligation; obedience to the moral law was an ethical responsibility. Sanctification of human life was possible in the devotion to God of man. According to the rabbis, obedience to God's law, adherence to the code of living was the noblest form of devotion to God.

Man has freedom of will. He may pick and choose and decide for himself. He has freedom and liberty of personality. But man can attain a true form of liberty only by attachment to a high standard of living. Ethical demands were given to man "only to purify all creatures." (Bereshith Rabbah, ch. 44) All others of man's inclinations become subject to his overpowering will to achieve purity through performance of commandments, or Mitzvot. The Mitzvot comprise the essence of rabbinical ethics.

Man is not exclusively a thinking, intellectual being. He possesses feelings and emotions as well. He loves and hates, feels warmth and sensitivities. Genuine religiosity consists, not in the intellectual and academic grasp of dogmatic precepts, not in dedicated acceptance of certain doctrines, and the execution of prescribed

ceremonies and rituals, but in the exaltation of the soul, the devotion of the self, which are experienced spiritually as religious feelings.[10]

It is in the ethical realm that feelings are of paramount importance. Man acts decisively when he earnestly feels something in his heart, as well as when he conceives it by his intellect. "The All-merciful requires the heart," teaches the Talmud with emphasis. (Sanhedrin 106n) Knowledge and action with regard to ethics should become also a matter of the heart, the feelings and emotions of man. The laws of ethics must be experienced emotionally; they need to be embraced with dedication. A true athlete is absorbed in his baseball. A true dancer becomes emotionally involved in her dancing. Painting for the artist is more than a mere form of discipline. Right living, morality, ethics, call it what you will, ought to become an integral part of the human personality. For the heart acts as the mediator between the idea and its realization, between the intellectual perception of the moral ordinance on the one hand, and the volition, the will, the desire, on the other hand.[11]

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos expresses the thought: "Great is the Torah! (Law, ethics) If it were not for the Torah, for the moral law, heaven and earth would not continue to exist" (Nedarim 32a). Moral living, uprightness, and common decency insure the continuation of mankind. Man's very existence presupposes the operative power of ethics. In the rabbinic view, man has two instincts, the one evil, the other good. They are called by the Hebrew word, Yezer. It is totally up to man which of his inclinations he follows. The most

important factor in the rabbinic view of man is "God created the evil impulse, but He also created the Torah, the moral law, as a spice (remedy, antidote, corrective) for it" (Kiddushin 30b; Baba Bathra 16a).

Why Practice Ethics

We come now to an important consideration in our theory of ethics and morality. Why care at all about them? What is the motivation? What is the motive? What is the intent? Are we seeking rewards in what may or may not be the after-life? Are we seeking to gain material compensation in this earthly existence? Are we secretly hoping that God will smile on us with favor if we adhere to His ethical code, His moral demands, His system of Mitzvot? Do we pray that we might receive an "A" on the Algebra final examination; and, in return, we promise God that we shall in the future practice ethics? Do we make a bargain with God, that if he makes us rich, we will engage in ethical living? The rabbis teach something different.

According to rabbinic literature, ethics are engaged in solely for their own sake. There is joy in performing the Mitzvot, the commandments. The sense of security, the feeling of accomplishment is pervasive when one is ethical. One is ethical because his deeds are ethical. One's intellectual faith in ethics is not enough. "I believe in ethics; I like morality." These responses are not sufficient. You know, actions speak louder than words. And even if the rabbis were not familiar with this old adage, they certainly taught its application. The reward of having done something "right" and "good" is to have done it. The rabbis were not philosophically or psycho-

logically old-fashioned.

To the Jewish people, their distance from perfection was evident not only because of their lofty conception of the ideal, but also and especially from their knowledge of human nature. An infinite task had been laid on finite man. "The day is brief, and there is much to be done." (Pirke Avot) Man's capacity, which can never really go beyond the limits of the earthly, is called upon by the rabbis to fulfill the commandment that is infinite.[12] Quoting again from the "Sayings of the Fathers": "It is not within thy power to finish the task, nor is it within thy liberty to abandon it." This contrast between man's greatness and his limitations, between his task and his powers, between the divine and the human, between the Beyond and the Here in his life...becomes all the more deeply felt because of the continual reminders of man's personal responsibility, of the obligation that rests upon him to choose and decide, of his accountability to God, and of the stern thought of judgment.[13]

What we claim for ourselves as human beings represents what our fellow men may rightfully claim for themselves. These are rights given to man by God. What we owe to God is to be paid first and chiefly to His children. Throughout our relationships and associations with others, we discover the sum of the duties which God has demanded from us. With other human beings, we can manifest our love of God and our delight in His service. The Talmud says: "Love God in the men whom He has created."

We are ethical, then, because we wish to serve God. We engage in decent living, then, because we delight in God's service. We

value and esteem morality, then, because we may show our love and devotion to God by serving and caring for His creatures, our fellow human beings. The love of mankind is tantamount to the love of God. Ethics is Godliness. Holiness is morality. Righteous living is decent living. We do it because we want to do it. The performance of ethics, of Mitzvot, fills our hearts, our very being, with joy. This joy of the heart begets a sense of meaningfulness in life. That is why we are here on earth right now. To accomplish this is to accomplish our purpose in life. Many people question why they were put here. "Why am I alive?" they sometimes rhetorically inquire. Rabbinic Judaism has an answer.

The rabbis recognized three stages in man's conduct: intention, articulation, and action.[14] They were concerned with the motive or purpose that carries man into action. They wondered how he would verbalize his desire or intention. And they valued how he would purposefully perform a deed. In prayer, it is the direction of one's mind towards Heaven that gives the prayer its importance and significance. Kavanah, thoughtful, sincere, heartfelt, intention is uppermost in prayer. It is not enough for a Jew to merely utter the words of the watchword of his faith, the Shema. He must carefully and thoughtfully consider the meaning behind the words of the Shema in order to achieve its full effect. The same is true in the rabbinic conception of ethics. Man must participate in ethical living with his whole being. Ethics are not merely a case of physical activity in a given direction. Ethics demand that man responds to life and to others with his whole self. One does what he does not in the expectation of reward. He is ethical leshemah, for its own sake.

Leshemah, ethics for their own sake, was a major concern of the rabbis. The proof of purity of motive and intention in the performance of a good deed is its joyful execution. The rabbis called it "Simcha shel mitzvah," the joy of fulfilling a commandment (Shabbat 30b). "The Presence of God does not rest in man's grievous mood but in his joyful mood through the fulfillment of a mitzvah" (Pesachim 117a). "The Torah teaches proper conduct, and that is, that when one fulfills a commandment he should do so with a joyous heart" (Leviticus Rabbah 34, 9). Ethical living brings with it its own fruits and rewards. Apart from the natural procreative powers of man, he should strive to beget ethics in his life and in the lives of others.

The ethics of Judaism are found in the teachings of Judaism. They are based on the fundamental concepts and teachings of rabbinic Judaism, based primarily on the Bible. Jewish ethics show how the Jew has acted, as well as how he ought to act, under the consecration of the principles and precepts of his religion. The whole rabbinic system of ethics is based upon humanitarian laws of righteousness. The scope of Jewish ethics embraces not only the Jew, but man, the fellow creature. The source and ideal of all morality is God, in whose ways man is to walk. The motive of moral action should be the pure love of God. The principle of rabbinic ethics is that the very essence of God and His law is moral perfection. Religion and ethics are, therefore, intimately interwoven, for it is the motive which decides the moral value, the good or evil character of the action. Personal values through rabbinic literature derive from the rabbinic

conception of ethics. Now, we shall further see how they may be applied in our own lives.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREENHOUSE

IV

The Greenhouse

"A home where Torah is not heard will not endure." (Intr. Tikkune Zohar, 6a)

"A man rejoices when he dwells in his home." (Y. Moed Katon, 2, 4.)

"If a man sin against those of his own household, he will inevitably come to sin against his neighbor." (Tanna de-be Eliyahu, 289.)

"He who loves his wife as himself; who honors her more than himself; who rears his children in the right path, and who marries them off at the proper time of their life, concerning him it is written: 'And thou wilt know that thy home is at peace.'" (Yebamot, 62.)

Background

We have dealt with the problem of our own identity. We have begun to delve into the matter of "who we are" as divinely-created man. Furthermore, we have observed that it is human, desirably so, that we need others. Our own lives assume added meaning, when our existence is fulfilled in association with others. Moreover, we have noted that, in order to successfully and beneficially get along with others, we must actively practice certain guidelines or principles in the daily round of life. Ethics and morality are inseparable from religion, and a belief in God and a commitment to Judaism presuppose that our energies will be spent in striving for human decency. What we do and how we do it bespeak the type of religion to which we adhere

and which we profess.

But, we may inquire, how do we begin to know ourselves? Where do we first perceive the mirrored-reflection of our own identity? Where and how do we learn that man needs others? And where do we first learn ethics and morality? If you have carefully noted the rabbinic quotations at the beginning of this chapter, you will be readily able to provide the answer to these queries. The home, the family, and family relationships provide the "greenhouse" wherein these awarenesses are learned. As a horticulturist cultivates and nurtures young seedlings in his greenhouse, in preparation for their "adult" and "social" life among the other plants of the great outdoors, so too do the home and the family provide fertile soil and the climate in which young men and women may be prepared for the future. Also, the context of the home environment makes available to man the opportunities for self-fulfillment and self-enhancement through the marriage relationship and by means of parental involvement. The consciousness of the rabbis in this regard is clearly evident in rabbinic literature.

A Modern Problem

In a large, metropolitan community in the Midwest, a meeting was recently held, the nature of which seems to point up the potential gravity of the problem of family relations and the family structure in American society. It was noted dramatically by a well-known juvenile court judge that "Jewish family life was deteriorating!" Conditions among the youth of the community had motivated his outcry. The impetus behind the community's realization of the problem led to

the formation of a Jewish Youth Advisory Committee, representing the synagogues and temples and a wide section of the community. Those participating in the preliminary and subsequent discussions and seminars stated that "We have experienced a social, economic, and technical revolution during the past twenty years. The accelerated pace of living and social pressures have indicated the necessity of reviewing our responsibility..." These leading citizens went on to indicate that "Jewish parents have an obligation to give their children a set of Jewish values." As an illustrative summary, a brief exposition of guidelines of a Jewish family ideology, as culled by the rabbis of rabbinic literature, was presented:

1. Family purity and integrity (Taharath Hamishp'chah)
2. Parental responsibility in child-rearing (Gidul Bonim Uvonoth)
3. Filial respect and the generations earning each other's respect (Kivod Av Va-em)
4. Family compatibility, wholesome interrelationships, wholeness (peace) and a "working" serenity (Sholom Bayit)
5. Conduct that reflects well on the Jewish community and religion (Kiddush Ha-Shem)

"These values are not inflexible 'do's' and 'don'ts' but are principles by which to live. As young people mature, they desire more freedom. They usually welcome direction, but they resent arbitrary orders. They want and need the understanding support of their parents." (Parents' Meeting, Jewish Community Center, June 20, 1966, 8 P.M.)

The preliminary meetings of a steering committee were later expanded into a general community parents' meeting. "Pro's" and "con's" were heard and weighed. Opinions and arguments filled the air. What emerged was a community's evident alarm with regard to social change as it affected younger citizens. The citizenry seemed incensed over the problem. But their upset and concern gave rise to a specific statement of the nature of the problem. The conclusions appeared to be traceable to the breakdown of Jewish family life in modern American society.

The rabbis of rabbinic literature have much to say that relates to this problem. The concern of Jewish family living was primary in their philosophy. Their theology dictated a hallowing and a sanctification of what occurred in the environs of the home. Marriage was considered a supreme blessing, and children, a fulfillment of creative living. According to the rabbis, man learned how to be "man" in the home. Family life was the dynamically creative process from which there emerged a whole, unified individual.

However, before we more closely examine the teachings of the rabbis in this regard, it might be wise to further note some of the conclusions and concerns evoked at this parents' meeting. Profuse was the dialogue and verbal interchange. Varied were the arguments. The problems which were cited in the printed summary that followed the meeting, however, serve to point out the major areas of concern. And these might well serve for our own fruitful discussion:

- early social pressures put upon 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys and girls.

- forced socialization of children far beyond their readiness.
- the thesis that ten, eleven, and twelve-year-olds should not be pushed beyond their years.
- SOCIAL CONTACTS, CLOTHING, and SCHOOL.
- Boy-girl parties for 5th-6th graders should be discouraged.
- 5th-7th graders be permitted to informally experiment with dancing when they are ready for it.
- Children should inform parents where they are going for an activity.
- Bar Mitzvah celebrations should be kept simple.
- children should not be left at shopping centers or restaurants.
- clothing should be appropriate for the age group and should be in good taste.
- stresses and pressures seem to begin in varying degrees in different areas of the city.
- what are the normal parent-child relationships at this age and what are the danger signals which parents can recognize?
- relieve the pressures on youngsters and parents for a more meaningful family experience.
- drinking among teenagers presents an increasingly serious problem in our Jewish community.
- no one has the moral right to serve any alcoholic beverage to other people's children.
- open houses became a public problem...disturbing the peace, drinking, vandalism, traffic problems, late hours, and sexual activity.

- adult supervision and respect for the Sabbath.
- the car is more than a means of transportation... a status symbol, both in terms of the adolescent's view of himself and how others see him.
- boy-girl relationships are a vital part of the total development of the maturing person. Dating provides one opportunity for the most important social relationship which a young person can have.
- the ninth grade is the earliest year in which dating should begin.
- double-dating or group get-togethers are preferred.
- single dating is premature.
- a boy should be given an opportunity to meet his date's parents.
- steady dating should be discouraged.
- practical and moral help in handling the pressures of sexual power.
- the sexual revolution, the flood-tide of advertising, overly-frank talk, misinformation, cynical exploitations of sex.
- girls who are virgins when they graduate from the twelfth grade are rapidly becoming a minority group.

Certainly, the rabbis were not so clairvoyant as to be able, in their wisdom, to foresee all of the above listed problems. Naturally, it would be foolish for us to assume that they even commented

on half of these specific problems. However, what the rabbis had to say with reference to marriage, with regard to parent-child relationships, and with reference to family life may give us some direction in our quest for some solutions to these "matters." The rabbinic point of view may lead us aright in our search for values for living. A very personal value system or code of conduct may evolve from our discussion of the rabbinic conception of Jewish family life.

It will not be our purpose here to supply answers and solutions to the problematical areas listed in the above report. But we may be able to set our compasses by the teachings of the rabbis. We will not attempt to be professionally sociological or psychological as we explore family life, although the rabbis were, more often than not, amazingly up-to-date in their "rabbinic" views. The rabbis' scheme of things is happily in accord, very often, with current psychological findings. Be that as it may, herein we shall only "scratch the surface" of the problem. Our purpose, consequently, will be in fact to present the philosophy of the family according to rabbinic literature. With the knowledge of this "under our belts," we then may be able to deal more effectively on our own with the problems of the community parents' meeting. The rabbinic point of view, even in this Space-Age Twentieth Century, may have some relevance. Let us endeavor to derive our own personal values for its value system.

The Jewish Family

The Jewish family is a "thing" esteemed, but often demeaned. It is, perhaps, the most cherished possession of the Jew. It abides in the "home"wherein man makes his palace. The family of the Jew is that group of people which permits man to be, in fact, man. In the

bonds of family life, man realizes a higher destiny. He learns to love and be loved. He learns to give unselfishly and freely of himself. He serves as a helpmate and as a friend or "pal." He acts as an educator and as an instructor in the wisdom of living. He assumes the status of king or queen, and knows the feeling of reward that comes from give-and-take relationships. He learns the responsibility of providing and sustaining and upbuilding. He administers the skill of creative living. He helps others to fulfill themselves. He is partners with God in the work of Creation. This is Jewish family life.

In family living, man assumes the "director's role. "Every man is king in his own home." (Abot de-R. Nathan, 28.) As he is the leader of family group living, so is man the bearer of the responsibility of the family. To be "king," does not merely imply that man is the recipient of wealth, riches, honor, and obeisance. Rather, man, because of this unique role, assumes the "yoke of the kingdom of heaven," in that he must try to 'bring heaven a little bit closer to earth" in the realm of his family abode.

In the family, varying age groups and the two sexes engage in an interplay that often determines what the individual family member will become in the world at large. What is learned and practiced at home becomes the mode of conduct for all the world. What a man and his family are under their one roof suggests what they will do in society in general. The roof of Heaven itself becomes comparable and allegorical to the physical shelter of the rented apartment or newly-built suburban dwelling. For what occurs under the microcosm

of family life is as noteworthy as that which takes place under the macrocosm of the heaven of God's universe.

Family relationships test the individual's know-how and fidelity in group dynamics. The type of human being he will be, the brother he is, the sister she is, the father he has been, the mother she is, all these will directly influence the sort of friend he will become, the type of business partner he will become, the sort of marriage he will later enjoy, the type of life that he will lead. Family life, according to the rabbis, is sacred and blessed. As a result of the mercy, kindness, and benevolence of God, family life is to be cherished. There is no room for infidelity or unfaithfulness or insincerity in this form of group living. Deceit learned at home becomes the detriment of society when practiced in public. Lying and falsehood observed in a home undermine the individual's potential worth and deter his healthful development. Family roles are not to be tampered with by "playing" them. They must be sincerely, devotedly, and honestly earned. Lack of wholeheartedness in family relationships "is like rottenness in fruit" (Sotah,3). "Immorality in a home is like a worm in a fruit" (Sotah, 3). They destroy from within. One germ is enough to stimulate a massive disease. As soon as one link in the chain of family living begins to wear out or is broken, the total bond seems to begin to decay.

Human beings are most fully themselves when at home. The superficial disguises and costumes of society, the apparel worn on the job or at school, is most usually discarded in the home environment. Man's defenses "are down" most commonly at home. His inclina-

tion or tendency to wrong that which is most near and dear to him is strongly apparent in family living. "If a man sins against those of his own household, he will inevitably come to sin against his neighbor" (Tanna de-be Eliyahu 289). If the natural human tendency becomes a custom of his home, when a man guards not well the art of family living, most likely his dealings with his fellow man at work and at play will quickly deteriorate. Sins learned at home, what one "gets away with" within the confines of his own home, become the habits practiced in greater society. So the world soon becomes the scapegoat, as it were, of man's inability to manage things effectively in his own home. It has been suggested by many a new commentator: "How can we expect to solve the problem of World Wars and a situation like Viet Nam, if we cannot deal even with our own problems in our homes?" Family living is challenging and often difficult.

Different human personalities, human desires, jealousies and envies, competitions, and unfair practices are not alien to the hallowed walls of a home. Peer relationships and the well-known and often-mentioned sibling rivalries run rampant in a home. Hatred is first learned and malice first felt. The simple problem of "just plain getting along" is manifest in the family. Wives and husbands often succumb to the bacteria of untrustworthiness, and their offspring learn well the obvious lessons. Equilibrium seems to steal its way out of the home when any problem knocks on the door. The ever-present and bewildering problem of family finances often snatches the foundation from under the family structure. But what to do when

all this happens? How to face it all? Where is the doctor of family relations? What is the prescription?

A very clear and even precise value system is set forth in rabbinic literature. The rabbis knew only too well the dimensions and the extent of these very problems. Not much seemed to be alien to their ken. With a keen eye, with a shrewd awareness, and with a thoughtful understanding of the Jewish family, its "why's" and "wherefore's," the rabbis commented and taught. For family living, for them, was a true art if practiced correctly. Nowhere better, nowhere more appropriately could man begin to know himself, his fellow man, and the world around him. Values? Commandments? Mitzvot? They were numerous.

A home, if we accept the view of the rabbis, is a place wherein all the connotations and ramifications of what is truly "Jewish" become realizable. All that was revealed to Moses by God at Sinai, and subsequently to all of the later prophets and sages, is first and foremost practiceable in the home. Injunctions and decrees are too many to mention. But one thing is clear. "A home where Torah is not heard will not endure" (Intr. Tikkune Zohar, 6a). A home where no value system is present will crumble. A family that observes and practices no ethics and morality in group living will stumble in failure. "Torah," personal values for family living, made the home and the family the primary sanctuary and place of worship in Jewish life.

In the rabbinic view, every human being who has a mind of his own is responsible for his actions. Family members are actually not

legally responsible for what each of them might do. The laws of God do, on the other hand, hold man responsible if he is the cause, even indirectly, of a criminal or immoral action of another. Thus, he who is at the head of a community or family, and the related family members themselves, become morally and ethically obligated to one another. Every family member assumes, if only indirectly, a responsibility for the other's conduct and approach to life. Even through non-action or by means of a passive attitude, a family member may be considered as "guilty" if his relative practices indecency. Family responsibilities are mutual and are shared in Judaism.

We recall, from our first encounter with the problem, that each individual is sacred as created "in the image or likeness of God." All men are products of the goodness of God's creation. The human personality is sacred. No man is the property of another. This philosophy holds sway for the rabbis as they look upon family life. It remains the task of every family member to insure and guarantee the sanctity of life of his fellow-member. The relationships are precisely described and delineated by the rabbis. The obligations may vary, but the principle is the same. As your family relation, I am obligated, if I possess any values at all, to guarantee for you your human dignity. If you are lacking in wholeness of person, if your view is impaired, if your lower impulses tend to govern your actions, it is my duty to strengthen and uplift you as a human being. And finally, it is my job simply to love you. For to love one's family, to experience true love in family living, is to begin to learn to love God. One best serves God as he effectively and lovingly serves his family.

The First Step: Marriage

The most sacred human relationship, as interpreted by the rabbis, is that of marriage. "Wedded bliss" is best understood not with a smile or a sneer, but rather with a rabbinic perspective. The rabbis exalted the status of marriage in religious life, and endowed it with supreme importance. On the Marriage Certificate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations there appears the interpretation: "No man without woman; no woman without man; and neither without God." Marriage is looked upon as the partnership or relationship that permits God's Presence, His Shechinah, to dwell on earth among men. The work of Creation is most fully realized in and through marriage.

The sentiments linked with marriage according to tradition may be seen in a contemporary interpretation. In a midwestern congregation, each year the rabbi makes possible a ceremony whereby he reconsecrates the wedding vows of notable celebrants. During the ceremony, the couples recite in unison: "We consecrate ourselves anew unto one another in love and faithfulness, in truth and uprightness, willing to share in each other's burdens..." (Marriage Reconsecration Service, January 27, 1967, 8:15 P.M., Temple Sholom, Cincinnati, Ohio). To enter into marriage is to consecrate and dedicate oneself to specific purposes and goals. One completes himself or herself as a human being, one glorifies the human personality, as he enters into the union that is marriage. Marriage, furthermore, indicates a total sharing, a genuine and unlimited give-and-take that is effected by two human beings. The rabbinic view of marriage, it

must be noted, does not suggest that one personality merges into that of the other. Rather, two separate individuals dedicate themselves to the idea and the ideal that their living together will eventually enhance their own existence and that of others. Their promises to one another at the wedding ceremony indicate their willing ness to insure, for life, that their partner in life will find it possible somehow to fulfill himself.

The total human being is involved in the marriage relationship. Every aspect of his being participates, whether actively or passively, in the contractual agreement. The covenant of marriage suggests that all that a man is will become possible in marriage, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Realistically was the human being observed by the rabbis as they considered this matter of marriage. They taught that "a bride who has fine eyes is fine throughout" (Taanit,24). It was their opinion that the key to a woman's inner recesses of personality was in her eyes. Honesty, truth, and sincerity were readily discovered by gazing into the eyes of one's betrothed. In many instances the eyes of a beloved spoke when words found no way.

Total mutuality and sharing exists in the marriage relationship from the very beginning. For "a groom cannot go under the canopy unless his bride permits him" (Wayyikra Rabbah, 9,6). Respect for one another's wishes, needs, and desires is necessary. And the rabbis noted how difficult indeed was it for one to find the suitable mate to make all this possible. Compatibility in marriage was a question for the experts with which the ordinary layman often fumble. "Mating is as hard as the cleaving of the waters of the Red Sea"

(Sotah, 2). Correctly observing the problems inherent in human nature, the sages remarked: "It is not wise to take a wife of superior rank - rather go down a step in choosing a wife" (Yebamot, 63a). Wise they were in the peculiar ways of men. Perhaps by doing this, a man could better guarantee his mate's deep appreciation of her husband and his work!

Human creativity is an elusive problem, difficult to confine and master. Potentiality in human beings often remains bottled up or at least stifled. But marriage affords man the opportunity to elicit from himself and from his beloved the finest possible consequences of his natural endowments. "God creates new worlds constantly. In what way? By causing marriages to take place" (Zohar, i, 89a). And it is for such high and lofty purposes that marriage should be contemplated. Marriage, it may be granted, partakes of the nature of a contract. But material personal gain is not to be expected from this transaction. "He who weds for money will have delinquent offspring" (Kiddushin, 70). The desirable results of any marriage are not to be found in the realm of the material. Marriage deals with the dignity and the sanctity of the human personality, and as such, implies a nobler purpose as its initial motivation. The result of fraud is fraud. The offspring, the progeny, and the by-products of a "businesslike" marriage, or a marriage "of convenience," will be as troublesome and as ill-placed as the purpose.

One of man's purposes on earth is to wed and raise a family. This is not solely to procreate the species. Marriage allows man to be as he is. Man is not looked upon as "complete" until such time

that he is married. "When a soul is sent down from Heaven, it is a combined male and female soul. The male part enters the male child and the female part enters the female. If they are worthy, God causes them to reunite in marriage. This is true mating" (Zohar, iii, 43b). All of life is definitely not available to man if he be single. Man was not created to live alone. He needs others to supplement his own existence. Only then does life become meaningful. "The Shechinah (God's Presence) can rest only upon a married man, because an unmarried man is but half a man, and the Shechinah does not rest upon that which is imperfect" (Zohar Hadash, v, 59a).

> "Rabbi Jacob said: 'He who has no wife remains without good, without a helper, without joy, without a blessing and without atonement.' Others add: 'Without peace (welfare) and without life.'
>
> Rabbi Hiyya ben Gamla said: 'He is not a whole man, as it is said: "And He called their (male and female) name Man."'
>
> Others said: 'The unmarried man diminishes the likeness of God.'" (Bereshit Rabbah, 17,2; Yebamot 62,63)

As the rabbis raised the status of marriage as an incentive to conduct for human beings, they noted a value system that was dedicated to the worth of the individual. From the ability to love, cherish, and live with another human being, the rabbis suggested that man would be able to tackel the task of loving and living with many men and women; and finally, he would learn the true love of God. Furthermore, what man did not natively possess, or of what man was incapable;

woman did possess in her nature, and woman could indeed do. A good woman made a better man. (I am sure that you all have heard the phrase, even if it is often uttered with facetiousness: "Behind every great man, there's a woman.") "That man's life is indeed enriched who is wedded to a virtuous woman "(Shabbat, 25b). The virtues of one's wife may be used by man to help him pull himself up "by his own bootstraps."

The rabbis had an obvious flair for understanding human nature. They knew well what would best complement a man's natural instincts. "Among the necessary qualifications of a good wife are a gentle temper, tact, modesty, industry" (Sotah, 3b). These qualities in a woman made her a desirable mate. They would further aid her to become a fine mother. Although it was incumbent upon woman to serve man as his helpmate, his housekeeper, his partner in romance and love, the mother of his children, the light of his household, it certainly was man's duty, according to the rabbis, to place her on a type of pedestal. Perhaps this was in recognition of her manifold goodnesses to him. "He who loves his wife as himself, and honors her more than himself -- to him the Scriptural promise is uttered: 'Thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace.'" (Yebamot 62b). "Thy wife has been given to thee in order that thou mayest realize with her life's great plan; she is not thine to vex or grieve. Vex her not, for God notes her tears" (Ketubot 61a). And to discover true happiness in one's life, elusive as it is, one need only turn to the countenance of his wife. "A wife is the joy of a man's heart" (Shabbat, 152).

As man learns to give of himself, freely, willingly, unconditionally, as he does in marriage, he learns the art of altruism

and selflessness. He learns to forget his own selfish needs as they are superseded by his wife's and his children's. Fulfillment is known, meaning in living is tasted, perhaps, for the first time, in the marriage and subsequent family enterprise. "A man should eat less than he can afford, and should honor his wife and children more than he can afford" (Hullin, 84).

The power of a wife in the marriage relationship is observed with frankness by the rabbis. Often, they recognize, she is the determining factor in his development and maturation.

> "A pious couple lived together for ten years, and having no children, were divorced. The man married an impious woman and she transformed him into a man of wickedness. The pious woman married a man of wickedness and she transformed him into a man of goodness. The Sages declare: 'Woman determines man's behavior.'" (Bereshit Rabbah, 17)

Woman's natural sensitivity and often greater awareness of other human beings is necessary for man if he is to realize his better nature. She is more often capable of showing and expressing her emotions. She is the more romantic of the two. Today we might call it "woman's intuition." The rabbis knew about it long ago. "God has endowed women with a special sense of wisdom which man lacks" (Niddah, 45). It is woman's obligation to bring this quality to her husband.

The marriage relationship, if practiced according to the rabbis' teachings, would teach man and woman the primary lessons of life. As a diamond-carver works on his diamond, so the couple who

worked at their marriage with diligence would "tool out" for themselves "jewels" of personalities. Moreover, their marriage would set an example for all the world. All men would come and see and learn from the manner in which they led their lives. The esteem in which they regarded one another would "rub off" on other men, so as to inspire them to nobler lives. As a blessing from God, a perfect union and communion between husband and wife was inspirationally instructive for the rest of mankind. Furthermore, from the love of man and woman subsequently flowed the unbounded love of parenthood. Children would first learn of love, of life, of the world, of other men, from the marriage relationship which they perceived to exist in and through their parents.

One need only submit himself to the task of reading through the volumes of legislation, prohibition, and statute that surround the matter of Jewish marriage. The rabbis earnestly sought to protect and preserve the dignity of the man and woman. Especially since the woman held a lesser position in society, and because she was more likely and easily hurt, law upon law was enacted to insure her protection. Her individual worth and dignity were highly respected by the rabbis. Intricacies of legality and impediments to human degradation were found in rabbinical enactment. It would be impossible for one to recollect the totality of the legislation. It is easily available in the pages of a Code of Law, such as the Shulchan Aruch by Joseph Caro. But what steps out vividly from the pages, almost in a personified form, is the image of woman, esteemed, highly regarded, respected and sanctified.

This last word is most important. "Sanctified" from the Hebrew word Kiddushin or "betrothed," actually means "set apart" or "distinctive." When speaking of marriage, the rabbis often made use of this word. It was instrumental in lending added meaning and import to their general discussion. For the rabbis, marriage meant that man "set apart" woman solely for himself. They were each other's only, and over and above everyone else. By "sanctifying" a woman, man made her his own, and took upon himself the obligations of a husband and later, a father.

"Sanctification" brings along with it the secondary meaning of "holiness." It might be suggested that he who sanctifies exists in "holiness." That which a man sanctifies exists in a state or a condition of "holiness." That which is "holy" is most valued. That which is "valued" is most respected, and so on. True trends of holiness emanate from true marriage fidelity. The fine art of being "holy" is learned, realized, and actualized in the bond of marriage. Thus, all that appertains to marriage, all that is associated with marriage, all that is derived from marriage, and, moreover, all that precedes marriage takes on a new and more-informed meaning and significance. Just take a quick "look" at that list which we presented at the beginning of this chapter's discussion. Knowing what you now do about marriage a la the rabbinic view, what would you say about many of the problems cited? Marriage, if looked upon as the rabbis would have us look upon it, would seem to eliminate some of the problems that follow from an unhealthy, and shall we say, an irreligious, view of things.

Put Torah in the marriage situation, and you would find, as

a necessary consequence therefrom, a specific scheme of values. The "do's" and the "don't's" then easily flow. First one needs an overall perspective or point of view. Then logical, current, up-to-date dialogues may result. We suggest that the rabbis were certainly "on the right track." (If not, THE track!)

The idea that marriage is more than a union of the flesh, or nature's arrangement for insuring the continuity of man, is prevalent in rabbinic literature. In marriage, man and woman became one spirit, more than one flesh. But, it should be noted, the Jew, not even the rabbi, ever shunned the natural desires of the human body. Sex was never looked upon as something that should be avoided. Sex was regarded by the rabbis as a God-given, natural expression of the human being in love. It was but one form of demonstrating one's love for one's mate. It was another mode of "sanctification," of "setting apart" something extremely special for one's betrothed. Marriage made possible the correct channeling of this native human instinct. The Jew believed in the satisfaction of all the legitimate appetites or desires of man. But satisfaction was not to be sought aimlessly, but rather in conjunction with a value system. What emerged was a healthy, if not beneficial, attitude towards sex and marriage. Man was always considered the pilot of his own vessel, and he was expected to exert the controls of a value system on his natural inclinations.

According to Mishnah Ketuboth V.5, when the man married, he assumed obligations, among them the task to provide for his chosen one. The wife had definite chores also, among which was the care of the household and children. Associated with the rabbinic conception

of marriage was the purity of the wife and the fidelity or faithfulness of the husband. The ideal of marriage implied pre-nuptial chastity for both. If values are attached to pre-marriage relationships, and if, subsequently, value-systems are imposed on a marriage and wedded life that bespeaks a sense of sanctification, then, obviously, a tone or climate is set in the home. The home effected by a couple thus engaged is pervaded by a sense of and respect for that which is holy or truly important in life. The atmosphere of such a household is a "light unto the nations." And little children shall grow and learn therefrom.

The Fruit of Marriage

According to rabbinic Judaism, as no man is complete until he has taken a wife unto himself, no man is really complete until he has obeyed the "first commandment," "to be fruitful and multiply." In a strictly biological sense, it is man's duty to procreate the species. But more important, man has certain prescribed obligations with regard to child-rearing.

Children bring joy to the household. They make of a marriage a family. Although they are the fruit of the womb of love of the marriage, children are not, strictly speaking, possessions of the parents. No human being, for that matter, may actually be possessed. All belong to God alone. Children allow man and woman to fulfill themselves in the bonds of marriage. Instincts, natural desires, inclinations, tendencies, native endowments are fulfilled when one has progeny. The

offspring of man are the fruit of his love. Thus, they must be conceived and born only in love. Rabbinic view indicates that children are the product, the outgrowth of the "holy" love that exists between man and woman. Only when this love has been sanctified by marriage, only when value systems have been employed as marriage is effected, can children then come into the world. Those who are results of other "unions" are the by-products of man's desecration of God's Name. They are the flippant "thrown-asides" of men and women who live without value systems.

Parenthood is not immediately conferred upon one at the birth of a son or daughter. Parenthood must be earned. It too is an art and must be worked at. Parenthood is a blessing, for in one's children, one finds his immortality. Biologically and spiritually, one is preserved and sustained in and through his children. And one too grows himself, he learns and develops his own personality, as he shares with his mate the challenging and frustrating, and, at the same time, rewarding experiences of parenthood. As a gift of God, emanating from the benevolence of God, parenthood is to be cherished and regarded as the highest type of responsibility. One is a parent not to receive rewards or recognition. One's personal inheritance is unimportant in this regard. One is a parent as a manifestation of service to God. One acts as a parent and performs willingly the obligations and duties of parenthood out of love and devotion to his offspring, and that God may be glorified on earth. One is a parent so that his children will do likewise for their children when they assume the roles of parenthood.

The family in Judaism and in Jewish life has always been the focal point of the religion of the Jew. One need only examine all of the laws and customs that are pertinent to the home environment. Blessings and ceremonies, rituals and observances, the Sabbath and festivals, dietary laws and laws of purity and chastity, the home is truly the greenhouse in rabbinic Judaism. What little children know and see as young ones, they will grow up to do as older ones. The true spirit of sanctification is made possible when the love of children enters a home. A mezuzah, or prayer box, is placed on the right door post as one enters the house to teach that the home is paramount in Jewish life. When one enters or leaves a Jewish home, he goes in and out of a sanctuary. The true sanctuaries of Jewish life are not the synagogues or the temples; they are the homes, the family dwelling places of the Jew. A Sabbath, if observed according to rabbinic dictum and enactment, provides a taste, as it were, of what it will be like in the forthcoming Messianic Age on earth. With Malachi, "when the hearts of children are turned to their parents, and when the hearts of parents are turned to their children..."

Thus fulfillment as a Jew is possible first and foremost in family life. Without a value system in family living, there occurs a breakdown in the structure of societal life. Juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, unwarranted sexual relations, and narcotic addiction result from a society whose family structure has been weakened. Furthermore, if one were to list any values that he might cite as demonstrative of a "good," "pious," or "religious" life, like "truth," "honesty," "diligence," "lovingkindness," "righteousness," he would find that these are first learned and taught, or not learned and not

taught, in the home. Family life provides the primary school for children and adults alike. If no value systems motivate what takes place in one suburban dwelling, then usually no value system will motivate a total society. What results is chaos.

There must be rules; there must be regulations. There must be guidelines or guiding principles, suggested the rabbis. All cannot be left up to man's whim. So they taught and they sermonized. The rabbis dictated laws and rulings. Even if one does not subscribe to all that they said and taught, at least one can find himself at home with the value system that they promoted. In it, what went on in the home of the Jew, what he did, how he treated his wife, the household she managed, and the children they raised, all were of supreme religious importance. A Bar Mitzvah, a Bris, or a Confirmation ceremony could not solve the problem. Man's initiative and creative efforts in family living were the only means by which the home and its occupants could be sanctified.

Children are even revered by the rabbis. Their importance is never underestimated. They enjoyed a special status in the Midrash. "'They that are planted in the house of the Lord' (Ps. 92:13) R. Hana b. Pazzi said: 'While they are yet saplings, they are in the house of the Lord; these are the little children who are in school.'" (Numbers R. 3:1) Care and training of one's children are invested with real importance by the rabbis. "R. Hamnuna said: 'Jerusalem was destroyed only because the children did not attend school, and loitered in the streets'" (Shabbat, 119b).

Education

The education of one's children is looked upon even with zeal by the rabbis. A man was obligated to teach his children in the ways of Torah, that they might walk therein. In other words, parents were expected to teach their children a value system that would be appropriate enough to accompany them throughout their lives. Education was thus always especially esteemed by the Jew. One need only look at honor roll statistics to discover that Jewish academic achievement has always been in the foreground, ahead of the natural expectation of such a small percentage of the general population.

I remember something that happened when I was in high school in the East. During a class in Problems of American Democracy, an attractively diminutive Italian girl raised her hand and asked the teacher a question that made me somewhat uncomfortable. She inquired: "How come the Jewish kids are always on the honor roll?" The teacher replied that he thought it was a direct result of Jewish family life, and of the emphasis placed on education and academic achievement.

The rabbis too felt the necessity of emphasizing the role of education in the rearing of children. They knew well its full and potential value for greater society. With a respectful eye to the benefits and the wisdom of the past, and with an expectant eye towards the promise of the future, the rabbis spoke often of the values of education. The Torah, the repository of personal values for effective living, became a symbol of the guarantee of the future.

> "When Israel stood to receive the Torah, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: 'I am giving you my Torah, bring me good guarantors that you will guard it.' They said: 'Our fathers are our guarantors.' The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: 'Your fathers are unacceptable to me...Yet bring me good guarantors and I shall give it to you.'...They said: 'Master of the Universe, our prophets are our guarantors.' He said to them: 'The prophets are unacceptable to me... Yet bring me good guarantors and I shall give it to you.' They said: 'Behold, our children are our guarantors.' 'For their sake I give the Torah to you,' as it is written, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has Thou founded strength.' (Ps. 8:3)." (Cant. R., Romm, p. 7a)

Furthermore, book-learning was not considered as sufficient. Actions were thought to speak louder than the words on the printed page. Moreover, one's deeds should arise from one's clear knowledge of tradition. According to the Midrash:

> " 'Ye shall diligently guard these commandments to do them' (Deut. 6:17; 11:22). Lest a man might suppose, if he guard the words of the Law, he can sit quiet and need not do them, it says: 'To do them.' If a man learns the words of the Torah, he has fulfilled one command, if he learns and guards them, he has fulfilled two; if he learns and guards and does them, there is no one greater than he" (Sifre Deut. 84b).

Education of one's children played a dominant role in the value system of the family.

Children are Beloved of God

Just as God, the Creator of the world, places the value of children high in His Celestial Value system, so too should man, in his.

> "R. Judah said: 'See how beloved the little children are before God. When the Sanhedrin went into captivity, the Shechinah went not with them; the watchers of the priests went into captivity; the Shechinah went not with them. But when the little children went into captivity, the Shechinah went with them.' For it says in Lamentations I, 5: 'Her children are gone into captivity,' and immediately after (I,6): 'From Zion her splendour is departed.'" (The 'splendour' is interpreted to be God.) (Lam. R. I, 33, on I,6.)

Children occupy a place of supreme importance in the world of the rabbis. One need only peruse the pages of rabbinic literature, and he will come away from his confrontation with the harvest of a healthy respect for the value of children. The rabbis saw in youngsters the promise of Judaism's future. They recognized in the young lad a quality of wonderment and awe when he came face to face with God's creation. Show a young summer camper a worm or a grasshopper in the great outdoors, and you might as well have given the rainbow to him. This quality the rabbis desired to make applicable in appropriate proportion to the adult world. A sense of respect, an inclination towards obedience, the warmth of an overflowing heart, these qualities

which the rabbis noticed in children, they sought to preserve for the adult, who would enter a world of confusion and frustration.

Parenthood

The duties of parenthood were looked upon by the rabbis as man's natural, God-given responsibilities on earth. Parents were the protectors and guardians of they who were God's guarantors. The blessing of having a child brought with it the obligation to raise that child in certain prescribed ways. A methodology of approach to life was the parent's task to impart to the child. Sacred was the duty of parenthood. Holy was the child given to the parent to shape and to mold for the world. Now, we are all aware of what modern child psychologists and sociologists tell us. They note the importance of the home and the crucial role of parents in the shaping of children's lives and personalities. The rabbis did not have all the findings of modern science at their disposal. Nevertheless, what they have to say about parenthood is applicable even today.

It is a parent's joy to see his child imitate his example. Moreover, a child feels fulfillment when he can live as would make his parent proud. "Happy is the son who can fill the place made vacant by his father" (Pesikta Zutarta, Bereshit, 26). We have the sayings in English, or American culture: "From the mouths of babes oftimes come gems" and "...by thy children thou wilt be taught." In rabbinic literature we note: "The proverb runs: He who is descended from thee often teaches thee" (Yebamot, 63).

The communication that ensues between parent and child is significant. What is said and how it is spoken are most important in

the upbringing of children. Also, a parent's effectiveness is, in part, in his ability to understand his child fully in the remarks that he makes. Most of the communication is accomplished in the form of the spoken word. Thus, dialogue in family discourse and relationships is supremely important. One must listen well, as well as verbally instruct. "When does a child become especially dear to his father? When he begins to talk" (Tanhuma, Tetzaweh). One does for his children without any thought of personal gain. "As my fathers planted for me, so do I plant for my children" (Taanit, 23). In reciprocation for what his own parents did for him, a new parent performs unselfishly the manifold chores of parenthood for his own child. A never-ending cycle is thus created in the stream of Jewish life. The value system is promulgated.

Although God blesses man with children, he is not immediately to be invested and honored with the title "father." He must earn it by the sweat of his brow. Parenthood is not to be a title worn only as a status symbol. Children do not come to one solely to bring him recognition. "He who brings up the child is to be called its father, not he who gave him birth" (Shemot Rabbah, 46, 5). This teaching might be found meaningful by those parents who must adopt children.

We have all heard the expression, "The hand that spares the rod, spoils the child." The rabbis said: "He who rebukes not his son leads him into delinquency" (Shemot Rabbah, 1). In this age parents are often reluctant to set firm limits for their children. They are, in a sense, afraid to set up strict rules and regulations to govern their children's young, experimenting, discovering, and searching

lives. Actually, children really feel more secure and realize more easily their identity when parents exercise appropriate and thoughtful discipline. Moses was seldom reluctant to act as God's rod of chastisement to the Israelites. In order to make them a civilized, sophisticated people, God had to set certain standards for the newly-freed Jewish people. The experience in the wilderness was preparatory to the confrontation which they had with the covenantal value system at Mount Sinai. Personal values for group living were revealed at Sinai, and rebuke and valid criticism followed the rigid legislation. Throughout the Bible, God is the parent-figure for the maturing and adolescent Jewish people. The rabbis later carried this realization further as they advised the parents of their generation. Absence of enforced values leads to an absence of morality in the young people of a generation. Adult anarchy follows such a situation. Then a total society may collapse.

Men and women are born with certain natural instincts, one of which is that of parenthood. In order to fulfill oneself as a human being, according to the rabbis, one needs to know parenthood. "A man is not a complete man if he has no son and daughter" (Raia Mehemna, iii, 3ha). Often it is that the way a child behaves reflects on the quality of his parents. The kind of family from which a young man or woman comes can often be detected in his overt behavior. "Fathers are often respected because of the merit of their sons" (Tanhuma Wayyikra, 5). Sound psychology is expressed by the rabbis as they advise: "Show no partiality among your sons. Treat all of them alike" (Shabbat, 10).

A father's obligations to his children were precisely stated by the rabbis. Each duty carried with it its own ramifications and connotations. One can derive much as he reads: "The father's obligations to his son are: he must circumcize him, redeem him, teach him Torah, teach him a trade, and help him secure a wife - some say also, to teach him to swim" (Tosefta Kiddushin, 1, 11). Religion and a way of life, coupled with a personal value system, are herein inseparable. The parental duty is obvious.

> "The strength of the Jewish family rested on three religious principles: (1) the responsibility of the father to teach his children, boys more intensively than girls, the moral laws of the Torah; (2) the constant awareness of the father that while under the laws of man he had no legal responsibility for the actions of his children, under the laws of heaven, as the head of the family, he was fully responsible for the actions of his children. In other words, what the king is to the nation, the head of the community to the community, parents are to the family; (3) the religious belief that the duty of honoring parents is equivalent to the duty of honoring God. This, above all meant that children, regardless of their age, owed obedience to their parents whenever such obedience did not contravene the moral and religious obligations which fall upon every individual."[15]

It should be remembered that the duty of teaching a child Torah is not to be compared with the modern concept of giving a child an "education." It rather emphasized the fact that a parent should instruct the child in the moral and spiritual way of life. This suggested teaching not only moral theory but also the significance of practice.

> "Rabbi Nehorai said: 'I would set aside all the crafts in the world and teach my son naught save the Law, for a man enjoys the reward thereof in this world and its worth remains for the world to come...for it guards him from all evil while he is young and in old age it grants him security and hope.'" (Kiddushin 4, 14)

The parent's ability to instill in his child a love for Torah, a love and dedication to a personal value system, finally determines the moral conduct of the child. The rabbis had no patience with an ignorant man or an uncultivated man, an _am ha-aretz_. The discipline of Torah, which a parent was to teach the child, led to moral and ethical practice. "Rabbi Nathan ben Joseph said: 'Who is an _am ha-aretz_? Whoever has children and does not raise them in the study of Torah.'" (Berakot 47b). A parent was a failure if he neglected inculcating in his child a personal value system.

The rabbis thought that parents were morally responsible for the conduct of their children. In the eyes of God, they felt, parents could be held culpable for the behavior of their offspring. "Whoever is able to protest against and thus prevent the misdeeds of the people

of his own home and does not do so, is punished for the deeds of the members of his family" (Shabbat 54b). It is man's duty to respond to the misdemeanors of the members of his household. Silence, or taking a step backward, is no virtue. Passivity is condemned. A parent is to be ever-active in his role. One should not permit his child to fall into mischief or a misdeed without protesting against his actions. If a parent does not protest against lack of decency and ethics among members of his household, he is held to have caused his own children to sin (Hilkot Teshubah 4,1). Ethically and morally, a child is always considered to be under the control of his parents; therefore, if one does not check his children's immoral actions, he is as responsible as if he had directly caused his son to sin.

What Childhood Owes Parenthood

One need but look at the Ten Commandments, and he will anticipate what the rabbis taught about honor and respect due to parents by children. It should be noted at the outset that the rabbis did not think that sons and daughters should honor mothers and fathers in an unconditional, unlimited manner, if these parents were unethical, or immoral in their own living. One might temper his respect for parents only when they knowingly and deliberately broke moral or ethical laws. At all other times, affection and esteem given to parents was second only to that shown to God. Moreover, God regarded it as honor paid to Him, when a child honored his parent. Through the love of one's parent, might one learn the love of God. A man and woman were partners with God in the work of Creation, when, together,

they brought forth a child. The offspring owed their lives to parents and God, the debt to be paid in the form of honor and respect. From whom life comes, to him, honor is due.

"A son should lighten the burden of his father and place himself in accord with his will" (Raia Mehemna, iv, 215b). "Whether thou has wealth or not, honor thy parents" (Y. Peah, 1, 1). "When a son respects his parents, God accounts it as if the son respected God as well; but, when a son vexes his parents, God saith: 'I cannot abide thee.'" (Kiddushin, 30). "A man honors his mother more than his father; therefore, God has placed the father first in the commandment to honor. A man fears his father more than his mother; therefore, the mother is placed first in the commandment to fear" (Kiddushin, 30, 31). "Honor thy father and thy mother, even as thou honorest God; for all three have been partners in thy creation" (Zohar, iii, 93a). The debt of gratitude to a parent, and to God, is great. Life is the supreme blessing. We owe our very existence to our parents. Therefore, our relationship towards them, according to the rabbis, should bespeak a sense of dedication and reverence. Now, look again at that list of current family problems that appears at the beginning of this chapter.

Brothers and Sisters

A brief word needs to be said with regard to brothers and sisters. Herein we shall not take the time to go into the matter of sibling rivalries. Rather, we would note the importance of the people who occupy these roles in family living. Equal respect and love is due them. Interestingly, the rabbis comment: "Honor thy father and

thy mother - including, also, thine older brother" (Ketubot, 103). There appears to have been a healthy regard for one's elders throughout rabbinic literature. An older brother or sister usually was especially respected; for, so often, this relative aided the parents in child-rearing. Also, older brothers and sisters participated in supporting the family. Sons often worked with their fathers. And older sisters assisted mothers in household chores. They achieved, through their efforts, a respected status in the family structure.

It was the obligation of brothers and sisters to help each other in the business of life. Having grown up together, partaking of the same food, living under the same roof, being born of the same parents, conscious of each other's welfare, brothers and sisters were considered certainly close. Their knowledge of one another was intimate and even private. Often only a glance or the wink of an eye told all. Words were not always necessary as communication between brothers. There exists an invisible telephone or telegraph line between or among siblings. Sensitivity for one another is keen. A brother or sister is usually one's first friend or pal. The art of getting along with someone of one's own age can be learned from such a relation. Man first learns the art of sharing, when he lives in the household that boasts more than one child. The human being is better prepared for society in general when he can master the problems of the society of his home. Brothers and sisters teach this lesson to one another.

The Aged

Most of you have grandparents who are yet alive. Be thankful for that blessing. Rabbinic Judaism gave special honor and respect

to the elders. Coupled with this was the honor due a teacher by his pupil or disciple. This type of honor was comparable because it was a respect paid to one who was schooled more in life than was his younger colleague or relative. The aged person in the family shared in the same type of honor lavished upon a sage or teacher. Respect for age was likened to respect for learning. To have lived long, was to have known and experienced much. To have studied much, to have acquired much wisdom, was to have aged oneself beyond one's years by reason of one's educational prowess. Younger men and women and students noted this by the respect which they demonstrated in word and deed.

The aged, like the learned, have attained a supreme sensitivity to all of life. They are keenly aware of all that has gone before. What life has dealt them has made their senses all the more alert and acute. A learned man accomplishes this through the vehicle of his studies. Sensitivity to life, to know what life is all about, comes through years of experience in this endeavor, and through wisdom. "Even the chirping of a bird awakens the aged" (Shabbat, 152). "How welcome is old age! The aged are beloved by God" (Shemot Rabbah, 5, 12). And if God treasures the aged, all the more so should man cherish their presence.

It was a religious obligation, if we take the rabbis seriously, to honor the aged. "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: 'Honor and respect the aged and saintly scholar, whose physical powers are broken, equally with the young and vigorous one; for the broken Tablets of Stone no less than the whole ones, had a place in the Ark of the Covenant'" (Berakot, 8b). One who has endured life's battles, and has survived,

merits the honor and respect due a hoary head.

Reflection

Let us reflect pensively. What have we been trying to say? Once again, let us glance for a moment at the list of problem areas posed as a result of the parents meeting. Were the rabbis in their "antiquity" so very far "off"? Perhaps, the rabbis were not made all the wiser through present-day scientific findings. Yet, somehow they seem to speak and teach and write with specific reference to what has occurred in our own lifetimes in the twentieth century. Their observations, it will be granted, arise from a long-ago and often-forgotten time-place context. They spoke in an ancient milieu. However, rabbinic wisdom has no cobwebs if approached with sincere, thoughtful regard.

The individual man is most fully realized as he finds himself and envisions himself amidst the dynamics and drama of family living. The person is shaped and molded by what he sees in his own household. His natural endowments and talents find outlets or are frustrated in this unique group setting. Man first learns to deal with another man in the family. Man first learns what love is in the family. Man completes himself in family relationships. Sacred is the bond of family life. Holy is its purpose. Noble is its cause. Just is its existence. Human dignity and worth and significance are exalted by rabbinic Judaism when it comments on the family. Man comes face to face with life and with what he really is as a human being when he discovers himself in family ties and associations. Often, when God seems most evasive, He may be found in the Jewish home.

CHAPTER V

THE GARDEN

Chapter V

The Garden

"Our masters have taught: 'When Israel is sunk in sorrow, if one of Israel should separate from them, the two ministering angels that accompany every man come and place their hands on his head and say: "So and so has separated from the community; let him not see the consolation of the community."'" (Taanit 11a)

"Rabbi Yohanan said: 'Every distress that Israel and the nations of the world share is a distress indeed. Every distress that is Israel's alone is no distress'" (Deut. Rabbah II, 14).

"Thus said the Holy One, blessed be he, to Israel: 'My children, have I allowed you to lack? What do I seek of you? All I ask is that you love one another, and honor one another, and respect one another, and let there be found in you neither transgression nor theft nor any ugly thing; so that you never become tainted; as it is said: "It hath been told thee, O man, what is good... and to walk humbly with thy God (Micah 6:8)," - do not read: "Walk humbly with thy God," but rather: "Walk humbly, and thy God will be with the;" as long as you are with him in humility, he will be with you in humility'" (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah XXVI).

"How does a man find his Father who is in heaven? He finds him by good deeds, and study of the Torah. And the Holy One, blessed be he finds man through love, through brotherhood, through respect, through companionship, through truth, through peace, through bending the knee, through humility, through studious session, through commerce lessened, through the service of the masters, through the discussion of students, through a good heart, through decency, through No that is really No, through Yes that is really Yes" (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah XXIII).

After the Greenhouse

After the greenhouse, what? What comes next? The young seedlings must be transplanted to the great outdoors, to the garden. What was nurtured and made ready in the controlled environment of the temperate greenhouse, must now seek its existence and "livelihood" in the exposed, weathered atmosphere of the social unrush! "Society." "Others." "Community." "Social Consciousness." "Sharing." "Humility." "Compassion." "Meeting." "Being together with." These words suggest something important.

Man has been molded and shaped, prepared and matured in the protective situation of family life. His parents have taught and loved him. He has discovered his personality. But now, he must learn to swim for himself by plunging dramatically into the sea of life. The confines of his fledgling nest are no longer suitable for the kind of life which he desires for himself. More and more, he realizes his native need for others. He wants to be with people. He wants to work with them. He desires to share with them. He seeks to improve himself in conjunction with them. Life becomes increasingly social. Society assumes a highly-regarded significance. The community of Jews is something felt, sensed, and realized. The community of "the various" is dear and precious. The world of people is something to cherish. All real living becomes meeting. All meaningful existence occurs when I truly know and care for you, and when you are concerned for me. Hatred ceases to make sense. Jealousy seems illogical. Envy is out of place. Cruelty is anachronistic. Racial strife is incongruous.

The literary world of the rabbis is replete with references to the world of others. It constantly speaks of social obligation and social responsibility. The rabbis composed law after law which sought to demonstrate the high regard which man was expected to exercise with his fellow man. The community of Israel took on an added brilliance. Duty to one's neighbor was of paramount importance. The rabbis noted that God gave the world to man to do with as he would. However, according to the rabbis, it was up to man to complete or to

carry on the work of Creation through effective and healthful relations with those other men around him. Nothing in life was alien to an enactment of rabbinical legislative power. Business, crime, taxes, commerce, pride, humility, the common virtues of human decency, weights, balances, and just measures, charity and righteousness, all assumed a prized role in the life of the individual man as he came face to face with and "life-to-life" with other individual men. The group, mankind as a whole, every man, these the rabbis valued. And they commented again and again.

Life is to be Shared

It was the rabbis' opinion and conviction that "All Israelites are mutually accountable to each other" (Shebuot, 39a). Each man, when he is born, receives the obligation to serve other men. Every Jew, every individual, is responsible for the welfare of the rest of mankind. It is the natural duty of all who live to act and perform so that the welfare of others is promoted. Mankind is the cherished possession of God, the dearest aspect of His Creation. If one would be religious, he would serve his fellow man. If one would be pious, he would choose the thoughtfully social life. If one would be ethical, he would be humble and decent before other men. That is not to say that the individual is unimportant. Every man is important. Man should guard himself well. But even as he recognizes his own worth, man should become aware of the other man's worth. Life is made up of a mutually shared give-and-take interchange among all people. That which flows between man and man is sacred. The communication lines

may be verbal or emotional, with eye or with ear, but they are "holy."

The highest kind of charity is the giving of oneself. The noblest type of human response is the willingly-given human deed or human heart. The most perfect form of religion is in the genuine human association. When I give part of myself to you in business or in play, in love or in friendship, in study or in dialogue, and when I receive in return from you, in like proportion and degree, when we mutually esteem and value what happens between us, when our thoughtfulness makes us selfless, then God is truly brought down to earth; and human existence is truly sanctified. This is the highest kind of religion. To be religious, one needs people. To be religious, one's dealings with mankind must reflect the highest forms of human piety. The sacred worth of each human being becomes magnified in the community. Society, the social interplay between and among men, is as fine gold.

The Garden

What is the garden? It is the great outdoors. It is the community. It is society. It is fellowship. It is association. It is relationships with other people. It is in meeting. The garden of one's life is in the sweetness that derives from living with other people. But special care needs to be taken of the seedlings which have been recently placed in the garden.

Consider the garden. How does it grow? What forces in nature guarantee or control its existence? What does the sun do? Of what value is the rain? How does a rich, fertile soil help? Can fertilizers be of any benefit? What is the gardener's role?

Admittedly, we are being a bit poetic, but now compare all this, compare what your answers were to the above questions, to the matter of the community, of society. What do you get? What do you make of it? Is there a parallel?

Furthermore, before we advance any further, glance back at the quotations which introduced this chapter. How do they fit in? Can these rabbinic teachings add anything worthwhile to our discussion?

What man is, what man has become in the family, what he has learned in the home, now determines what he will do as he goes forth. His adult life among other people is, we suggest, partly predetermined by his experiences in the greenhouse. His family members and their specific roles were crucial in helping him create for himself some views of the world around him. But now, he is on his own. What tools will he need for the job? What perspective should he have? What tendencies of heart and mind should direct his cause? The community is now his world.

What does Rabbinic Judaism Say?

The rabbis suggest that "justice" in its positive, social sense, with its forceful demand to be translated into action, is the first element of what we are summoned and burdened with to offer to our fellow-man. To this requirement, the rabbis immediately add love towards our fellow-man. This requisite does not only apply externally. What goes from hand to hand is not the only area of application. The aid that goes from heart to heart, that our fellow human beings need and desire, is also a primary area of concern. Human empathy, a fellow-feeling, more than sympathy, is an implied teaching of the rabbis.

Every other person should receive from us his due. His heart must receive from us its own due. According to a teaching of the Talmud, "Justice has value only in so far as there is love in it." This kind of love is called the "beginning and the end of the Torah." As the Talmud instructs: "Justice can be shown only to the living, but love to both the living and the dead. Justice can be shown only to the poor, but love to both rich and poor. Justice can be shown only by means of what we have, love by what we have and by what we are. Justice and love outweigh all the commandments in the Bible."

Judaism speaks of the great social task. There is present in rabbinic literature the notion that human society is a community pervaded by human duties, a moral association, "chock-full" of ethical expectations. The great social order was comprised of the great community or family of man.

The social characteristic is consequently an essential part of religion. To the rabbinic mind, there can be no religion without our fellow man. There is no true religion in fleeing from the world, or in separating oneself from the community. The rabbis of the Talmud and Midrash have thus stated that this awareness of our fellow human beings is the "essence of the Torah." From this recognition of our brethren, everything else flows. The good man can be properly described only by the words "just" and "loving," both of which involve social relationships.

The rabbis spoke of a special kind of love. This type of love toward others was expressed in sincerity and in frankness. Unashamedly should man endeavor to devote his actions and his causes in areas which would give him opportunities to emote, to express, true human love.

Love could not only be expressed in words or thoughts, but also in deeds. A methodology of approach to life should bespeak human love. We are not only to speak the truth, to speak love, to speak concern, but also to offer it to our fellow men, to help him to perform the good and lead him in the right way, that he, in turn, might do likewise for other men. "Love men and bring them into touch with the Torah," with a system of values, is a further summons prepared by the rabbis. Men had an obligation to one another to check each other, to promote the common good. Personal values, moral and ethical responsibility, was the concern of each man with regard to the community.

Checks and Balances

The requirement, say the rabbis, to love one's fellow creatures becomes the duty of caring for his soul. This is an established part of human duty. This would bring to mind the great moral responsibility that lies behind the notion of the community. The fellow man's sin or wrong doing, or straying from the right way, may become as one's own. What the other man does or commits is, in fact, my responsibility. This again is part of Judaism's system of checks and balances. In the government of the United States of America, one branch checks the workings of another. The Executive branch of the government (the Presidency) is checked by the Legislative, the Legislative by the Judicial, and so on down the line. In Jewish life, each Jew checks the functions of the next. Every man is indeed his brother's keeper. Your life is as dear as my own. The Talmud recites: "Ye are all sureties, one for another." Human society, as conceived by the rabbis is a moral suretyship. To live with one another means to lead each other on the path to God, the path which reflects a personal value system.

From the first, as one confronts the vast body of rabbinic literature, one must recall that the human being was considered as being created in the image of God. This teaching lies at the basis of all the rabbinic teachings concerning the community. Because men are formed in the image of the Deity, they must keep that knowledge always in mind in their relationships with one another. The purpose of Creation was to give man an opportunity to glorify the Creator. Life must therefore be understood and led in that light and with that insight.

Man is not alone in the view of the rabbis. Man was destined to live as a member of a greater and more complex society. He is a unit in the total body of humanity. By virtue of this fact, many duties are therefore imposed directly upon him. His conduct affects his neighbors as their conduct indeed affects him. Man should consequently adopt a proper attitude with regard to the community. Indeed the spirit of independence is a kind of virtue in man; but it must not be carried to the extreme of believing that the individual can disassociate himself from his fellow men. Harmful class pride should be avoided as one occupies his time in however exalted a social or professional status. An isolated life is not even worth living, and there is a certain desirability in comradeship. "People say: either companionship or death" (Taanit, 23). The greatest treasure a man can acquire for himself is the respect of his fellow men. To be popular with one's associates was considered as a characteristic which earned God's favor. The gift of a "good name" was the most prized after death. It insured one's immortality.

Labor

It was recognized as man's duty to work, not just for his food and shelter, but also to contribute his part to the maintaining of the society of which he was an integral part. The dignity of labor is referred to throughout rabbinic literature. "Work is more beloved than the merit of the fathers" (Bereshit Rabbah, 74, 12). "He who produces for the perpetuation of the world shares in a Divine work" (Schechter ed. Abot de-R. Nathan, version 2, chap. 21, p. 22b). Furthermore, the relationship between employer and employee is definitely defined by the Talmud, and the responsibilities of each are very clearly presented. The employer should be considerate towards the men working for him and not insist on strict justice should an accident occur. The employee should honestly and sincerely give of his time and his energy in return for the just wages which his employer is supposed to give to him. "A man should pray for the welfare of him who gives him employment" (Tanhuma, Wayyesheb, 13).

Peace

For life to be worthwhile and ethical, there had to be a certain stability and happiness within the community, based on lasting peace. In the void of peace there cannot be prosperity nor well-being. Quarrelling is harmful and terribly consequential. Injustice ruins the happiness of the community, and the qualifications which a judge should possess are set very high. "'Seek peace and pursue it,' namely, seek it in your own place and pursue it in another" (Y. Peah, 1,1). "Peace is equal to all else" (Sifra Behukotai). "Great is peace! Peace is the name of God" (Bemidbar Rabbah, 11, 18). "Great is peace! The

world cannot conduct itself except with peace" (Bemidbar Rabbah, 21,1). The well-being, the stability of society is a requirement to be reckoned with in all of Jewish life.

Humility

Brotherly love, as embodied in the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," was at the heart of the matter of rabbinic ethics as they regard the community of mankind, in particular. In addition to the command to love, there is the command not to hate. Humility was considered the greatest of all the virtues. Meekness was thought to be favored by God. Severe condemnation accompanies the haughty and the arrogant. Warnings are given against vain pride. It was obvious that among the features which distinguish the moral life is the desire to be as helpful as possible to one's fellow men. The key to the problem of the notion of the community is the manner in which one approaches the community.

Charity

Charity in the Talmud falls into two categories: almsgiving, which is termed Tzedakah, and gemilth chasadim, giving of loving acts and kind deeds. This refers to all those kindly deeds which alleviate the burdens of the afflicted and which sweeten human relationships. Mention is made in rabbinic literature of the special treatment necessary to be accorded to the wayfarer. Hospitality to the needy stranger is emphasized. The praiseworthiness of caring for orphans is enlightening and far-reaching. Visiting the sick is an aspect of benevolence. And highest of all is benevolence performed for the dead.

The rabbis say: "Great is charity. It uplifts the soul" (Eliyahu Zuta, 1). The sages of old well realized that it was not merely the giving of one's own sustenance or livelihood, one's earnings, that transformed the religious man. Rather, they taught that it was the giving of oneself that evoked true charity. Doing and living that others might do and live was genuine charity. Moreover, this kind of charity was instrumental in helping man to improve himself. He became a better man as a result of having performed in a charitable manner. "He who does charity and justice is as if he had filled the whole world with kindness" (Sukkah, 49). "A man may give liberally, and yet because he gives unlovingly and wounds the heart of the poor, his gift is in vain, for it has lost the attribute of charity; a man may give little, but because his heart goes with it his deed and himself are blessed" (Baba Batra, 9b). Such acts that would benefit all of mankind, unconditionally, non-partially, were those acts valued by the rabbis. "Charity knows neither race nor creed" (Gittin, 61a).

Kindness

In the rabbinic conception of the community was the thought that men should be kind to one another. "Deeds of loving-kindness are greater than charity" (Sukkah, 49). Man is composed of more than physical instincts and mental gifts. His emotions play a major role in his overall approach to life. Kindness is the way of the heart as one faces his fellow man. Kindness is the voice of the heart as a man becomes part of the community. Kindness shapes the deed and molds the action. Kindness directs the effort and manipulates the cause.

Kindness is the voice of a consciousness of the other man's worth and dignity. Kindness evolves from the deeply-seated divine spark within each and every human being. "Israelites are enjoined to deal kindly with every one they encounter" (Midrash Tehillim, 52, 6). Kindness knows no bounds. Its effect is dramatically far-reaching. It can preserve a family, a community, a nation. The legality of Judaism may be mastered if one is kind. "Deeds of kindness are equal in weight to all the commandments" (Y. Peah, 1,1). "The beginning and the end of Torah is the performance of loving-kindness" (Sotah, 14a). To deny another man the supreme blessing of kindness is to deny God, to become irreligious. "He who does not perform deeds of loving-kindness is as one who has no God" (Abodah Zarah, 17b). Kindness implies that a man is actually dedicated to all of mankind. Rich or poor, small or great, no man is foreign to its beneficent effects. "If there is a saving virtue, it is the loving service of men. It saves society, for it is one of the pillars of the world" (Abot, 1, 2).

In Business

A virtue which should outline the moral life is integrity in business dealings, and the whole of rabbinic literature attached much importance to it. The disastrous consequence of dishonesty in the life of the community is taught. Strict laws are laid down in the Talmud for the regulation of the business world. The harmony and accord which should exist in the community can be disturbed occasionally by differences between persons. Then, it should be the desire of all men to try to end all quarrels and restore peaceful human relationships. With perhaps tongue in cheek the rabbis said: "It is the custom of

merchants to display their worst merchandise first" (Tanhuma Shelah, 6). How well they knew human nature! They certainly were not confined to the House of Study. Worldly they were; the mundane was part of their common knowledge. "He performed no evil against his fellow man, namely he began no competitive enterprise or trade where there was no demand for it" (Makkot, 24). "Rabbi Judah ben Illai declared that a shopkeeper should not give to children-customers sweetmeats to attract their patronage. The other Rabbis permitted this, since the merchant does not prevent his competitor from doing likewise. He also declared that a shopkeeper should not cut prices. The others declared: The public owes him grateful remembrance, since this will prevent high prices on food-stuffs, and will also work against the practice of holding goods back for a higher market" (Baba Metzia, 4, 12, Mishnah).

Social Justice

The pursuit of the good life through law and ethics leads to true happiness. Judaism, as taught by the rabbis, herein dictates that society must be founded on the principles of humanism and social justice. Society was made for man, and not man for society. The conflict between what ought to be and what is expedient in society leads to a separation between ethics and politics and creates a dual standard of morality. Judaism suggests that all of the citizens of humanity have one father, and one God created them all.

Man has a responsibility to all of society. Whether it be in the area of poverty or in that of race relations, man has an obligation

to help create a better world "for a better tomorrow." The Messianic Age on earth will occur when all of the evils and ills of society are banished. When hunger is no more, when all have equal opportunities, when education is free for all and available to all, when the government of the democracy is of, by, and for the people, when cancer is historical, then shall society experience perfection. All of mankind participates in the ongoing work and challenge of the perfectability of human society. The human condition is the problem of everyman. Social justice is a religious precept of the faithful Jew. Social justice is not a product of the twentieth century, but rather it is a result of the persistent teaching of the rabbis. Social justice, for the rabbis, was not a banner to wave, but a religious command to fulfill. Without it, the world could not possibly endure. With it, the world could hasten the Messianic Era. "The world is well conducted by two spinning wheels: one that spins justice, and the other that spins mercy" (Zohar, iv, 259b).

In order that Judaism and the Jews might attain their great aim of the perfection of man, they had to formulate high ideals and noble principles that would be followed by endeavors in their practical application in daily life. The legislators and the teachers of the law set themselves the task of making the prophetic ideals real, by applying the noble principles taught by the prophets to the actual conditions of life. The rabbis tried to lead men to a realization of their Messianic visions and ideals by training them in the exercise of such good deeds as are expressive of high ideals. The end was that man should know and practice the ways of the Lord and thereby bring himself closer

to and make himself akin with Divine Holiness. The belief in the sacredness of the human personality defines man's relation to society as a whole. Each individual in Jewish life must share in the responsibilities of the social order.

The rabbis' opinion was that a righteous inhabitant of a city extends his merit to the entire city. One person could influence a total society (Sanhedrin IIIa). They also reasoned that it was unethical and morally wrong for a man to live in a morally and ethically corrupt situation.

Public Consciousness

The community of Israel is a community, a gathering, an assemblage of fellow-worshippers dedicated to the service of God. Service of God manifests itself in service to the community. Public consciousness and concern proceeds from the sanctuary of prayer to the structure of society. Thus, a basic principle in Judaism, and one of the main motives for the observance of the Law, is man's continuous striving to achieve Kedushah, a state of holiness. The characteristic feature of Judaism which asserts that man, with all of his limitations and faults, can hallow God, and that God demands of man that he be ready to hallow His Name, is known in rabbinic literature as "**Kiddush ha-Shem**."[16] Man is able to hallow the Name of God either by performing an unusual act, one which is not necessarily required of him, or through an extraordinary demonstration of his devotion to God.

"Hillul ha-Shem," on the other hand, is the profanation or the desecration of the Name of God. It is manifest in society through deeds, large or small, which demean His Image. Both of these rabbinic

terms refer, in their greatest significance, to public acts, acts performed by an individual either with the community or in the presence of the community. Certain religious acts in Jewish life require an "Adah," a community in order that they may be carried out in public. A religious community is referred to as a "Tzibbur." You have all heard of the "Minyan," or quorum, which is needed in order to recite certain Hebrew prayers of the prescribed ritual in Orthodox Jewish life. These various terms are part of a nomenclature system that connotes the concern of the rabbis for the community. "When ten men pray together, the Shechinah (Divine Presence) is with them" (Berakot 6a). The whole matter of public worship, as a congregation, family services, and the like, bespeak the concern of the Jew that reflects "other peoplehood."

In the conception of the rabbis there were two types of men who chose not to be part of the community. One type decided to completely disregard the fact that he was part of a greater whole. He led a hermit type of existence. Being alone was his watchword. However, the other type of man, although he acted as part of the community at large, demonstrated by his deeds (or by his lack of deeds) that he had separated himself from the ways and the teachings and the value system of the Jewish community. It was this same man who decried any personal value system in his own life. He lived and let live and existed on animal instinct and desire only. His life was lowly.

The well being of the entire world is dependent upon the actions and the choice of one man. What he does veritably matters. One must weigh his daily actions as they bear upon his neighbor.

"A man should always regard himself as if he were half virtuous and half guilty. If he fulfills one commandment, happy is his lot, for he presses down by his action the scale of merit in his favor. If he commits a transgression, woe is to him, for he presses down by his action the scale of guilt against him. Concerning such an instance it is written, (And one sinner destroyeth much good' (Ecc. 9:18). Simon ben Eliezer says: Because the individual is judged in accordance with the majority of his actions, therefore, should a man always regard himself as half virtuous and half guilty. If he fulfills one commandment happy is his lot, for he presses down the scale of merit in his favor and in favor of the entire world. If he commits one transgression, woe is it to him, because by his action he presses down the scale of guilt against himself and against the entire world. Concerning such an instance it is written, 'And one sinner destroyeth much good.' Because of one single sin which he commits, he destroys much good for himself and for the entire world" (Tosefta Kiddushin, 1, 14).

Friendship

This concern for and with other people could be uniquely demonstrated in the bond of friendship. Friendship was looked upon by the rabbis as a sacred human involvement. The dearest and sweetest parts of life could be shared by friends. The primary virtues of human

decency might be best expressed in friendship. All that a man was he could be with his friend. The noblest aspects of the human personality were the controlling agents in a true friendship. In anyone's personal value system, friendship is of noteworthy importance.

Friendship was even amazing in its effects. It was noble in its purpose and meaningful in its effect. "Who is the bravest hero? He who turns his enemy into a friend" (Abot de-R. Nathan, 23). One of the most difficult things in life to acquire is a genuine friend. Many people spend lifetimes not knowing the joys of companionship. "It is easy to acquire an enemy, but difficult to acquire a friend" (Yalkut Shimeoni on Pent., 845). One might find it possible to improve himself in association with another. He might indeed learn from his friend. His own existence would be thereby enhanced. "Ascend a step and choose thy friend" (Yebamot, 43). People, to really live, need others with whom they may share their most personal moments. "Get thee a companion, one to whom you can tell your secrets" (Abot, 4).

For Judaism to actually be Judaism, it requires society for its fruition. Judaism needs people. The individual man cannot express the totality of Judaism. All that Judaism is and all that Judaism might become is realizable only in the context of the community. Society is the structural framework that holds together and supports the fine architecture of rabbinic teaching. The rabbis spoke for a generation of society of their time, but the community of the future can be their heirs. Applicable are their suggestions. Fine is their value system. Messianic is their perspective. "If one man in a

society is removed, it falls apart, as if a stone were removed from a heap" (Bereshit Rabbah, 100, 7).

CHAPTER VI

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"To deceive with words or abuse with the tongue is a greater offense than to cheat in matters of money" (Baba Metzia, 58).

"He who walks in straight paths honors God" (Bemidbar Rabbah, 8, 3).

"Hypocrites are excluded from the presence of God" (Sotah, 42a).

"Truth is heavy; therefore few wear it" (Midrash Samuel on Abot, 4).

Have you ever noticed a fine piece of genuine sterling silver? Perhaps you observed sterling silver when your mother polished her "best silver" in preparation for the holidays. Notice (in your memory) how very impressive it was. It shone brightly, its brilliance seeming to come from deep within. As your mother worked at the task of polishing, employing ample "elbow grease," the sterling silver continued to acquire added luster. The more she worked with the polish and the cloth, the more was its inherent beauty enhanced. Perhaps, you heard your mother complain: "How easily this becomes tarnished! For, too soon, I shall need to polish it once more." The Jewish women of several generations ago used to engage in the task of polishing their silver and other objects of finery each week in preparation for Sabbath use. It was a constantly recurring task, but one from which these proud women took great pleasure and satisfaction. Silver was valued as a precious possession. Exceedingly great care was expended in its maintenance.

Sterling silver! Something precious. A jewel in metal products. It reminds the observer of one of the most precious of human values. Something amidst the personal value system of the Jew stands out from all of the rest. Rabbinic literature speaks of it with certain emphasis. It is that special something without which no human being can improve himself. It is that value which, when used habitually, enhances all other aspects of human existence. From its depths all things flow. All that is fine, decent, and good in human nature derives from its essence. That which may make man but little lower than the angels is that value, that intangible characteristic of man called "truth." Truth!

And "truth" implies other values which are closely allied with it. "Truth" speaks of the finer side of mankind. "Truth" suggests integrity. It describes purity, a moral soundness and an ethical uprightness. It tells of the unimpaired state of man. It whispers of honesty. For truth is part of the necessary equipment, part of the "tools of the trade," which man uses in order that he might sanctify each human relationship.

"Truth" speaks of human sincerity and straightforwardness. When truth is an essential ingredient in the variable recipe that constitutes man, man finds it impossible to lie, to deceive, to use trickery, to use falsehood, to slander, to desecrate human relationships. When man is sincere, he is free from hypocrisy. Man becomes real or genuine. A man of truth endeavors to realize to the greatest and highest degree his natural potential. Human character is ennobled.

Truth in Rabbinic Literature

The rabbis spoke of truth in many situations. In many contexts did they find truth applicable. When the rabbis sought to add dignity to human life, they spoke of truth. When the rabbis endeavored to evoke from man his noblest response, they advocated truth in all of its various manifestations. We must recall, with reference to this discussion, that the rabbis conceived of man as having been created "in the image of God." They noted that within each and every human being there glowed a divine spark. Every human being was therefore a participant in divinity. Everyone shared in the universal endowment of "something divine." There was thought to be part-of-what-God-was within each mortal. Every human being embodied individual worth for this reason. Moreover, because the godly was part of man, man had the obligation to react to life and to his fellows in such a way as to reflect his knowledge and his awareness of these factors.

Let us look with some emphasis at the quotations from rabbinic literature which appear at the beginning of this chapter. "To deceive with words or abuse with the tongue is a greater offense than to cheat in matters of money" (Baba Metzia, 58). The rabbis speak with concern and apprehension about the matters of cheating and misleading in human affairs. They discuss at length business ethics and business practices. Full well they knew the tendencies and inclinations of human nature. For personal gain a man might indeed be drawn to cheat or mislead his neighbor. From the world of business and the context of the merchant and the tradesman, the rabbis metaphorically dealt with the numerous problems inherent in routine human relationships. From

these specific areas, they extracted principles of human conduct that were applicable in other realms. For example, that it was unworthy of man to cheat or mislead in every-day ethics became the guide of the good man. One could cheat another in other endeavors aside from business.

One's Word

One's word was a moral commitment. That which man spoke was sacred evidence of his internal commitments. When men used human speech and discourse to transact business or to communicate promises, these exchanges between man and man became sacred interplay. The connection thus effected between a man and his fellow was to be upheld and even sanctified by the weight which was attached to it in one's own thinking. "A bargain made by words only is not binding, but the Sages say: The learned are not content with a man who nullifies his words. God will exact retribution from a man who does not hold fast to his word" (Tosefta Baba Metzia, 3, 14). Human speech was the vehicle by which one's neighbor or partner could obtain entrance into his associate's heart and mind. To obstruct the lines of expression between the heart and the mind and subsequent vocal expression was to tamper with the "holy."

Are you able to value the word of your friends? Can you trust the promises of your family members? Are truth and fairness and honesty significant parts of your household? Or do you find it an easy task to cheat and mislead others. What about school exams? Does it bother you to cheat? Does it disturb you to "steal" part of your fellow-student's knowledge? Rabbinic value systems herein play an important role as we look upon our own lives as they reflect our own

value systems. "He who walks in straight paths honors God" (Bemidbar Rabbah, 8, 3). When one follows the demands of his moral conscience, when his life reflects decency in human conduct, this man hallows the name of God.

It is difficult indeed to wear the badge of "truth." To govern one's life by the rigorous requirements imposed by truth is to assume a heavy yoke. Often, and most usually we might add, it is easier to choose another road. Why study for the final examination? Wouldn't it be easier to copy from your neighbor's paper? Why return the additional "change," which the cashier at the grocery store mistakenly handed to you? Wouldn't it be easier to keep the "extra" money in your own pocket? Besides, you could use it to go to the movies! The rabbis, perhaps, were not faced with these same dilemmas. Our twentieth century problems did not confront their learned minds. But what they taught is no less valuable for us today. "Truth is heavy; therefore few wear it" (Midrash Samuel on Abot, 4). I would rather have some sterling silver than tons of cheap metal. I would rather be able to look at myself in the mirror without "batting an eye," than possess all of the world's fortunes.

Lying

Lies deny truth. It is as simple as that. When one lies, he denies the possibility of truth. When one lies, he changes reality. When one lies, he prohibits the real and the actual from being known. When one lies, he murders the genuine. And with each lie, man destroys a little bit more of that divine spark within himself. Habitual liars can put out this little flame altogether. Liars wear costumes in

daily living. One never knows what they really look like. Their disguises hide their real selves. Their false words hinder optimum human relationships.

I remember the tale of the lad who cried: "Help! Help! I'm drowning!" He yelled this warning practically every time that he went swimming. He did so as a practical joke, for he enjoyed seeing the people on the beach run to his rescue. When they jumped into the water, he would laugh with sure delight. However, at one such occurrence, he actually was being pulled under the water by a swift undertow. Indeed, this time he was gasping for a bit of oxygen. However, the onlookers on the seashore were wise to him, they thought; "They knew his tricks," they thought to themselves. This time they did not run to his aid. His lying became his destruction. "This is the penalty for the liar: even when he tells the truth, no one believes him" (Sanhedrin, 89b).

Now, not all lying goes to this extreme. But it can be as destructive of human character and of human relationships. When one lies to another, he in effect says that he does not really value his worth as another human being. When one prevaricates, he denies the godly within himself and within the other man. When one lies, he cheapens human relationships. Lying defeats the goal of human conduct and soils the potential purity of human existence. Sterling silver, left unattended, becomes tarnished. Its once-known brilliance and luster are hidden by the accumulated filth. If truth is not used in contradistinction to falsehood and deception, then the luster of humanity manifests a blemish that impairs its true beauty. Human beings become

scarred by the morally foul matter which they themselves promote.

When there is a lack of truth and honesty among men, then moral decay ensues. Truth can strengthen what takes place between man and man. Deceit and verbal trickery can undermine all human relationships. The truth of men, valuable as it is, is lost through the habitual use of foul play. Falsehood in a household can lead to the corruption of the members and their various relationships. When a mother lies to a child, she teaches him to lie. When a father does not keep his promise to his son, he instructs him to employ deception in his later adult life. When brothers and sisters lie to one another, their subsequent friendships in the "greater spheres of human existence" are torn to shreds by their own doing. Suspicion reigns supreme and human associations crumble. Marriages cannot survive when lying and deception interrupt their precious lines of communication.

All human relationships and interchange are based on good, sound communication. Human faith and truth are learned therefrom. But when the absence of truth becomes acutely demonstrated, one is eternally suspect. His every action, his every word, his every behavior pattern is held up to the test of strict scrutiny. Men learn to become suspicious of one another. They find that they cannot trust each other. What is left? Veritably nothing.

It is a contradiction to love to lie. The two cannot exist side by side. If one lies, he in effect denies love. In one's marriage, lying shakes the very foundation of this loving relationship. Friendship topples when friends contradict their association with false play. If one loves humanity, only truth in all of its connotations and appli-

cations can be effective. If one loves himself, if one esteems his own worth as an individual, then truth is his only possible guide. In the famous story of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," when the wicked queen inquires: "Mirror, mirror, on the wall..." she finds that she can no longer tolerate herself. Her mirrored image bespeaks her own lack of decency. What she sees is not physical ugliness, but rather, ethical corruption. As a result, she loses patience with even herself. Her self-disgust leads her to gnaw away at the goodness of others.

Thus, according to rabbinic tradition, it would seem that one had better guide well what his mouth utters. He should exercise discretion when he utters the language of human discourse. The rabbis taught: "Let thy ears hear, what thy mouth speaketh" (Y. Berakot, 2, 4). The rabbis' opinion was that the way to God and His ways was through truth. Falsehood upset the trip to righteousness. "There is no salvation in falsehood" (Ruth Rabbah, 5, 13). Although the rabbis spoke for their generation, they speak to us now in the age of confused value systems. Hundreds of years ago they said: "Nowadays falsehood stands erect and truth lies prostrate on the ground" (Zohar, ii, 188). Out of the milieu of their own time and place, from the environmental conditions of the rabbis, came this startlingly vivid declaration! Just pick up any newspaper in our "nowadays"; notice the newsworthy incidents that would not have occurred were truth not "prostrate on the ground."

One who engaged in the business of lying was excluded from the presence of God. A man who lacked integrity did not deserve the blessings of God. "No man should talk one way with his lips and think an-

other way in his heart" (Baba Metzia, 49). "A liar is excluded from the presence of the Shechinah"(Sotah, 42a). Honesty was the key to effective human intercourse. "Rabbi Jose ben Judah said: 'Let your "Yes" be honest and your "No" be honest.'" (Baba Metzia, 49a). A human being might be tempted to speak when he should refrain from speaking. Men often like to "hear themselves talk." This manner of self-indulgence can lead to false speech. "Teach thy tongue to say: 'I do not know,' lest thou invent something and be trapped" (Berakot, 4a). One can be imprisoned and confined by his own ill-will in lies.

Truth can be used as a preventative. These days we find that medical doctors practice preventive medicine. They seek to keep a person in a healthy state or condition in order that he does not become ill. They hope to keep the body in a healthful condition so that if disease is contracted, then, perhaps, it will be a milder form; and the body will be able to defend itself against the malady all the more effectively. Even dentists are practicing preventive dentistry. They hope to prevent cavities before they start. Diligence and faithfulness are requisites in these realms that they may be successful. Truth may act in a similar way. Truth may serve as a deterrent in moral and ethical affairs:

A young man came into the presence of Simeon ben Shetah and said: "I find it difficult to control my evil inclinations. What shall I do?"

Simeon replied: "Swear to me that you will always tell the truth. Thus you will be cured." The youth uttered the vow, but wondered at the lightness of Simeon's injunction.

Once, however, he entered a neighbor's home in her absence and stole her valuables. A few moments later he bethought himself: "If all the neighbors are questioned, I will be included, and I swore to tell the truth." He hastened to restore the stolen goods, and then appreciated the wisdom of Simeon's counsel (Midrash ha-Katzer in Rab Pealim).

Truth is of God

When the rabbis spoke of "truth," they valued it as if it were fine silver. Finer than gold and treasure was "truth." "The seal of God is truth" (Shabbat, 55). A man is known by his "seal." Man's character is manifest in his behavior, in his ways. God's ways are those of truth. When He stamps Creation, He does so with the insignia of "truth." "Everything has been created by God, except falsehood" "Eliyahu Zuta, 3). Falsehood is of man. Truth is of God.

Hypocrisy

Much criticism was expressed by the rabbis when they came to the matter of hypocrisy. To them, hypocrisy was part of man's lower nature. When man's evil inclination overtook him, hypocrisy was one of the results. When one "makes believe," when one pretends to be what he is not, when one is first of all not honest with himself, whe n one attempts to deceive all the rest of the world, when one feigns to be that which he certainly is not, he is dipping into the brew of hypocrisy. The rabbis had little patience with this practice. Most people today seem to feel the same way. "It is forbidden to deceive anyone, Israelite or Gentile" (Hullin, 94a). "Hypocrites are excluded from the presence of God" (Sotah, 42a).

Consider the problem of "keeping up with the Joneses." What does this mean? It suggests that one is trying to be something other than himself. "The grass is greener" elsewhere. One is not satisfied with himself. So he treads the path of the hypocrite, in his search for a "better" identity. He uses other people as one would manipulate objects in a game. The hypocrite has stepped out of his true shoes, and he runs barefoot down a pebbled path. A man of integrity is one who is the same on the inside and outside. When the external appearance is different from the internal feeling, the resulting human being lacks any integrity. He is as tarnished silver. To be something truly and completely is to have integrity. To stand for something with devotion is to have integrity. To incline one's heart and soul and might with dedication is to be virtuous. To be a Jew, according to the rabbis, one must possess integrity of being.

Sincerity

People everywhere seem to consider as precious that quality called "sincerity." Sincerity is certainly part of the personal value system of the rabbis. It was one of the essential ingredients of the "good Jew." Sincerity played an important role in all phases of human life. In worship, in family relations, in friendship, in prayer, in business, in love, in work, in devotion, in all of these, sincerity was of crucial significance.

When someone speaks to you, can't you tell whether or not he is sincere? When someone professes his concern for your welfare, can't you discern whether or not he is sincere? Sincerity is the knot that

ties securely those things in human life which men hold as dear. Sincerity is the lock that closes the door to evil ways. If one is sincere, he is most truly himself. When one is sincere, he is without anxiety. When one lacks sincerity, he is always beset with apprehension that someone will find him out. He worries that others may know him for what he really is. He is suspicious even of himself. Insincerity is like a disease that destroys from within. It eats away at the heart of the man who possesses it.

Even in prayer, the necessary emotion or feeling is inward sincerity. "It is not external rites that win forgiveness, but inward sincerity" (Taanit, 16a). The pompous Jew who proclaims his piety to all the world in the form of ritual and ceremony is not the Jew who wins divine favor. Outward acts must be signs of inner convictions. What one does publicly must truly reflect what one thinks and feels inwardly. Man must be total and complete in this respect. God knows the prayers and the imaginings of the heart as well as the words of the mouth. "It matters not whether a man gives little or much, if only his heart goes out with it to his Father in Heaven" (Berakot, 17a). "The essence of goodness is good intent" (Megillah, 20a). Sincerity, honesty, strict integrity and truthfulness are often praised by the rabbis. Their teachings reflect actual life. Their instruction is comfortable in any time and place. The rabbis might have been talking about justice or truth in oaths, or justice in law courts of their era; but they were also talking about what would happen in the future development of mankind.

The Rabbis and Posterity

The rabbis spoke of just weights and balances and just measures. They dictated the qualities necessary for the judge. They enacted law upon law to guarantee justice between man and man. They dealt with damages to property, and law suits. The world was real for them. They were not religiously aloof. Their religion was for the world of the actual. Religion was a way of life; they merely developed a complex value system to govern and direct it. Their perspective was far-reaching, as though they could see into the distant future. Their value system has influenced and shaped the development of Western civilization.

Justice and truth, for the rabbis, are the fundamental virtues on which human society is based. Justice and truth affect the matter of fair dealing between man and man. Justice and truth both affect the public scheme of things. The function of the community is to define and enforce the duties and the rights of the individual members of society. Finally, justice and truth deal with human character traits, and particularly, that trait called "righteousness." Nowhere is the endeavor to develop the highest principles of law in ordinances and regulations more noticeable than in the realm of judicial procedure. Specific rulings involved witnesses and the testimonies which they gave.

According to the rabbis, the responsibility to speak the truth is obligatory, and thus emphasized in the warning against false witnesses. Starting slander, or continuing the tale of slander is strictly admonished; for these are cases wherein a falsehood obviously injures another man, either in his material interest or his reputation. Rabbinic literature is rich with sayings that reflect this common concern.

R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said: "The world stands fast on three things, on justice, on truth, and on peace" (Abot, 1, 18). "Four classes are excluded from the presence of the Shechinah: scoffers, hypocrites, liars, and retailers of slander" (Sotah 42a). In the rabbis' point of view, to deceive another is a kind of theft, and this "stealing a man's thought" is the first of seven kinds of theft, and is considered as grave as all the rest together (Tos. Baba Kamma 7,8).

We shall conclude our discussion of "truth" with a specific reference to Rabbinic literature. One must recall that truth is of God. Truth, it should be remembered, is termed the seal of God. Since a seal usually carried the name of its owner, ingenuity was used in order to discover a name of God in this inscription (of the Hebrew word, "emet"). The rabbis took the letters as shorthand, the initials of three words, "Elohim," "Melch," and "Tamid," and explained: "Living God and eternal king" (Jer. 10, 10). R. Simeon ben Lakish had a clever interpretation: "Alef is the first letter of the alphabet, Mem is the middle letter, and Tav is the last; that is to say, 'I the Lord am first,' for I did not take over the rule from another; 'and beside me there is no god,' for I have no partner; 'and with the last I am He,' for I shall not hand it over to another" (Sanhedrin 18a). God is the first and the last. "Truth" tells of His greatness. To be true is to be of God. To exercise truth is to be godly. To be truthful is to sanctify human existence. To be a Jew, one employs the art of truth as a prized possession in his personal value system. If we would be "a kingdom of priests and a holy people," then truth would be part of our motto.

CHAPTER VII

PERSONAL VALUES AND MAN'S POTENTIAL

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Personal Values and Man's Potential

"Remember three things, if thou wouldst not sin -- the all-seeing Eye, the all-hearing Ear, the Recording Hand" (Abot, 2, 1).

"A transgression hardens the heart" (Yoma, 39).

"Not sackcloth and fasting avail, but repentance and good deeds" (Taanit, 16).

Background

Throughout our discussion, we have been referring to a proposed personal value system for man. Our investigation has taken us well into the treasure house that is Rabbinic literature. We have found that the rabbis were magnificently aware of the inner workings of man. Although psychology and the findings of modern science were not at their disposal, they were able to achieve significant results in their intellectual gymnastics. They struggled stubbornly with the real problems of mankind. The consequences of their self-imposed search were peculiarly relevant to their own time and place as well as to our own environmental and societal situation. The rabbis thought: if man is what he is (and their conception of man was clear and precise), and if God is what He in fact is (and their religious and theological views were precisely expressed), then it would seem only logical and natural for such-and-such to be the case, and thus-and-so to be the law (and, as we well know, their outpourings of a legal and regulatory nature were

profuse, specific, and complex). The Torah, for the rabbis, was a way of life, a philosophy of man, a methodology of approach to the world of being or existence. The Torah suggested a rich personal value system for man, to guide him, to help him to live effectively. The Torah expressed a code of ethics, a mode of conduct, the results of which would guarantee for each and every man the best possible form of existence and the highest degree of satisfaction in living. The Torah influenced man to be inclined in certain directions, that his natural tendencies might lead him in worthy channels. Rabbinic literature, as it manifested the art and skill of the rabbis, dealt with these aspects of the Torah.

What the rabbis produced was legislation. What the rabbis created was a theological system, although it does not present itself in any exact manner. What the rabbis bequeathed to the world of mankind was a personal value system that was based or founded upon religious conceptions. Their discrete knowledge of human nature and their sincere approach to their religious heritage shaped the resulting literary handiwork. God, as the Almighty, had created His beloved creature, man, in His own image, that man might carry on the work of Creation, and thereby glorify the Creator. Man was therefore a potentially holy being; he had an inherent capacity for greatness. His in fact was the task to usher in the "Messianic Age" on earth. By fulfilling the personal value system set down in the Torah, and later interpreted by the rabbis, man might indeed cause this long-awaited era to become a reality. Actually, no winged angel would come down to the earth to make the world "hunky-dory." Only man, working as a partner of God, could really bring this expectation to fruition. This was the significant

potential of man. This was his goal; this was his task.

Man could make of himself an improved being. As a being inspired by the Creator, he could perfect himself. Of necessity, he had to recognize and deal with the divine spark within himself and within his fellow man. He had to use all the natural endowments which were his equipment for the work before him. His job was to sanctify life and all of human existence. No real endeavor was to be alien to the impact of this approach. The world was to feel the effects dramatically of his having been there. That he was on earth was meaningful. His life had purpose and meaning. His responsibility was but to realize his crucial role. Rabbinic literature provided him with the personal value system as a guide which would lead him on a route that would insure his success. Rabbinic literature was the map of the Jew as he set out into the business of just plain living. To live according to this value system was the goal of religion. To adopt for onself this personal value system was the highest and noblest form of piety.

But Man Has a Problem

Man has a problem intrinsic. He is not a perfect being. He has what we call "human frailties." His being has weaknesses in it. Only God is the truly perfect ideal of all being. Man must deal with these which are his own peculiar faults. He can deal with them, but it must be his own decision to do so.

Man has free will. He is a free being. No one is pulling the strings upstairs. He is not the manipulated and controlled puppet of Creation. But rather, man is himself a creative being. He can effect change, even in himself. His own personal metamorphosis can be his own

doing. He is the pilot of his ship. He is the one who can call the "plays." Man is an independent and resourceful aspect of God's Creation. His attitude makes the important difference. The tendencies of his heart and mind define the role he will assume. His attitude toward himself, his attitude toward others, his attitude towards his work, his attitude towards God, and his attitude toward the personal value system that unites all of these determine the success that he will know in his endeavor to deal properly with "his problem."

The "Yezer Tov"

We must remember that man is a complex being. He is composed of many differing, and often opposing, aspects or characteristics. Human nature is an eternal puzzlement. From the rabbis we learn that man is in possession of a finer side. He has, as part of his God-given make-up, a good or noble inclination. The rabbis called this the Yezer Tov, the good inclination. It was this "side" of man that accounted for his noble deeds. It was this tendency of man that motivated him in "religious," "pious," or "virtuous" directions. It was this bent of man that led him to what was divine. It was this proclivity of man that predisposed him to adopt a personal value system for himself. This tendency that was man's partook of divinity. It kindled and even maintained the divine spark that burned eternally ever within man. It was that magnetic pole that drew him closer and closer to human perfection. The Yezer Tov and the Torah could be partners in this sense.

Man was a partner with God. The Creator and the Created were wedded in mutual love and concern and self-sacrifice. The relationship between God and the Jew was always compared to the relationship known

by a man and his beloved, the association into which the bride and the bridegroom entered. The union was an effective one, for it could be the cause of "greater things to come." What God had started and set in motion, as it were, was man's obligation to continue to carry on to fulfillment. The Divine and the "image of the divine" had an important task to accomplish. Their partnership was the primary motivation. The covenant into which they entered at the foot of Mount Sinai so very long ago was a covenant for all time and all places. It was a binding agreement that would influence generations of men to come. This covenantal relationship, between God and the Jew, this eternal partnership, this union of divinity, was the world's hope for tomorrow. The Yezer Tov was the "marriage ring" that sealed this commitment.

The "Yezer Harah"

However, man also had another side to his being. Another aspect of his nature also had power in him. It could motivate him or influence him in a variety of ways. Its name was the "Yezer Harah," the evil or unworthy inclination of the human being. It was this disposition of mankind that brought evil and something called "sin" into the world. This internal feeling or force within man could bring about drastic results. It could cause man to abandon all that was good or fine or noble in life. The "Yezer Harah" was the source of man's weakness and frailty. It could enter into his judgment in such a dramatic way as to cause him to suspend or relinquish his personal value system. It was that side of man's nature that led him to immorality; an absence or lack of ethics was its "calling card." However, it also made possible a certain amount of creativity and engendered "finer things" if

it were tempered with wisdom and restraint.

Something in man made him want to rebel against God, against his fellow man, and against even his better self. Something in man sought to defeat the power of the "Yezer Tov," which was his also. The questionable "Yezer" of man was something unreliable, and was responsible for the Jew who might go astray. The activity of the weaker side of man is summed up by R. Simon b. Lakish, who said, "Satan and the 'Yezer' and the Angel of Death are one" (Baba Batra, 16a). It was the assignment of this "Yezer" to seduce and to tempt. It had an insulting and an insinuating way, appearing first to the man as a modest traveller, then as a welcome guest, and ending in exacting obedience as the master of the house (Sukkah, 52a). This "character" showed himself also more as an effeminate being with no capacity for doing harm, but afterwards overwhelms with masculine strength (Genesis Rabbah, 22, 6). The snares in which this "Yezer" traps man are at first sight as insignificant and vain as the thin thread of a cobweb, but become all too soon the size of a rope, thus making it impossible for man to free himself from it (Genesis Rabbah, 22,6). The man who is most exposed to the attraction of the "Yezer Harah" is the vain one.

Idolatry and Adultery

Two areas of concern are most influenced by the "Yezer Harah." This lesser tendency of mankind leads him to act or misconduct himself in the vicissitudes of two primary realms. These are composed of the passions of "idolatry" and "adultery." Sin and immorality were part of both. In the primary sense, idolatry referred to the worship of idols,

devotion to foreign, unauthentic gods. Idolatry implied that man committed himself to vain obligations and mistaken value systems. Idolatry, by deduction, suggested that man allied himself with vain endeavors or concerns. An uncontrolled or unchecked desire for personal material gain, an unrestrained rush towards riches, a value system that was commanded by wealth-accumulation alone, these were all forms of idolatry. When man found it impossible to observe and live by the "golden mean", when he could no longer control his animalistic passions and desires, when the material and the short-range preempted the spiritual and the long-range, these were matters of idolatry. When one worshipped the ineffectual and the inconsequential, he was idolatrous.

"Adultery," in the primary sense suggested that man was unfaithful to his betrothed. A man who was not totally committed to his wife was adulterous. One who was unfaithful to God was a man of adultery. A man who could not be regarded with trust in human relationships was an advocate of adultery. When a man busied himself with the corruption of human nature, and when he endeavored to destroy human dignity, and when human worth was not held as important in his value system, and when purity of intention and purity of purpose were unknown in his manner of living, this man was he who tread the crooked and narrow path of adultery. This lower inclination of the human being was the work of the "Yezer Harah."

A Matter of the Heart

Where are both of these tendencies of man to be found? What part of his physical structure houses these opposing forces. Where is the battleground upon which these two enemies fight? According to the

rabbis, the seat both of the Evil and the Good inclination is in the heart, the organ to which all the manifestations of reason and emotion are ascribed in Rabbinic literature. In Ecclesiastes Rabbah I, 16: "The heart sees, the heart hears, the heart speaks, the heart walks, the heart falls, the heart stops, the heart rejoices, the heart weeps, the heart is comforted, the heart grieves, the heart is hardened, the heart faints, the heart mourns, the heart is frightened, the heart breaks, the heart is tried, the heart rebels, the heart invents, the heart suspects, the heart whispers, the heart thinks, the heart desires, the heart commits adultery, the heart is refreshed, the heart is stolen, the heart is humbled, the heart is persuaded, the heart goes astray, the heart is troubled, the heart is awake, the heart loves, the heart hates, the heart is jealous, the heart is searched, the heart is torn.." The heart is not in itself corrupt. But when man succumbs to the "Yezer Harah," his heart is pulled in a terribly dynamic way; and its potential purity is soiled.

What Man Can Do

However, it must be noted at this particular juncture that the "Yezer Harah" is not all "bad." It is responsible for the inherent possibilities of creativity within man. It bespeaks certain passions in man without which neither the propagation of the species nor the building up of the proper kind of civilization would be possible. The passions which the "Yezer Harah" controls and dominates only become evil when man makes improper use of them. In the final analysis, it is man, and only man, who is the determining factor or necessary agent in the workings-out of both of these natural tendencies. Man has the

power in his own hands, and it is only by man's own neglect and weakness that the Evil inclination gains the strength necessary to dictate and thus defeat him. Man has the power to resist the temptations brought forth by this side of his nature, and he can even turn their services to good purpose and fine objectives. It is a matter of choice and personal decision, the lesser man choosing the "Yezer Harah," and the finer human being preferring the "Yezer Tov." The righteous man is he who finally controls both of his inclinations. Advice is given to man by the rabbis that he should prove himself higher and above his own capacity for sin, and not allow himself to become its slave.

Furthermore, the rabbis counsel man to stir up his nobler nature to do battle against his lower instinctual desires. It is man's task to assist the Good inclination and save him from his enemy. Man should also make the effort to establish the kingdom of the Good inclination over the Evil inclination (Genesis Rabbah, 22, 6; Ber., 5a;Leviticus Rabbah, 34, 1). The weapons to be used in this battle-like engagement against the Evil inclination are primarily Torah, a sound personal value system, and good deeds or deeds and works of lovingkindness. The Torah, a sterling-silver-like value system, is considered as the best remedy and antidote for the Evil inclination of man. However, the Torah by itself is not sufficient to defeat this lower tendency. The victory in the end comes with the help and support of God, in the eternal partnership that exists at all times and at all places between man and God. Man's conscience and his conscientiousness are awakened and inspired by the goodness of God. God "talks to man" through the inner voice, the still small voice within him. The small divine flame inside the human being still glows because of God's blessing.

Sin

Let us remember what man is. Let us recall just exactly who man is. Also, let us consider, in our recollection, of what tendencies man is composed. Finally, let us reflect on man's relation to his Creator. What happens if things get fouled up? What happens when man does not abide by the demands of his conscience and when man forgets his partnership agreement with God? What occurs when the Evil inclination overpowers the man in whom it resides? What does man do as a result of his forgetfulness and neglect? He sins.

What is sin? There are many synonyms for "sin." Consider such words as "transgression," "offense," "misdemeanor," "foul play," or "violation." What do they all suggest?

According to the rabbinic view of this matter, "sin" manifests a backsliding, a going away from, a becoming far distant from the demands and requirements imposed on man by God. "Sin" suggests an abandoning of morality and ethics. "Sin" implies an "I-don't-care" attitude in life. "Sin" speaks about the problem of man's "missing the mark" or "falling short of the bull's eye of the target." "Sin" points out the fact that man has yielded his finer nature to his lesser inclination. "Sin" means that man has done away with any use of a personal value system in life. "Sin" explains the ways in which man has violated the commandments of the Torah. "Sin" is against God.

When a man sins, he denies his belief in God. When a man sins, he destroys the divinity of life. When a man sins, he liquidates the partnership which he shares with God. A man's sin denies God. A man's sin prevents God from entering his life. A man's sin prohibits meaning and then purpose from being realized and actualized in a man's living.

"Sin" means that there is a gap or a hole somewhere in a man's existence. But most of all, "sin" violates the "image" which a man should have of himself.

Now, you can all classify, if you so desire, sins of various types, sizes, and degrees. If you wish, you may list for yourself the kinds of sin that exist in human endeavor. Remember, though, that according to the rabbis, a man sinned primarily in one of two major areas, "idolatry" or "adultery." Of course, the shedding of human blood was one of the major types of sin, for it meant that one completely destroyed the sacred "image" of God. But even "murder," as such, could arise from a sin of "idolatry" or "adultery." No matter what your conclusions are, you should bear in mind that whatever the sin is, it is a violation against God. Whenever and wherever a man sins, he does not correctly fulfill a demand of Torah. Thus, it might be said, that whenever a man sins, he neglects the observance or use of any one of the essential ingredients of his personal value system. For the rabbis, "sin" was a direct violation made by man of the terms of his contractual agreement with God.

We find from our study of Rabbinic literature that "sin" can be explained as disobedience. It may be looked upon as defiance and rebellion against God. Even when a man sins against his fellow man, he thereby rebels against God. Whether it can be classified under the artificial headings of "idolatry," "adultery," "the shedding of blood," or just "common theft," it still may be conceived of as rebellion against God. Rebellion against God is rebellion against a personal value system. For the cause of interest, you might try to list the various types of sin that come to your mind which could be listed under the above suggested headings.

"Sin" is a complex and intricate problem. The three cardinal sins, as well as blasphemy and slander, are called the evil things (Sifre 120b). An impure thought is also described as evil (Niddah, 13b). Whatever the manner of sinning, all cause a separation between man and God. Sin, as an act of rebellion, denies the fundamental root of existence; that is, God. "Sin" excludes God and what He means from the world. The contamination of humanity is the consequence of "sin." "Sin" is a symptom of corruption and decay in the spiritual condition of man. Moral filth and ethical collapse are the products of "sin." Man is denied his "image" by the effects of "sin." "Sin" is also described in Rabbinic literature as folly. They who know not God, they who possess no sound value system to which they dedicatedly adhere, are known as "fools" (Agadath Shir Hashirim, p. 90). By the act of sinning, man becomes a "fool" (Targum to I Kings 8, 47).

The effects and consequences of "sin" are far reaching, even as they are profound. They are like an earthquake which shakes and then topples the very structure of the Universe of mankind. "Sin" seems to have a blighting effect upon the world; the righteous even suffer from its influence. That which is a sin can be committed with intent or without. It can be intentional and premeditated, or can be done "by accident." "Sin" suggests that man has been careless and thoughtless. But a casual carelessness can lead to serious results. "Men need not feel distressed on account of an unintentional sin, except for the reason that a door to sin is thus opened to them, leading both to more unintentional and even intentional sins" (Tan. B, 3, 8b).

"Sin" can destroy the individual man from within and from without. It can eat away at his potential goodness. It can hamper his talent and skill. "Sin" can impede man's relationships with his fellow man. It can cause the structure of the family to collapse. The sacred lines of communication within the family can be torn to bits by "sin." The community, the members of which give in to the temptations of "sin," can not long endure. Societies that permit "sin" fall quickly into oblivion. And the sterling silver of "truth" is forever tarnished when it is blemished by the ravages of "sin." Life is ruined, sanctification cannot take place, what is holy is desecrated, when "sin" reigns with force.

Personal Values and Man's Potential

In Rabbinic Judaism, the sinner, the fool, the man who has "forgotten," all may have a "second chance." The road that leads to "sin" is not looked upon as a permanent thoroughfare. It has many exits and "clover leaves" just like on a modern expressway. Man may choose to leave the particular route on which he is progressing and find another way. He may "return" to his former state of goodness and potential righteousness. Man may turn around and take a better look at himself. He may seek to improve or mend his methodology of approach to life. His philosophy may be revamped if he so desires. His value system may be renovated in his effort to "return" to God. Rabbinic Judaism speaks magnificently of this native possibility of man, that he may return. He may change. He may undergo metamorphosis.

Rabbinic Judaism presents to man the opportunity for self-improvement and individual-betterment. Rabbinic literature is rich with refer-

ences of this sort. The rabbis always held out to man the possibility of "return." They called it "repentance." "Repentance," for the rabbis, meant a "return to God." It spoke of a resumption of the on-going task of human perfectability. "Repentance" implied that man took a new look at himself and at his personal value system. It suggested that man regretted his actions and methodologies of the past. Man's potential for change and self-improvement was glorified by the belief in "repentance." "Teshuvah" is the term the rabbis used when they spoke about man's native potential. A personal value system was instrumental in effecting "teshuvah." With it a man could return to God. With it man could renew his partnership. With it man could exalt human existence. With it man could hasten the arrival of the Messianic Era.

"Repentance" was a gift of the divine. It was a supreme blessing. God not only created "repentance," but also he continues to teach man in the ways of true repentance. The rabbis instructed that repentance is the path-to-travel that God indicates for the sinner (Jer. Makkoth, 31d). Man is encouraged by the rabbis to repent. the encouragement of mankind to "return" is so great that the "door" is opened even when this repentance is not entirely the expression of real remorse or regret, having been brought about only by pressure of various sorts.

It was the opinion of the rabbis that nothing should be done to frustrate or discourage the penitent, and everything and anything should be done to aid him and to influence him to repent. Continuing friendly relations were maintained with sinners in the hope that this type of interchange with "good" men would cause them to experience shame and

thus change their ways for the "better." The gateways to repentance, to change, are always open. Man's inherent potential is ever before him, and is held up to him as an incentive to conduct. Repentance is initiated in a man's thought, in his philosophy of approach to life; then it is conspicuous in his behavioral actions. One's personal value system, based on a commitment to God, founded on a recognition of man's worth and dignity, motivated by a desire to sanctify life, was the prime mover to repentance. Man's best and greatest potential could be realized by a fulfillment of this personal value system. This was the highest type of religion.

The essential part of repentance is the abandonment of evil deeds and evil intentions. It necessitates a radical (fundamental, root) change of conduct and motive. The basically moral nature of repentance is exemplified by the "nine norms" of repentance which are found in the nine exhortations God utters in Isaiah I, 16: "Wash you, make you pure, remove the evil of your misdeeds from before my eyes, cease doing evil, learn to do well, seek after justice, relieve the oppressed, do justice to the orphan, take up the cause of the widow." Repentance meant that man made it "good" between his fellow man and himself, and both before God. If a man sinned only against God, he could acknowledge or confess his sins privately to God. However, if a man sinned against his fellow man, it became incumbent upon him to confess his sins to his fellow man. If a man sinned against his fellow man in public, he had to confess his sins to his fellow man in public. He who stole had to make restitution or repayment. First, one had to turn from the evil of his ways, then he had to "make good" his misdemeanor, and finally, he

had the obligation to completely change his ways. Repentance required great things of mankind. Humanity could be sanctified through repentance.

The important thing to remember about repentance is what man must do to fully achieve it. It does not involve merely a change of heart or mind, although this is an essential part of it. But it also involves human interchange and interplay. What happens between man and man is crucial in this context. When man denies dignity to his fellow man, when a family is corrupted by the violence of sin, when friends interrupt their natural relationship because of wrong-doing, when the oppressed and the afflicted are forsaken by the blessed, when social justice is only an intellectual ideal, when business practice involves deceit and trickery, when academics partake of the lower instincts of man, when society is blemished by foul play, when all these things occur, then man must "make good" to man. Man must confess and acknowledge his guilt. Man must tell of his error. Man must publish his weakness. Then man must turn from the tendency that led him in faulty ways. And he must find the straight path "for His Name's sake," to glorify God. God's "image" is preserved in man only when he realizes his potential. Diligent adherence to a personal value system promotes and evokes the beneficial consequences of true repentance. Man then becomes, in effect, godly. His endeavors become "holy." Life is held as sacred. When this happens, the Messianic Age has arrived. God's Creation has found its end result.

Sin and Repentance in Rabbinic Literature

Rabbinic literature is rich with sayings and teachings that refer to the matters at hand. The rabbis were evidently deeply concerned with

human sin and man's repentance. The hope for the future resided in the return to God. It should be remembered that the Evil inclination plays an important role in leading man to sin. "This is the device of the evil Yezer: Today it says, 'Do this'; tomorrow 'Do that,' till at last it says, 'Worship an idol,' and the man goes and does it" (Sab. 105b). "R. Yanni said: He who hearkens to his evil Yezer is as if he practiced idolatry; for it is said, 'There shall be no strange God within thee; thou shalt not worship any foreign God.'" (Nedarim, IX).

"The words of the Law are likened to a medicine of life. Like a king who inflicted a big wound upon his son, and he put a plaster upon his wound. He said, 'My son, so long as this plaster is on your wound, eat and drink what you like, and wash in cold or warm water, and you will suffer no harm. But if you remove it, you will get a bad boil.' So God says to the Israelites, 'I created within you the evil Yezer, but I created the Law as a drug. As long as you occupy yourselves with the Law, the Yezer will not rule over you. But if you do not occupy yourselves with the Torah, then you will be delivered into the power of the Yezer, and all its activity will be against you" (Kiddushin 30b). The Torah, a sound personal value system, could overwhelm the inclinations of man that might lead him to self-defeat.

According to the rabbis, God is compassionate. He is tender. The sinner is aided by God at every juncture in order that he might more easily realize his potential. God's attribute of lovingkindness is emphasized more than His attribute of justice. The basic tender mercy of God, the desire to bring back the sinner, to forgive the mistaken man, are evident in Rabbinic teaching. "As soiled garments can be cleansed,

so the Israelites, albeit they sin, can return by repentance unto the Lord" (Exodus Rabbah, Beshallah, XXIII, 10). "These are man's intercessors: repentance and good deeds" (Sab. 32a). These aid man in his endeavor to better himself and his fellow man.

"It is written, 'Good and upright is the Lord, therefore He will instruct sinners in the way.' They asked Wisdom, 'What shall be the punishment of the sinner?' Wisdom answered, 'Evil pursues sinners.' They asked Prophecy. It replied, 'The soul that sins shall die.' They asked the Law. It replied, 'Let him bring a sacrifice.' They asked God, and He replied, 'Let him repent, and obtain his atonement. My children, what do I ask of you? Seek me and Live.'" (Pes. K. XXV, 158b). God desires only that man turn from his wickedness that he may live to know the ways and wonders of God. No matter how severe the sin, no matter how great the transgression, God encourages the sinner, on behalf of their partnership. "A king had a son who had gone astray from his father a journey of a hundred days; his friends said to him, 'Return to your father'; he said, 'I cannot.' Then his father sent to say, 'Return as far as you can, and I will come to you the rest of the way.' So God says, 'Return to me, and I will return to you'" (Pes. R. 184b).

If man wrongs his neighbor, he must effect reconciliation with him properly. The injured party must be sought and confronted so that an apology may be given. Confession must be made. "Re. Elazar said: If a man treats his fellow with contempt in public, and afterwards seeks to be reconciled with him, the other says, 'You treated me contemptuously in public, and now you want to be reconciled with me between our-

selves. Go and bring the men before whom you treated me contemptuously; then I will be reconciled with you.' But God does not act thus. A man stands and reviles and blasphemes Him in the open street, and God says, 'Repent between ourselves, and I will receive you'" (Pes. K. 163b).

Man's piety or righteousness does not exempt him from sin. The nobler his personality, the more is expected of him. "The greater the personality, the more severely will God call him to account for the smallest trespass, for God desires to be sanctified by His righteous ones" (Yebamot, 121b). One sin begets another. Sinning may be habit-forming. "Keep far from a minor sin lest it cause thee to commit a greater" (Abot de R. Nathan, 2). One must control his natural passions. "He who has had an opportunity to offend, and refrained, has accomplished a great Mitzvah" (Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah, 4). One slowly but surely becomes adapted to the habit of sinning. He gradually assumes a callousness. "A transgression hardens the heart" (Yoma, 39).

Repeated sins cause man to let down his defense mechanisms. His personal value system is deteriorated by sin. "When a man commits the same offense twice, it seems to him already permissible" (Yoma 86). At the start, sin may seem harmless or inconsequential. But its effects soon overtake man, and he is helpless. "Rabbi Akiba said: 'At the beginning, sin is like a thread of a spider's web; but in the end, it becomes like the cable of a ship'" (Bereshit Rabbah, 22, 6). The Torah can help man to alleviate the harmful effects of sin. Man's potential for betterment aids him in this regard. "Many of the wicked in Israel drew near to the learning of Torah, and, as a consequence, became pious and good" (Abot de R. Nathan, 2).

What goes on in man's heart may help him to overcome his Evil inclinations and dubious enterprises. "A twinge of conscience in man's heart is better than all the floggings he may receive" (Berakot, 7). A fine, sterling personal value system can grow on man so that his heart, his conscience, may be conditioned and predisposed to a certain mode of conduct. Repentance should always be an ongoing involvement. The philosophy of repentance can act as a preventive. "Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus said: 'Repent one day before thy death.' His Disciples asked him: 'How is it possible for a man to repent one day before his death, since he does not know on what day he shall die?' He replied: 'So much the more reason is there that he should repent every day lest he die the next day. Thus will all his days be penitential ones'" (Abot de-Rabbi Nathan, chapter 15).

Repentance can bring in its "tracks" true goodness. Life can be enhanced by its beneficial after-effects. "Rabbi Meir said: 'Great is repentance, because for the sake of one who truly repents, the whole world is pardoned; as it is written: I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him. It is not said: from them, but from him'" (Yoma, 86b). God desires sincerity and truth in repentance. A personal value system that leads and directs to proper conduct and behavior is the end result of effective repentance. This is true piety and religiosity. Outer forms and external ceremonial pomp do not insure the desired consequence. "Not sackcloth and fasting avail, but repentance and good deeds" (Taanit, 16). Repentance involves a complete change. It is a decisively active step taken on the part of man. "If a man repents of his evil deeds,

and then returns to the same deeds, he has not truly repented "(Pesikta Rabbati, 44).

The rabbis were realistic about man. They were aware of his often confusing nature. They taught: "God knew that man would be prone to sin, and He therefore created Repentance before He made man" (Otzar Midrashim, 494). Repentance is ever available to man. Man has only to have a change of heart. His attitude can indeed make the difference. "The gates of petition are sometimes closed; but the gates of repentance are always open" (Bershit Rabbah, 21, 6). One must be sincere and honest as he approaches God. Thus, he will then approach his fellow man with the same attitude. "Sincere repentance reaches up to the very seat of God; upon it rests the welfare of the world" (Yoma 86a). Through complete, successful repentance, man's greatest potential can be realized. What he can make of himself, what he can become, the sanctified nature which he can assume, all these can come through the power of repentance. Repentance is the key to the "good" life, to true religious behavior. "Repentance makes man a new creature; hitherto, dead through sin, he is fashioned afresh" (Midrash Tehillim, 18). Man renews the divinity within himself by this means. He guarantees the nobility of life. Life's higher purpose is then actualized through his efforts. The "image" of God is then consecrated for all mankind. The Messianic Era looms ahead.

A Final Word

Man is a sacred creature. He is divinely created. All men are equal in this regard. God is the Creator of all, Who presents to man-

kind opportunities for human fulfillment in living. Life takes on meaning and purpose if viewed with the perspective of the Rabbis. They were wise scholars and great teachers and pious psychologists. The rabbinic view of man, if made applicable in one's own life, can insure spiritual prosperity for all of mankind. Man has great potential, if only he will actively choose to realize and activate it. The work of Creation can be satisfied through man, as he endeavors, through the sanctification of mankind, to bring about what may be only Messianic in expectation. Hope looms ahead for him. The future may be dramatically changed by his handiwork. God guides and bestows. Man guards and gives of himself. A rabbinically-inclined personal value system insures. Judaism becomes real and actual and wonderfully modern!

FOOTNOTES

1. Samuel Belkin, In His Image (New York: Abelard-Schuman Limited, 1960), p. 18.

2. Leo Baeck, God and Man in Judaism (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958), p. 44.

3. Moritz Lazarus, The Ethics of Judaism (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1901), pp. 1-2.

4. Lazarus, p. 12.

5. Lazarus, p. 114.

6. Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. vii-viii.

7. Schechter, p. ix.

8. Louis Ginzberg, Students, Scholars and Saints (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958), p. 117.

9. Lazarus, p. 38.

10. Lazarus, pp. 59-60.

11. Lazarus, p. 61.

12. Baeck, p. 45.

13. Baeck, p. 46.

14. Belkin, p. 185.

15. Belkin, pp. 167-168.

16. Belkin, p. 130.

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