

HOMILIES IN LEVITICUS RABBAH

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment for
the Title of Rabbi and
for the Degree of Master of Hebrew Letters

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1 9 4 2

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Leviticus Rabbah consists of thirty-seven parashahs of just as many homilies. Twenty-five of the Sabbath lessons of the Sederim cycle, five homilies are equal, with but minor differences, as many of the Pesikta Sederim. As to the remaining seven beginnings, the reason why they are set down may be found perhaps in a different division of the Sederim. This homiletical midrash,

Part I General Background of Leviticus Rabbah

contemporary to the Book of Leviticus and rather a collection of sayings based on certain verses in the third book of Moses. According to the division of Lev. Rab. into sections is based on the division of the Book of Leviticus for the Triennial Cycle of Pentateuch-reading.

Leviticus Rabbah is an ancient Palestinian midrash. It gives the authorities cited and people still mentioned. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to the date of the collection and the authority of the compiler. Some believe the opinion of the compiler is accepted. Others, as Dr. H. L. Strack, believe this should be dated

1. Strack, Introduction to Talmud and Midrash

2. J. H. Strack, Midrashim des Pentateuch und Hexateuch
des Judentums, III.

Leviticus Rabbah consists of thirty-seven parashoth of just as many homilies:-- "twenty-five on the Sabbath lections of the Sedarim cycle, five homilies equal, with but minor differences,¹ as many of the Pesiktha Kahana. As to the remaining seven beginnings, the reason why they are set down may be found perhaps in a different division of the Sedarim."¹ This homiletical midrash, considered among the older midrashim, is not a running commentary on the Book of Leviticus but rather a collection of sermons based on certain verses in the third book of Moses. According to Theodor the division of Lev. Rab. into sections is based on the division of the Book of Leviticus for the Triennial Cycle of Pentateuch-Readings.²

Leviticus Rabbah is an ancient Palestinian midrash in which the authorities cited are nearly all Palestinian. Where a difference of opinion occurs between the authorities of the Palestinian Talmud and the authorities of the Babylonian Talmud the opinion of the former is accepted. Weiss, in Dor III, 261, believes this midrash to be Baby-

1. Strack, Introduction to Talmud and Midrash

2. J. Theodor, Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums Jahrg. XXX.

lonian in origin. The reason for his contention is the use of the word loif in the midrash which, in turn, is frequently found in the Babylonian Talmud. J. Israelstam in his introductory remarks to Lev. Rab. (Soncino Press) rejects this theory on the ground that it is too flimsy an argument, that it rests upon insufficient evidence to warrant such a conclusion. Scholars, for the most part, agree with J. Israelstam.

When one compares Lev. Rab. with other midrashic works it becomes apparent that Lev. Rab. most closely resembles the Pesiktha de Rab Kahana. Some chapters in Lev. Rab. bear a very close resemblance to certain sections of the Pesiktha. (The author acts here as a reporter. He is not sufficiently acquainted with the Pesiktha to take part in a comparative study of the two Midrashim). The problem as to which came first is still debatable. Wuensche in his book, Der Midrash Wajikra Rabba, considers the Pesiktha one of the source books for Lev. Rab. This thought suggests an earlier date for the Pesiktha. Zunz in his Die Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden and also Weiss are of the opinion that the Pesiktha is dependent upon Lev. Rab. Lauterbach (quoting from Strack's book) took issue with Zunz and Weiss until recently and is now in accord with the date suggested by these scholars. (Lauterbach changed his point of view after the publication of Strack's book). These three scholars suggest as the possible

date of Lev. Rab. the middle of the seventh century. The dating of the two midrashim is still highly conjecturable because of the striking similarities between the two. Both midrashim share a certain originality in the structure of the proems. They resemble one another with regard to the concluding formula.

Because of the many Aggadic chapters in Lev. Rab. the midrash became an important source for later Midrashim. Midrash Shir Ha-Shirim, Koheleth Rabbah are but a few. Strangely enough, the Halachic portions occur only sporadically in Lev. Rab.

According to J. Israelstam in his introduction to Lev. Rab. (Soncino Press) the first known direct references to Lev. Rab. are by Rashi and Nathan b. Yehiel in his dictionary the Aruk.

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Studies in Jewish Preaching. For a definition of
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for obvious reasons cannot be included here, the reader
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Part II Exegesis

The early preacher used every conceivable device
at his command to attract his thoughts, views, and
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In dealing with the exegetical material of Leviticus Rabbah the author is greatly indebted to Dr. Israel Bettan for his splendid analysis of early preaching. Out of a voluminous storehouse of Jewish homilies he sets forth a detailed outline in which every homily can be conveniently categorized. The author intends to follow this outline, found in the first chapter of Studies in Jewish Preaching. For a definition of terms and general background of early preaching, which for obvious reasons cannot be included here, the reader would do well to acquaint himself with this chapter. An exhaustive study of the homilies will not be attempted here, but rather selected homilies will be studied.

The early preacher used every conceivable device at his command to elucidate his thoughts, views, and opinions. He left no literary device untouched. Since his homilies were for popular consumption, it was necessary to employ those techniques which made his ideas luminous and impressive. His illustrative materials were culled from his own experiences and the experiences of his people. They were gathered from Jewish and non-Jewish historical experience; at times, his material was the product of his vivid imagination.

The general physical structure of the sermon followed two well-defined patterns. The form of the homily

was either simple and natural or more elaborate in which the homily was introduced by an extraneous verse to explain the text proper. There are few simple and natural texts in Leviticus Rabbah. Thus, for example, in preaching on the text, Lev. 7.11-12 וְלֵכָה בְּיָמֶיךָ אֶתֶּן אֶתֶּן לְיָמֶיךָ שָׁמַח בְּיָמֶיךָ מִן הַיָּמִים, the significant word for the preacher is בְּיָמֶיךָ. The sermon (in fragmentary form as we have it) flows directly from a careful consideration of the word. It suggests to him that only he who is בְּיָמֶיךָ may offer a peace-offering. Since a mourner is not בְּיָמֶיךָ with the world he cannot offer a בְּיָמֶיךָ אֶתֶּן.^{1.} The sacrificial cult no longer played a part in Jewish life but the preacher probably took this opportunity to give a history of sacrifices in Jewish life. Another preacher waxed eloquent on the theme of peace as suggested by the word בְּיָמֶיךָ.^{2.}

Or, take the text from Lev. 9.1 And the elders of Israel. To the preacher elders means something more than age. It means maturity (scholarship). The rabbi continues to glorify the necessity of scholarship in an individual. A person is called elder only by virtue of his knowledge.^{3.}

Several rabbis played with the text from Lev. 9.1 בְּיָמֶיךָ אֶתֶּן. One rabbi concludes that whenever these two words are written together some misfortune or calamity is related. Witness such instances as found in Gen. 14.1,

1. 9.8 2. 9.8 3. 11.8

Is. 7.1, Jer. 1.3, Esther 1.1, and Ruth 1.1.^{4.} Another preacher concludes that 'ו' serves to indicate either a period of misfortune or an occasion of rejoicing. If that passage records sorrow it is a sorrow the like of which has no parallel. If the passage be one of joy, it is a joy the like of which has no parallel.^{5.} Another preacher offers a further interpretation. He belabors the phrase and contends that 'ו' does not refer to joy and that
^{6.}
'ו' does not relate a misfortune.

The rabbis preferred to wrestle with and derived more enjoyment from those techniques that taxed their homiletical abilities. Far more numerous, far more effective, and far more informative to the congregation was the homily based on an extraneous verse which served to introduce the text proper. Greater leeway was afforded the preacher and it is therefore not unusual that Leviticus Rabbah contains a preponderance of just such sermons. In a sermon preached on the text Lev. 6.2 וְהָיָה כְּכֹהֵן הָאֲדֹמִי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
the introductory homily is opened with a verse from
Prov. 10.12 וְהָיָה כְּכֹהֵן הָאֲדֹמִי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
(an antithetical verse). Here the preacher establishes the thought that God is a forgiving and all-merciful God.

וְהָיָה כְּכֹהֵן הָאֲדֹמִי suggests Israel's hatred of God and
God's love for Israel.^{7.} There is no direct relationship between the verses from Leviticus and Proverbs. It is

not necessary, though very often, that a link be established between the two verses. Consider the same text and the preacher's interpretation. **לֹא אָהַב אֱלֹהִים אֶת-אַהֲרֹן כִּי יָשָׁה לְרֵעֵהוּ** refers to God's hatred of Aaron because he yielded to the whims and fancies of the people by allowing them to erect the Golden Calf. The second half of the verse **וְעַתָּה יִסְכַּח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-אַהֲרֹן כִּי עָשָׂה כְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר-אָמַר אֱלֹהִים** is taken to mean that although Aaron transgressed God forgives him. Love is stronger than hate. Then God charges: **וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהִים יִסְכַּח** and complete^{8.} harmony is established between the text and the message. Consider the sermon preached on Lev. 6.13 **וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ לְזִכָּרוֹן**. The rabbi opened his discourse with a verse from the Hagiographa, Ps. 75.8 **וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ לְזִכָּרוֹן**. He applied the later verse to Israel. The sermon is woven around the word **זָכָר**. At times, Israel degraded himself, at times he exalted himself. The preacher provides Scriptural proof for his statements. The sages expounded the verse as alluding to Aaron. At times, **זָכָר**, he abased himself, at times, **זָכָר**, he exalted himself. **זָכָר** is the significant word and connecting link in both passages.^{9.}

Texts

Thus far the general physical outline has been considered. The internal makeup is quite varied but yet capable of classification. There is a plethora of obscure texts

in Leviticus Rabbah. This type of text tested the homiletical skills of the rabbi. And he was glad for the opportunity. In Lev. 6.2 **וְהָיָה הַזֶּה לְךָ זֶכֶר וְהָיָה הַזֶּה לְךָ זֶכֶר** there is a redundancy that demands explanation. For, according to the rabbis, there are no superfluous words in the Bible. The preacher resolved the redundancy by stating that the first **וְהָיָה הַזֶּה** refers to present sacrifice and the second to future sacrifice.^{10.} In Psalm 50,23 **אֶת־זִבְחִי וְהָיָה לְךָ זֶכֶר**, this extraneous verse is obscure. Why use **זֶכֶר** with **וְהָיָה**? Should one not read **זֶכֶר** with **זֶכֶר**? The rabbi explained this difficulty by showing that **זֶכֶר** really means confession. The Scriptural verse, Joshua 7.19f, is cited to prove this contention. By means of **זֶכֶר** Achan, the wicked one, set aside his evil inclination or, to be more exact, sacrificed himself or made confession. **זֶכֶר** rendered in this wise is the appropriate verbal form with **זֶכֶר**.^{11.} The same verse presents a verbal difficulty, linguistic in nature. Why the additional nun in **זֶכֶר**? "To give the force of the frequentative, of continuous action," says the rabbi.^{12.} These points clarified a further challenge is directed at the homilist. Why is the verb written in the imperfect tense and not the perfect? Has not the **זֶכֶר** already been sacrificed? Says the preacher: "The perfect tense has reference to this world whereas the imperfect

refers to the world to come."^{13.} The word *ל* in Lev. 6.2 *ל* *אֶת־הָאֵשׁ* *הַזֹּאת* *עָלֶיךָ* *וְעָלֶיךָ* *וְעָלֶיךָ* *וְעָלֶיךָ* causes concern to the rabbi. "Should one not expect *ל* in lieu of *ל*? No! *ל* does not mean thereon but therein. The fire seemed to rise from the very altar as though the altar itself were aflame."^{14.}

At times texts bristled with logical inconsistencies. The rabbis offered explanations for these seemingly incongruous verses. Lev. 8.3 reads *וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם* *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ* *וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם* *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ*. The question is raised: "How can the entire congregation be gathered at the door of the Tent of Meeting? The rabbis said: 'This is a case where the lesser contains the greater' *וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם* *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ* *וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם* *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ* (A proof text, Gen. 1.9, is cited to strengthen the contention."^{15.}

Another type of text is the allegorical text. Here again is a type of text popular in Leviticus Rabbah. For example, the priestly garments (Lev. 8.2) *וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם* *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ* lend themselves to allegorical interpretation. The garments symbolize various groups in Israel. "The tunic atones for those who wear *וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם* *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ*. The breeches atone for unchaste people. The mitre atones for the arrogant, and the girdle for thieves or those crooked of heart."^{16.}

There are several allegorical texts based on Lev. 23.40

וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם *לְפָנֶיךָ* *בְּדָלֶיךָ*, one of which describes four kinds of plants that compose a ceremonial object. "The fruit of
13. 9.2 14. 7.5 15. 10.9 16. 10.6

the Hadar tree symbolizes Israel. Just as the Ethrog has both taste and fragrance so Israel has men who possess Torah and good deeds. The branches of Palm trees, also, apply to Israel. As the palm-tree has taste but no fragrance, so there are those who possess Torah but possess no good deeds. The boughs of thick trees symbolize Israel. As the myrtle has fragrance but not taste so Israel has those who possess good deeds but possess no Torah. The willows of the brook applies to Israel. As the willow has neither taste nor fragrance so Israel has those who possess neither Torah or good deeds." ^{17.}

And, then, there is the pictorial text, rich in imagery, vivid, colorful, and graphic in its language. Thus, in Lev. 9.1 the elders of Israel, Israel is compared to a bird. Very strikingly and succinctly a picture is limned to stress the exalted position of a leader in Israel. "Even as a bird is unable to fly without wings so Israel is unable to accomplish anything without its leaders." ^{18.} Or, in the text Ps. 80.9: Thou didst pluck up a vine out of Egypt, Israel is likened to the vine. "In the case of the vine the more you clear away under it the more praiseworthy (improved) it becomes. So with Israel! You cleared them before every king and afterwards it took root and filled the land. As in the case of the vine first its fruit is trodden down with the foot and then set on the

table of kings so it is with Israel. Israel appears as though he were rejected but in the Time to Come he will be on high. As in the case of the vine a single bough comes out and subdues (eclipses) many trees so it is with Israel. One righteous man comes out of her and rules from one end of the world to the other.^{19.} Again, Israel is compared to a rose. "A king entrusted his orchard to a tenant. After a time, he returned to look at the orchard. It was filled with thorns and briars. He was disheartened. But he saw a rose among these thorns and briars. He said: 'Because of this rose the whole orchard will be saved.' Israel is that rose in the world surrounded by thorns and briars (heathen nations). Because of the rose God said that the world will be saved."^{20.}

Illustrative Matter

The example was a very effective way of stressing an idea and bringing it close to the heart of people. Slander is a cardinal sin in Judaism. One rabbi preached on this theme and showed what dire effects slander could have upon individuals. He employed the example for emphasis. "A man had a wicked daughter-in-law who was quite adept in the art of spreading idle gossip. She told her husband that his father was trying to seduce her. 'If you don't believe me', she said, 'come and see.' One evening

her husband saw them talking together and in the course of the conversation his father leaned forward to emphasize a thought. The husband immediately concluded that his wife spoke the truth. The irate husband killed his father. The husband was brought before the bar of justice and given the death penalty. The wife was given a like sentence for spreading gossip.^{21.} Truly a vigorous example on the subject of slander.

One rabbi preached a sermon on the physical care of the body. Cleanliness is Godliness. With this thought in mind he proceeded to give an example from the life of Hillel. "Once when Hillel had finished a lesson with his pupils, he accompanied them part of the way. They said to him: 'Master, where are you going?' 'To perform a religious duty.' 'Which religious duty,' his disciples asked? 'To bathe in the bath-house.' 'Is that a religious duty?' He answered them, 'If somebody is appointed to scrape and clean the statues of the king which are set up in the theatres and circuses, and paid to do the work, and, furthermore, associates with the nobility, how much more should I, who am created in the Divine Image and likeness, take care of my body.'^{22.}

An example is taken from history to prove that slander is a cardinal sin. "The generation of Ahab were all worshippers of idols. Since they had no informers

in their midst they were always victorious when they went out to battle."^{23.}

Analogy

The analogy is used quite frequently. A preacher draws an analogy to show God's beneficence toward all His creatures. "A man gives into another's keeping an ounce of silver in private and the keeper returns a pound of gold to the man in public. The former is surely grateful to the latter. So with God! People entrust unto Him some seminal fluid in private and God returns unto them openly a human being."^{24.} The question was raised: "Why did Aaron bring a sacrifice? Was not only the layman expected to bring sacrifices?" The question is answered by means of an analogy. "The lion eats all other animals, and now has food come out of him. Similarly with Aaron! He eats of all the sacrifices, now does a sacrifice come forth from him."^{25.}

Proverb

The proverb is used extensively in Leviticus Rabbah. The proverb epitomized and expressed most pungently the thought of the sermon. It was a practical technique by which the thought of the sermon was preserved in the minds of the people long after the sermon was forgotten. The contention is made that too much talking may lead to trouble. This contention is enforced with the proverbial

saying: "There is nothing better than silence." ^{26.} *אין שום דבר כה טוב כמו שתיקה.*

Or, take the case where God is depicted as easing the task of child-bearing. Woman's abdomen consists of many cavities and coils. When one band is loosened the one closely connected is ipso facto loosened. Thus, the proverb, "When one band is loosened two bands are loosened." ^{27.}

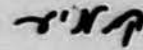
Knowledge alone is not sufficient in a scholar. Good sense (common sense) must accompany knowledge. The preacher concludes this sermon with the adage: "As for a scholar who lacks sensibility (*אדם חכם*), a carcass is better than he." ^{28.} "Knowledge

is the summum bonum", contends one rabbi, giving rise to the popular saying, "If you acquire knowledge, what do you lack; if you lack knowledge, what have you acquired?" ^{29.}

One rabbi preached a sermon in which he deprecated most violently the taking of oaths. "Whether guiltless or guilty, let it not come to an oath." ^{30.} The thought expressed that it is better to give one dollar to charity honestly earned than to exploit and rob others that one might multiply his philanthropies is enforced with the proverbial saying concerning "the prostitute who sells her body for a basket of apples and distributes its contents among the sick." ^{31.}

Parable

The parable is concise, simple, direct. It enhances

the text and serves as a valuable aid in the understanding of the subject under discussion. Thus, a preacher discourses on the need of Torah in one's everyday life. The Torah is Israel's protection. A royal parable is cited by way of illustration. "A king had a son who was afraid to travel because of the robbers on land and the pirates on sea. How did the king remove this fear psychosis? He gave him a staff, hollowed it out and placed a  (amulet) inside. The king said: 'Let this staff be in your hand and you will not have to fear anyone.' What the staff is to the king's son the Torah is to Israel." ^{32.}

The theme of another homilist was the eternity of God. God alone is eternal. "A king entered a province and all of the inhabitants came out to applaud him. This applause was so pleasant to his ears that he said: 'Tomorrow I will construct for you a water-conduit. Tomorrow I will erect for you public baths and bath-houses.' He went to sleep that evening but never awakened from his sleep. He could not fulfill his words. With God it is otherwise. He is a God who lives and reigns forever." ^{33.}

Or, again, in the theme which exalts Israel above all other nations. At times Israel transgressed and God sought to rebuke Israel. But when he saw that these rebukes brought joy to the nations he changed them for good. "Once a widow brought her son before a judge for misbehaving. The widow waited her turn

in court and saw many, who were being sentenced, punished by fire and lashing. The widow became uneasy. When her turn came she told the judge that her son kicked her while in her womb. (As a matter of fact she sought to remove the charges but since she had to say something mentioned this innocuous charge.) The judge said: 'This is no offense.' So God is with Israel. He changes the rebukes into good.^{34.}

Other Exegetical Devices

Gematria

The homilists delve deeper into their pentateuchal texts by the use of Gematria. From the text $\text{אֶת־אֲהֲרֹן־וְאֶת־בָּנָיו־וְאֶת־כָּל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל}$ the preacher deduces that Aaron's sacrifice was as beloved to Him as were the twelve tribes. How so? The word אֶת has a numerical equivalent of twelve. Thus, the preacher's deduction.^{35.} Again, the preacher stresses the importance of observing Yom Kippur. All must pray on that day to escape the wrath of Satan and become at-one-ment with God. What is the preacher's basis in stating that one can escape Satan on Yom Kippur? He reasons in the following manner: There are 365 days in the year. The numerical value of לֶקֶט is 364. During those 364 days Satan accuses Israel before God but there is that one day, 365th, in which he is powerless to bring accusation against Israel. That day is Yom Kippur.^{36.}

Notarikon

The splitting of words was another tool in the preacher's bag of exegetical devices. For example, the section dealing with leprosy is given, for the most part, a deeper interpretation than the mere physical affliction. Their outbursts against slander is derived from these leprosy passages. By splitting the word לִצְלוּת into its component parts לִצְלוּ and ת the rabbis are able to preach textual sermons on this worst of abominations.^{37.} This interpretation is given the verse from Psalms 34.13 $\text{לֹא יִצְלוּת אִישׁ אֶת אֶתְמוֹתָיו}$. Read לִצְלוּת as לִצְלוּ and ת .^{38.} Again, it is said that if a man is a worthy man the water content in his body does not exceed the blood content. If a man sins, sometimes the water exceeds the blood and dropsy is the resultant affliction. At times the blood exceeds the water and the sinful person contracts leprosy. By a play on the word לֶחַם (man) the rabbi reads לח plus ם (or blood that exceeds)^{39.} and in this wise reaches his conclusions.

Part III Classification of Ideas

I. Nature and Character of God

Belief in the existence of God is an axiomatic truth in Lev. Rab. God is the true God -- the living and everlasting King. *לֹא יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְיְהוָה הוּא הָאֵל*^{1.}

Lev. Rab. is concerned primarily with the nature and character of God. Many midrashim on the subject bear witness to this fact. The rabbis sought to clarify and purify the God idea in Judaism. To assist the comprehension of His attributes the rabbis, in a very striking and concise midrash, draw an analogy between the divine in man, namely, the soul and the attributes of God. The analogy can be regarded as the blueprint of Rabbinic theology. "As the soul is one in the body, so God is one in the universe. As the soul fills the body, so God fills the universe. As the soul carries the body, so God supports the universe. As the soul outlasts the body, so God outlives the world. As the soul within the body needs no nourishment,^{1a.} so God sees but is not seen. As the soul is pure in the body, so God is the pure one in the universe. As the soul in the body does not slumber,^{2.} so God does not slumber." Some of these attributes are treated in greater detail.

The incorporeality of God has long been a point of controversy and a concept not easily comprehended. To a decided majority there seemed to be a sharp discrepancy between the teachings of the Rabbis and the written word of

1. 26.1 2. 4.8 1a. See erratum

the Torah. Lev. Rab. does not dwell at great length upon the subject. But enough is inserted to show that there was an awareness of the problem. For example, when the term holiness is mentioned the rabbis are quick to say that the term is used homonymously, i.e., when applied to God holiness has a different connotation than when applied to man.³ A midrash posits these rhetorical queries: "Is it possible for a /"P to walk after God? Is it possible for a /"P to ascend the heavens and cleave unto Him? It is written thereafter in Dan. 7.9, *וְלֹא כִּדְמוּתָא בְּרִיָּהּ* ".⁴ Further corroboration of God's incorporeality is furnished by the following midrash: "It is customary for a /"P *אֱלֹהִים* to issue a decree and if he desires to establish it he does so through his own actions. If not it is executed through others. Not so with God! He issues a decree and performs it first."⁵ The ways of God are not the ways of man. His essence differs from that of man. God, though humanized in the Bible, is not body.

It follows that since God is not body He has no limitation in space. He is all-present. "Once Titus, the wicked one, entered the Holy of Holies; drew his sword; cut the curtains of the Ark. He brought two harlots into the innermost sanctuary; spread out the Torah under them and had illicit intercourse with them on top of the altar.

The sword with which he rent the curtain of the Ark emerged full of blood. Titus uttered revilings and blasphemies against Heaven. The angered Titus thereupon collected all the holy instruments, placed them in a net and embarked on a ship. A violent gale arose which made the wicked Titus all the more vociferous in his emotional outburst against God. 'God's power and presence are only in the water', railed Titus. 'When I was in His house and within His own domain He was unable to hold out against me and now He has confronted me here.' God was vexed and said: 'With that which I created during the first six days of creation I shall exact punishment from you.' God caused the sea to be assuaged enabling Titus to reach Rome in safety.^{5a.} God was all-present and later in the same story, by means of a mosquito, proved Himself to be all-powerful.

Since God is not body and therefore infinite; and since He is not subject to decay He is eternal. A parable relates: "A *1^{er} p^{sh}* entered a province and all the inhabitants came out to applaud him. Their applause was most pleasing to his ears and so he said to them: 'Tomorrow I will erect for you public bath-houses. Tomorrow I will begin construction of a water-conduit.' He went to sleep that evening and never awakened from his sleep. Not so with God! He is a God who lives and reigns forever."^{6.}

By a play on the word **אין** [אין] -- there is none
beside Thee -- the rabbis read **אין** [אין] -- there is
none to outlast Thee.^{7.}

In Judaism, the theocracy where God is Ruler
all are equal in His sight. God hearkens to all.
God is the Supreme Ruler of the universe. He has two
thrones -- **כסא דין** and **כסא רחמים**. We associate
כסא דין with the 'throne of strict justice' and **כסא רחמים**^{8.}
with the 'throne of abundant mercy.' God exercised
the attitude of compassion more often than He did His
power of strict justice. "When God ascends and sits upon
the 'throne of strict justice' He ascends with the intent
to mete out **דין**. Yet when Israel raises its
shofars and blasts its sounds before God He rises from the
כסא רחמים and sits on the **כסא דין**."^{9.}

God shows no favoritism or partiality in dealing
with His creatures. All are alike in His presence. God
said: "The feeblest among you are as dear to Me as David."^{10.}
"When a **דן** sits in judgment he is praised if he
acquits. If he condemns no one praises him, because they
know that passion influenced him. No such accusation can
be levelled against God. Whether He acquits or condemns --
He is praised. **ואלה מרוק לשלום כי לשלום יבק דמיון ה' צדק**
ויגון ושלום כי אקרא בא שלום אל ה' נא כי יקח כי שלום ה' מן
"When two men come before a judge toward whom does the

judge turn? Is it not toward the face of the rich? How different God is! *אלהים אינו נשען על פני עשיר* ^{12.}

That Lev. Rab. lays stress upon the idea of holiness is not surprising since the Book of Leviticus contains the Holiness Code. The commonest of all names ascribed to God is *אלהים קדוש*. To be holy means to possess a glowing desire to emulate God's holiness -- to seek a state of ethical and moral perfection. This attribute above all others elevates man above the beasts and Israel above all other peoples.

The celestial and terrestrial beings glorify God with the words *קדוש קדוש קדוש* ^{13.} "The rabbis say: 'A king has three crowns. He places one on his own head and two on the heads of his sons. The celestial beings crown God with three sanctities *קדוש קדוש קדוש*. God places one on His head and two on Israel. Mortals ^{14.} need two sanctities because of the evil inclination.'"

"Ye shall be holy, for I am holy. Is it possible to imagine that men can be as holy as God? 'No! My holiness ^{15.} is higher than any degree of holiness you can reach.'"

II God and Creation

God pre-existed all things. God is the First Cause and the Cause from which all else emanates. There is difference of opinion among the rabbis as to whether

heaven or earth took precedence in creation. The House of Shammai believes that heaven was created first. Hillel claims the earth came first in the scheme of creation. Each elaborates and quotes passages for his statements. "The School of Shammai likened the matter to a king who made a home for himself and afterwards made a footstool for it. Thus God said in Is. 66.1: 'The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool.' The School of Hillel likened the matter to a king who builds a palace. First the king builds the lower stories and afterwards the upper ones. In Gen. 2.4 it reads: 'On that day the Lord God made earth and heaven.' Shimon b. Jochai could not understand the reason for this controversy. He declared: 'Both were constructed like a pot and its lid, as it is said in Is. 48.13: 'When I call unto them (earth and heaven) they arise together.' He was asked: 'In that case why does Scripture mention sometimes earth before heaven and sometimes heaven before earth?' He replied: 'It is to teach that both are of equal importance.' The sages say: 'In regard to creation the heavens came first. 16. In respect to completion the earth was first.'"

After creation of heaven and earth came the creation of God's creatures. The rabbis held strongly to the belief in the doctrine of teleology, in the doctrine of deliberate adaptation of all phenomena of organic life. Everything

was created for some definite end or purpose. Nothing was left to blind chance. Ecc. 5.8 based on Lev. 17.3 reads: "And the superfluities of the earth are included" emphasizes this point of view. Things that appear superfluous in the world -- the gnat, fly, flea -- are included among the things that benefit the world. The serpent, frog, scorpion, mosquito are messengers of God as well as the prophets.^{17.}

The story of Titus related above but not in toto should be completed here. It bears direct relationship to the subject under discussion. "When Titus reached Rome he was hailed by all his subjects. God then proceeded to punish him. God caused a mosquito to enter his nose and probe steadily until it reached his brain. The mosquito brought untold misery to Titus. He sent for the physicians who, in turn, diagnosed the ailment and decided to split his brain. They did so and in the midst thereof they found something resembling a young pigeon weighing two pounds."^{18.}

Another example: "R. Eleazar was standing by the sea of Caesarea when he saw a thigh bone rolling along. He wanted to push it aside but it continued to roll along. 'This', he said, 'is designed to perform a mission.' Soon a person passed by and the thigh bone rolled between his legs. The person stumbled over it, fell and died. People gathered about and found that the person who fell and died carried documents con-

taining harsh decrees against the Jews of Caesarea." ^{19.}

In God's scheme of creation the angels were made higher than man and with fewer shortcomings. Both were responsible to God. The angel was not an intermediary between man and God. "A story is told of a priest and lay Israelite. The priest said to the physician: 'You give the lay Israelite the necessary orders but you leave me alone.' The physician responded: 'The Israelite may walk among graves but you are a priest and it is not your habit to walk among graves, so I leave you alone.' Since the celestial beings have no evil inclination one ^{ה' אומר} (utterance) is sufficient. The terrestrial beings, like the lay Israelite, require ^{ה' אומר} for they have an evil inclination." ^{20.}

It is God's task to maintain peace ^{between} angels, as it is written ^{21.} ^{אין שום מלחמה בין מלאכים}. Very often the angels become jealous of man and seek to effect a rift between man and God. In our calendar there are 365 days in the year. The numerical value (gematria) of 1682 is 364. During the 364 days Satan accuses Israel before God but on the 365th day he is unable to bring accusation against them. ^{22.}

The Jews had no fear of angels. Said Israel: "Though a host of ^{23.} ^(ה' אומר) ^{אין שום מלחמה} encamp against me my heart heareth not."

God in Nature

19. 22.2 20. 26.5 21. 9.9 22. 21.3 23. 21.3

God has complete power over the forces of nature.

God is over and above all natural phenomena. His is the guiding force that enables nature to be a harmonious whole in the universe. "God causes the sun to shine by day and the moon by night."^{24.} "Day borrows from the night and night from the day. They repay each other amicably without legal document and judicial verdict."^{25.}

"In the ordinary way if a man purchases a pound of meat in the market how much trouble he goes through until he cooks it. Yet while people are asleep God causes the winds to blow and the clouds to rise; the plants to grow and the fruits to be fleshy (/ 87)."^{26.} "In the ordinary way when a man washes his cloak during the rainy season how much trouble he must go through until he can dry it. Yet while people sleep God brings forth a little wind and dries the earth."^{27.} Here we have the

presentation of an impersonal God who manifests Himself through nature. Yet we cannot help but feel that/^{even} here we have a personal God -- a God vitally interested in the welfare of each and every individual -- a Deity who feels personally responsible for all His creatures. God causes the winds to blow, the rains to fall, the earth to produce -- all for the sake of His creatures. A much greater emphasis is given to the personal God in Lev. Rab. -- a God who takes a personal interest in every human being.

God in Relation to Man

God begins to care for man in his pre-natal existence.

28.

Because of God man escapes many dangers. Thus, e.g.

"If a person holds a bag of money with face downward will not the coins scatter? The embryo is in its mother's womb

head downward. God watches it and sees that it does not

fall out and die." 29.

To cite another example: "A beast walks with its body in a horizontal position and the embryo is

in the womb in the form of a bag. This position is danger-

ous to the embryo because of its close proximity to the

ground. On the other hand, woman walks erect and God watches

it so that no harm befalls the embryo." 30.

Also, consider the midrash that marvels at the miraculous anatomy of a

woman's abdomen. "The abdomen consists of many cavities,

coils, etc. When one abdominal band is loosened the one

closely connected is ipso facto loosened. *אם יחלש*

אם יחלש 31.

God takes particular care of a travailing woman. The wondrous marks of God's

favor manifest themselves. "Woman is so fashioned that dur-

ing child-birth there is no menstrual flow. The blood

goes to her breasts and turns into milk for the embryo." 32.

God's favors are all the greater if the child be

a male-child. "Even though a child issues from the womb

of his mother filthy and soiled, full of secretion and

blood, yet all embrace the infant and kiss him especially

if the infant be a male-child." ^{33.} Ergo, the Biblical stress upon the clause ^{34.} "If birth is given to a male no semen is wasted in cohabitation. The petrified drop is well-distributed -- part to the brain, part to the bones, part to the sinews." ^{35.} The male-child in Jewish life enjoyed a superior position to that of the female child.

Christianity has no monopoly on the belief that it alone extends a helping hand to the lowly. It is not unique to Christianity as some would have us believe. Judaism places an equal or even greater value on the lowly and oppressed.

A magnificent midrash comments on a magnificent verse, ^{36.} *וְכָל הַבְּרִיָּה כְּכֵל שֶׁנֶּחֱדָשׁ*. God's instruments are the broken vessels of humanity. When animals are sacrificed unto God they are required to meet specific qualifications before God. Not so with human beings! God is on the side of the down-trodden, the oppressed, the broken vessels of humanity. The Greeks idealized beauty, perfection, the physical perfection of man -- the whole vessels of humanity. How one-sided a religion when compared to Judaism. God favored the *וְכָל הַבְּרִיָּה כְּכֵל שֶׁנֶּחֱדָשׁ*. Here God plays the role of the pastor.

Very often man ignores human derelicts but God makes it His primary task to heal the broken of heart and

God. It is a fine conception of God. The Midrash makes a real and worthwhile contribution in giving emphasis to this point of view.

God and Israel

Lev. Rab. is a literature written by Jews for Jews. It is only natural that a preeminent position be accorded to the Jews. Israel firmly believed that they were God's chosen people. This belief receives wide amplification in the midrash. An intimate and unique relationship existed between God and His people.

God chose His people by democratic procedure.

"The Torah was offered to all the people of the world.

The heathen nations rejected the Law which was given out of the midst of darkness. Concerning them it says in

Is. 58.2 *כי כתר בחרת ישראל*. Israel accepted the Torah given under precisely the same conditions. Concerning Israel Scripture reads (Is. 60.2) *אליהם יזרח אור*

^{41.} *אור וכו' ואלהם יזרח אור*. The acceptance of the Torah indicated that Israel was henceforth to be a peculiar people.^{42.}

Since Israel accepted the Torah it followed that God was expected to show especial love for them. Thus,

we read in Lev. 1.2 *דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם*

Why do we have *דבר* and *אמרת*? This was to prove God's love for Israel. When one speaks of one's beloved

one does so expansively. God chose Israel as His people.

"Among them one in a 1,000 reaches the highest plane.

So, among nations -- one attaining a high plane is rare and therefore valuable in the sight of God." ^{43.} Israel reached that high plane.

Israel was the first people to proclaim God's sovereignty and accept the commandments as proof of the moral law. ^{44.}

"Israel cleaved to God, as it is said in Jer. 13.11 *לִי כָאֵל יִרְדָּה בְּאֶזְרִי וְהָיִיתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל*. So have I caused Israel to cleave unto Me. A royal parable relates: "A king had a special garment which he wanted to be looked after very carefully. The servant couldn't

understand the reason for such meticulous care. The king said: 'This is the garment closest to my body.' Israel is that garment closest to My body." ^{45.} Another parable:

"A king had many purple cloaks but was most careful with a particular purple cloak because the day he became king he wore that purple robe. So God with Israel! Israel was the first to declare God King at the Red Sea and He therefore watches Israel more than others." ^{46.} God's

love is further expressed for Israel in the passage from Num. 8.19 where the word Israel occurs five times. *כָּאֵל וְכָאֵל*

חֵיקָה מִתְּחִלָּה בְּאֵל וְכָאֵל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָאֵל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל ^{47.}

God's love is constant despite Israel's actions. ^{48.}

It is a love unlimited. Man can never reach this purity

of love. Any fault detected in the beloved (Israel) is painful to the lover (God). The lover, no matter to what extent he is tried, is never faithless. The love between God and Israel is a mutual love. "Even as God glorifies Israel so Israel glorifies God, as it is written in Is. 49.3 *אֲנִי אֶגְדָּל אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶגְדָּל אֹתִי*." ^{49.}

God and Israel made promises to each other. God would not disown them; Israel was not to disown Him. ^{50.} A blood covenant was consummated between the two. "God's half portion Moses sprinkled on the people. The people's portion Moses dashed against the altar of God." ^{51.} On many occasions Israel transgressed the conditions made at Sinai. God could have broken His promise but never did, for it is written in Hosea 11.9 *אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין אֶחָד כָּמוֹנִי*." ^{52.} "God redeemed them for the sake of His great Name." ^{53.}

Israel was bound by oath to meet its responsibilities. It was Israel's duty so to live as to bring honor and glory upon its God. No matter how arduous a task Israel was to remain ever true to its God. The Jew gave evidence of this faith. He did not falter. "Why do you go forth to be stoned? Because I circumcised My son. Why do you go forth to be burned? Because I have kept the Sabbath. Why do you go forth to be killed? Because I have eaten unleavened bread. Why are you beaten with a whip? Because I made a Sukkah." ^{54.} The Jew lived by

his faith, determined and resolute. "Though an enemy rise up against me I shall not fear for it says in Ex. 14.14: 'The Lord will fight for you.'"^{55.}

Through Israel ethical and spiritual teaching was to pervade the world.^{56.} This was Israel's mission on earth -- this was his excuse for being and no stumbling block could be permitted to obstruct his path. Israel had rigorous and absolute standards -- he would not compromise with the is in life. The mission was a difficult one -- Israel knew that his lot would be fraught with suffering. Nevertheless, Israel felt highly honored and privileged to be God's 'suffering people.' When Abraham set out to sacrifice Isaac he was accompanied by two servants. Abraham said to the latter: 'Look above and tell me what you see?' 'Nothing', they replied. Said Abraham: 'Because you see nothing (Isaac saw a cloud resting on top of the mountain) and this ass sees nothing remain here with the ass.'^{57.} The servants (heathen nations) were a people resembling the ass. Israel knew that he was dealing with asinine people and therefore his tasks would be multiplied. It would not be easy to make them see the clouds of God.

Israel's role in life involved suffering. "Israel is likened to a rose among thorns in this world. A north wind bends it to the south and the thorn pricks it; the south wind blows it to the north and a thorn pricks it.

An east wind bends it to the west and a thorn pricks it; a west wind bends it to the east and a thorn pricks it. Yet the rose always rights itself and regains its equilibrium. So with Israel. Israel is harassed and persecuted, tossed to and fro by the heathens. Israel is given little time for respite. Yet Israel ultimately rights itself and looks toward heaven."^{58.}

Commenting on the verse in Gen. 22.5 *וַיִּשְׁחָק אֱבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁחָק וַיִּשְׁחָק*, the rabbis said: "God showed Abraham the ram tearing itself from one thicket and getting entangled in another. So with Israel! Your children are destined to be caught in iniquities and entangled in troubles. But Israel will ultimately be redeemed through the horns of the ram."^{59.}

A farther elaboration of the same verse cited above reads: "Your children, says God, are destined to be caught by the nations and entangled in troubles. They will be dragged from empire to empire -- from Babylon to Media, from Greece to Edom (Rome) but they will ultimately be redeemed through the horns of the ram."^{60.} Rome's lash and sting was the greatest among all the heathen nations.

That Israel's lot in this world was a difficult one is further discussed by a midrash which compares Israel to a vine. Its reward was to be commensurate with its

sufferings in this world. "The vine is lower than all the trees and yet rules over all the trees. Israel appears as though they are lowly (inferior) in this world but in the World to Come they will take possession of it from one end of the world to another. As in the case of the vine first its fruit is trodden down with the foot and then set on the Table of kings. So with Israel! They appear as though they were rejected but in the Time to Come they will be on high. Israel is destined to rise like the vine on the king's table, to a place of preeminence among the nations of the earth."^{61.} "In the Messianic era Gog and Magog (symbols of Israel's enemies) will be involved in a war with God and He will fight against these nations and they will be destroyed."^{62.}

God and Torah

Moses received the Torah at Sinai. The Torah occupied a preeminent place in the lives of the Jewish people. "Torah was the embodiment of law and order in the moral universe even as God based the physical universe upon law and order."^{63.} According to one rabbi: The Torah preceded Creation by 2,000 years.^{64.} The world was created only for the sake of the Torah. "A king entrusted his orchard to a tenant. He came back later to inspect his orchard. He found thorns and briars, and so decided to cut them down. Fortunately, he saw a rose among them. The

king said: 'Because of this rose the whole orchard will be saved.' After 26 generations God looked at His world to see what it produced and found it full of water in water *וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ מַיִם בְּמִלְיוֹנֵי מַיִם* -- wicked people in a wicked environment. He brought cutters to hew it down. But He saw a rose amongst them-- ^{namely,} Torah. Because of the merit of the Torah the world will be saved.^{65.} Torah was one of the three gifts presented to the world.^{66.} "God said to Israel after the nations rejected the Torah: 'If you keep the Torah I will consider it as though you made them.'^{67.} (*לֹא-הָיָה* unvocalized can be read *לֹא-הָיָה*).

Study and Practice of Torah

Israel never subscribed to the philosophy 'Speak nicely, do poorly.' Study is not enough. Practice must accompany study. "It is not enough to learn the commandments," say the rabbis. "They must be learned with the intention of practicing them. One who only learns them would be better unborn. It would have been better had the after-birth in which he lay been turned over his face and had not come out into the air of this world. He who learns with the intention of practicing is worthy to receive the Holy Spirit."^{68.}

The Torah is a tree of life. It must be planted in the land. It must be deep-rooted in the lives of each and every individual. Let not the Torah (study and application) be in your eyes like a father who has a marriageable daughter.

ter and who desires to marry her off to anyone who comes along. The Torah is not something unwanted that you should want to get rid of. The Torah can be acquired

only through merit.^{69.} "Though a man has learned Torah and taught, observed and performed it, but if he had a chance to blot out wrongdoing and did not, or was able to maintain scholars and did not, he is included in the category of cursed, *נאק*."^{70.} One further example:

"If a man has not learned Torah nor performed it, nor observed nor taught it to others, nor had the means to maintain scholars, yet did maintain them, he is included among the blessed, *פיר* . If an ignorant man protests against violence and a scholar does not, only the former is included among the blessed."^{71.}

He who busied himself with Torah held a most exalted position in Jewish life. "Who is the most beloved and sweetest among the people? One says: 'The group that is backed by the strength of the Torah and precepts.' The other says: 'It is the Torah and Mishna teachers who teach children, inspire them with awe toward the Holy One, Blessed be He.'"^{72.}

The midrash sided with the answer of the latter group. The question is raised: "To whom is reference made in the verse from Prov. 50.23 *יבא חכמים ויבא ילדים*?" They are the Bible and Mishna teachers who instruct children faithfully."^{73.}

A disciple must always show proper deference before his master. It is said that "the sons of Aaron died because they gave a legal decision in the presence of Moses, their master." From this instance the rabbis conclude that anyone who gives a legal decision in the presence of his master incurs the penalty of death. A disciple cannot render a legal decision until he is 12 miles distant from his master.^{74.}

The rabbis realized that not everyone could be learned. They did not expect Israel to be a nation, each one a scholar. It is therefore not uncommon that the rabbis should say: "Better is one who studies two orders of Talmud and is conversant with them than one who studies many Halachoth and is not conversant with them."^{75.} This philosophical gem was intended as a maxim for life as well as for study. Better to do a little well than a great deal haphazardly. Honesty of knowledge, honesty of life were cardinal virtues highly to be desired. A fool says otherwise. "A fool says: 'Who can learn Torah, Nezikin, Kelim?' 'There is too much to learn.' A sensible person says: 'Teach me 2 Halachoth today, two tomorrow until I shall have learned the whole Torah.' He who is a fool says: 'Of what avail is my learning Torah and then forgetting it?' He who is sensible says: 'Does not God give reward for the very labor?'"^{76.} The rabbis very

succinctly express their attitude on study and practice in the following midrashim. "He who learns but does not teach, behold, there is no vanity greater than his. His learning dies with him."^{77.}

"Anyone who is greedy after commandments and the commandment is not fixed for future generations what benefit has he? Religious acts should be of benefit to the future as well as ^{to} the present.

Moses performed many commandments and religious acts; and many good deeds are credited to him and designed for future generations, as it is written ⁱⁿ Deut. 4.41 *לדור ודור* ^{78.}

Scholarship per se was the greatest of all achievements to the Jew. Yet scholarship without good sense and righteousness and hospitality is of very little value to the scholar. Thus, the proverb "As for a scholar who lacks good sense (*לדור ודור*) a carcass is better than he."^{79.}

Moses performed many tasks for Israel -- the incident at the Red Sea, the exodus from Egypt, to mention but a few. But Moses had the good sense not to enter the *אגף* ^{80.} until God called unto him.

The scholar must possess good manners. "Good manners preceded Torah (learning) by 26 generations. To illustrate; Yannai once met a well-dressed man. R. Yannai always thought that scholarship was all important until he met a man who, although completely ignorant of scholarship possessed true

gentlemanliness." ^{81.} What counts in life is not intelligence and scholarship alone but gentlemanliness, consideration, thoughtfulness. These qualities in a man are of prime importance.

God and Prophecy

Moses was the greatest of all prophets. He is the father of prophecy. "Whereas the other Israelitish prophets looked through nine lenses, Moses looked through ^{82.} one."

His was an intimate acquaintance with the Divine. The similitude of God was vouchsafed to the prophets through angels, through media which made visions less clear. Moses beheld the similitude of God directly ^{83.} with no interference from intermediaries.

The prophets of Israel, though inferior to Moses, were superior to the prophets of the heathens. "God revealed Himself to heathens in an incomplete form of address.

How do we know this? From the verbal form ^{וִיְקַרְא} (apocopated form) in Num. 23.16: ^{וִיְקַרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה}

When Moses is addressed the full form of the verb is employed: ^{וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה} ^{84.} Both forms are derived from the same verb ^{קָרָא} -- one is an apocopated form, the other a complete form. The rabbis make the following comment on verse 29 of the 15th chapter of Proverbs: ^{וְהָיוּ חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְחַיִּים וְחֵן} "The first half of the verse, ^{וְהָיוּ חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְחַיִּים}, refers to

the heathen prophets and the last half of the verse ^{85.} **והוא יבא אל ישראל** to the prophets of Israel." God revealed

Himself to the heathen prophets as one who comes from a far-off land **מאד רחוק הוא בא** (Is. 39.3).

With Israel's prophets He appeared or called directly ^{86.}

והוא יבא אל ישראל. A parable relates: "A king had a curtain in his room. When he spoke with a close friend he folded the curtain so that he could see his friend face to face. With others less intimate he drew the curtain across the room so that no one could see him. Thus with the Israelitish and heathen prophets. When God spoke to Israel's prophets he folded the curtain so that He could see them face to face. With the heathens He drew the curtain so that none could see Him." ^{87.}

Another parable: "A king had a wife and concubine. When he went unto his wife he went openly in broad daylight. When he went to the concubine he went at night, secretly. When God spoke to Abimelech He came to him in a dream at night (Gen. 20.3) **והוא יבא אל ישראל**. Not so with

Israel's prophets, as it is written in (Ex. 6.28) **והוא יבא אל ישראל** ^{88.}

The establishment of the **מלכות** played a prominent role in the history of prophecy. The rabbis said:

"Before the **מלכות** was established there was prophecy among the nations of the world. After erection of the **מלכות**

prophecy among the heathens ceased." ^{89.} "The Divine Voice
did not go outside of the ~~temple~~ ^{halak} ^{90.}

Proselytes and Apostates

We should remember that Judaism was not a closed, exclusive religion for Jews only. Others could also enjoy Divine privileges and favors provided they met certain requirements. Judaism was not a narrow, exclusive, nationalistic religion. While it is the religion of Israel it yet belongs to all mankind. Proselytes were treated as full brothers, not half-brothers. Other nations (Greece, Rome) did not welcome proselytes. They felt that an influential proselyte might bore from within and thus undermine their religious beliefs. The Jew had no such fears. His religion was so superior that once accepted the individual would think of no other religion. The Jew did fear casual observers: they could do a great deal of harm (misunderstanding the ~~halak~~ ^{halak} etc.) Judaism was not to be on exhibition to such individuals.

Commenting on Hosea 14.8 ^{1837 186, 1816} ("They shall return dwelling under His shadow") the rabbis say that this verse refers to proselytes. They shall become the root, just like Israel. They shall be included among the children of Israel. The proselyte is an integral part of Israel. "The names of proselytes are as pleasing to Me as the wine of libation which is offered to Me on the

altar."^{91.} In Lev. 1.2 *למה יקריב אליו* the rabbis made this observation: "In other places Scripture reads *למה* not *למה*. 'Why *למה* here?' To include the proselyte. When an individual accepts Judaism a hand should be extended to him to lead him under the wings of the *אש*."^{92.}

The apostates were hated with the same intensity that the proselytes were loved. Apostates were irreverent, shameless, intemperate people, comrades of lies and perjury. The Jew was willing to accept sacrifices from the wicked of Israel in order to bring them back under the wings of the Shechinah. But the sacrifice of an apostate would not be accepted."^{93.} In Lev. 1.2 *למה יקריב אליו* cited above the word *למה* is used. "Why is *למה* used?" asked the rabbis -- "in order to exclude the Israelite who became an apostate."^{94.}

Reward and Punishment

Every religion worthy of its name is expected to shed light upon and explain as best it could the problem of Divine retribution. Judaism posits the truth that God is a God of justice. Since He is a just God it follows that the righteous should prosper and the wicked suffer. Yet this thought is, at times, in conflict with the doings of every-day life. Too often the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. The rabbis did not evade the issue.

They said: "The wicked do their wicked deeds in this world and penalty is exacted from them in the world to come."^{95.}

"From the righteous God collects some of the misdeeds they have done in this world in order to give them a good reward in the Time to Come."^{96.}

(Time to Come and World to Come are very often synonymous terms in Lev. Rab.) "By doing right the righteous do good to themselves and to others. The wicked bring evil upon themselves and upon others."^{97.}

"God gives abundant peace to the wicked in this world for the few good deeds they have done in order to exact punishment upon them in World to Come."^{98.}

Further, "the wicked do not depart from the world until they pronounce their sentences from their own mouths."^{99.}

The rabbis leave us with a last thought stressing the point that "only Israel is destined for life in the World to Come."^{100.} The Jew and those who accept Judaism have a monopoly on life in the next world. In this wise the rabbis faced the problem.

Reward and punishment can also be understood by the theory, The Merit of the Fathers, advanced by the rabbis. When the forbears obeyed the will of God the offspring prospered -- when they transgressed the sins were visited upon the children. "Adam was not able to stand firm for even a short period. Because of his instability his children had

to wait with regard to  three years." ^{101.}

"When Jacob dreamed a dream he saw the princes of Babylon, Media, Greece, and Edom ascending and descending the ladder. God said to Jacob: 'You also ascend.' At that time Jacob was afraid and said to God: 'I will also come down.' God replied: 'Once you ascend, you will not descend.' Because Jacob hesitated and faltered in his faith to God his children were destined to become slaves to the four empires (mentioned above) in this world. At that time Jacob was afraid and asked God whether or not that would go on forever. God answered: 'No!'" ^{102.}

"God punished Aaron (incident of the Golden Calf) by taking his two sons. 'The parents eat sour grapes and the teeth of the children are set on edge!'" ^{103.} The rabbis pointed out, however, that the sins eventually spend themselves. "Hadrian (may his bones be ground to dust -- the Jew did not fail to express his hatred for his enemy be it directly or through ⁱⁿquendo) saw an old man planting trees. Hadrian said: 'Old man, if you had gotten up early (in your youth) to do the work you would not have had to work late (in your old age).' The old man replied: 'If I do not eat of them, then my children will. As my forbears worked for me so will I work for my children.'" ^{104.}

Land of Israel

The rabbis longed for Palestine. There are not many

midrashim on the Land of Israel but those found in Lev. Rab. are pungent of the rabbis' love for the soil of the Palestine. "Palestine shall always have plenty. In other lands there will be a dearth. All the other lands shall come and buy produce from Palestine. The Land of Israel will be a granary for all the peoples of the earth."^{105.}

"All the boons, blessings, and consolations that God will in the future bestow upon Israel will come only from Zion."^{106.} In a few words they expressed the imperative

need of Palestine for the Jew, his life and his faith.

יבוא ארץ ישראל, ויבוא ארץ ישראל, ויבוא ארץ ישראל.
: / ויבוא ארץ ישראל, ויבוא ארץ ישראל, ויבוא ארץ ישראל. ^{107.}

Every overt act of a man is of no consequence unless accompanied by a proper attitude. The attitude more than the act per se displays the inner worth of a man as a man. The rabbis were quick to make this observation and employed with consummate skill an antiquated vehicle, the sacrificial cult, to bring this thought close to the people. By using the sacrificial system as a basis for their doctrines the rabbis accomplished two things:- (1) they used their own sources to make clear their ideas and (2) they kept the people well informed on Biblical teachings and the historical role of sacrifice in Judaism.

I - Spiritualization of Sacrifices

The rabbis stressed the spiritualization of sacrifices. Sacrifices are more than mere outward acts and rigid legalism. The offering of the $\frac{1}{10}$, e.g., is left to the discretion of the individual. Only he knows whether or not he has sinned inwardly.¹ In Lev. 6.13 it is suggested that a $\frac{1}{10}$ part of an ephah be set aside. The rabbis attach little importance to the actual fraction of a man's produce. They attach great importance to the spirit in which it is given. The rabbis were concerned with man's mental attitude. "God, they say, demands quality of heart, not quantity."² The rabbis do not hesitate to repeat this thought whenever possible. In bringing a sacrifice (ram, ox, etc.) it is not the bulk that matters but rather the proper intention and the right spirit in man.³

An individual may bring whatever sacrifice he could afford. If a bullock is too expensive then a ram is quite satisfactory. If a lamb is outside his financial range a bird is an adequate substitute. Agrippa wished to sacrifice one thousand burnt offerings in a day. The priest, with this heavy assignment, could not accept any other sacrifice. A poor man came along and requested that his two little doves be sacrificed. The poor man had to plead with the priest. The priest finally yielded to the passionate pleadings of the poor man. King Agrippa, duly informed of the priest's behavior, said that the priest did the right thing by offering the poor man's sacrifice.^{4.} Another story: "A priest would not offer a handful of fine flour brought in by a poor woman. The priest despised her saying, 'See what she offers. This is not enough.' That night the priest had a dream. In that dream he heard a voice saying: 'Do not despise her.' It is as though she offered her own life."^{5.} "If you bring your offering willingly and cheerfully it is My sacrifice," says God. "But if it is brought against your will I will regard it as though you did not offer it unto Me."^{6.} Thus, the importance of a proper frame of mind! "A person must not think that he can sin with impunity, provided that he follows it with a meal-offering."^{7.} The end does not justify the means.

Every type of sacrifice offered is symbolic to the homilist. E.g., speaking of *אִפְרָיִם* suggests arrogance to him. Why? Because *אִפְרָיִם* means going up, uppish, arrogant. Further,

4. 3.5 5. 3.5 6. 27.10 7. 3.7

the words *he is to be* suggest that the punishment meted out to the arrogant is death by fire.^{8.} The homilist arrives at this conclusion through the association of ideas.

Thus, an antiquated vehicle is modernized by the preacher and serves a very useful end to him. Through his homiletics the preacher so interprets his texts that they become vital and striking messages to his listeners. One further thought is derived from these texts on sacrifices; whether it be sacrifice or atonement--these acts are performed to make man worthy before God. God said: "'I have commanded you in order that you may be made worthy.' Take pure olive oil for the light'. God does not need the light of man but it is rather to make you worthy of Divine favor. God does not need the sacrifices of man."^{8a.}

II - Unworthy Acts

A. Idolatry

Man is guilty of many sins--sins toward his God and sins toward his fellow-man. One of man's cardinal sins toward God is idolatry. In the concept of the unity of God originated a system of one ethical code, of one moral law for all mankind. It dispelled any philosophy of moral dualism that might bisect nations. Idolatry breaks down all that monotheism suggests. It is little wonder then that the rabbis railed against all forms of idolatry. They said: "The gods of idolaters are dead. They have mouths but they speak not -- they have eyes, but see not -- they have ears but hear not. They are dead.

Shall we leave Him who is everlasting and worship the dead? The dead cannot help the living. Why, then, should the living inquire of the dead?"^{9.}

The rabbis give the following explanation as one of the reasons for Saul's death: "It would have been better for Saul to consult the Urim and Thummim of the One above and not the ghost and familiar spirit of the lower world. Saul disguised himself and thus freed himself from royalty. He gave up royalty to perform this degrading act. This is a cardinal sin. Saul died because of five sins, one of which was that he inquired of the ghosts and familiar spirits and did not seek God's advice, as it is written in Lev. 20.27 *וְאֵלֶּיךָ לֹא תִשְׁתָּחֲוֶה*

לֹא תִשְׁתָּחֲוֶה 10. "Necromancy is a thing that has no light and does not cause light to shine upon you. Similarly, a necromancer sheds no light. He cannot cause light to shine for himself, how, then, can he cause light to shine upon others?"^{11.}

B. Immorality

Another cardinal sin is sexual immorality. Lev. Rabbah attacks most vehemently those who are promiscuous. Such promiscuity not only spells one's undoing but greater still causes the moral and physical undoing of others. The rabbis pleaded for sexual morality. "You should not say that only he who commits the crime with his body is an adulterer. If he commits adultery with his eyes he is an adulterer, as it is written

in Job 24.15 *לֹא יִשְׁכַּח עֵינָיו* 12.

9. 6.6 10. 26.7 11. 6.6 12. 23.12

Another midrash reads: "He who sees a naked object and does not feast his eyes upon it, he is worthy of seeing the face of the Shechinah, as it is written in Isaiah 33.15: 'And shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil'. What is written after it? 'Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold a land stretching afar. (Is. 33.17)'" ^{13.}

Commenting on II Ki. 4.27 the rabbis say: "Elisha never looked at her in all his life". The rabbis said: 'She never in all her life saw a drop of semen on his sheet.' ^{13a.} God hates four things one of which is having intercourse naked. ^{14.}

The rabbis spoke likewise of proper sexual relationship between man and woman. The seven days of separation were to be observed. ^{15.} "If a man comes into his wife during the period of separation וְזָ he produces leprous children. R. Abin applied to him the verse: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and their children's teeth are set on edge (Jer. 31.29).'" ^{15a.} The laws of cleanness and uncleanness were to be properly executed by a married couple.

Nor did the rabbis fail to mention ^{the effect of} strong drink as a contributing factor to sexual immorality. The rabbis did not oppose drink in moderation. They condemned excessive drinking. In Prov. 23.31 the verb כָּסֵה occurs. What does כָּסֵה mean? The rabbis said: "Read the verb as though it were written כָּסֵה וְכָסֵה -- a desire or lust for blood, for the

13. 23.13 14. 21.7 13a. 24.6 15. 14.3 15a. 15.5

blood of a menstruous woman and for the blood of a woman having an issue.' The man who drinks becomes familiar with wine and is likely to engage in forbidden marital intercourse.^{16.} The effect of wine may also lead to bastardy. Both daughters of Lot were with child by their father.^{17.}

Strong drink in and by itself is detrimental to man. "A person who drinks will go on depriving himself. In his drunkenness he reasons: What this copper pot does, an earthenware pot can do. So he sells the better vessel, takes the money and buys more drink."^{18.} "It (wine) biteth like a serpent and stingeth like a basilisk (Prov. 23.32). Just as a basilisk divides between death and life so wine caused a separation between Adam and Eve. Adam ate from a vine tree. These clusters of grapes brought bitterness into the world. Just as the basilisk divides between death and life, so did wine make a separation between Noah and his sons with regard to slavery. 'Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. (Gen. 9.25f).'^{19.} "God said: 'I had a Great House but I destroyed it only on account of wine.'^{20.} Aaron's sons died because of wine."

C. Slander

"The worst abomination is sowing discord among brethren."^{21.} "Slander can dwell in Rome and kill in Syria, dwell in Syria and slay in Rome. Why is the slanderer called *ῥῥῥ*? Because he kills three -- one who utters it, one who listens to it, and the one about whom it is spoken. To illustrate: 'A

man had a wicked daughter-in-law who used to spread evil reports. She made the slanderous remark to her husband that his father was trying to seduce her. 'If you don't believe it', she said, 'come and see'. That evening the husband saw them speaking to one another and his father leaned forward to emphasize a point. From this, the husband concluded that his wife spoke the truth. The enraged son killed his father. The son was brought before the bar of justice and sentenced to die for the slaying of his father. His wife met a similar fate for spreading slander.²²

Good and bad comes from the tongue. "Once R. Simeon b. Gamliel said to his servant: 'Go and buy me some good food in the market'. The servant returned with a tongue. 'Go and buy me some bad food in the market'. Again the servant returned with a tongue."²³ A further example: "A king had a feast. On the table were tender and hard tongues. The guests chose the tender tongues. 'So let your tongues be tender', said the host."²⁴ Thus we note the dual character of the tongue -- death on the one side and life on the other.

Slander is like leprosy. One sins with the mouth and all the parts suffer thereby. In the section dealing with leprosy, *67/31*, the rabbis are not concerned with the physical disease. They are interested in the moral and ethical truth derived from this particular section. They interpret

עוֹלָם as meaning עוֹלָם and עוֹלָם -- one who effects evil. When the rabbis spoke of laws formulated for lepers they are not thinking of actual lepers but rather with those who are afflicted with leprous tongues. When it states: (1) "that it is prohibited to go $\frac{1}{2}$ cubits to the east of a leper and (2) that a leper should be quarantined so as not to defile others,"^{25.} it may very well mean those who spread slander.

Slander includes more than the utterance of evil reports. "One who announces that he will give to charity and does not give; one who pretends knowledge of Torah and, in his ignorance, gives the wrong information, or one who makes vows and breaks them is also a slanderer."^{26.} To all slanderers the rabbis apply the popular saying: "There is nothing better than silence."

D. Dishonesty

The rabbis severely condemned dishonest practices. In the case of all other iniquities Ex. 34.7 reads לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן , here it is written $\text{לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן בְּמִשְׁכָּל מִשְׁכָּל}$. Wrongdoing a person in a sale or purchase is a heinous offence.^{27.} "One who uses diverse weights will not prosper. His curse will be upon him. Cursed actions curse those who are responsible for them."^{28.} "The rabbis said: 'Anyone who robs his neighbor the equal of a peruta is as if he slays him.'"^{29.}

"There was a governor who used to put to death the re-

(Lev. 5.1), The other example: "Reuben stole from Simeon and Levi knew about it. A deal was consummated between Reuben and Levi. The latter was to keep quiet. On the morrow they entered the synagogue and the ^{32.} announced: 'Who has stolen from Simeon?' Levi did not talk."

There must have been the practice many centuries ago of disfiguring faces else the rabbis would make no reference to it. We read in II Chr. 13.17 (the extraneous verse based on Lev. 25.1, 14): ^{33.} What is meant by ^{34.} "The disfiguring of faces", say the rabbis. We read that Abijah disfigured the facial features of Israelites. Is. 3.9 reads ^{35.} We know from elsewhere that one cannot attest save by the full face with a nose. By mutilating a person it was impossible to attest his identity. Many serious problems arose from such practice as, e.g., widows could not re-marry.

The rabbis denounced those who gave false oaths. "Let not a false oath be a light thing in your eyes. The curse for a false oath is so long that it required to be written on a large scroll, which proves how dastardly is a false oath." ^{36.} The rabbis, for the most part, opposed all forms of oaths. The applied the adage: "Whether guiltless or guilty let it not come to an oath." ^{37.} "R. Jonah said: 'One should avoid oaths entirely.'" ^{38.} "Another

rabbi said: 'Anyone who makes a vow and delays to fulfill it will ultimately become involved in the four cardinal sins, idolatry, sexual immorality, shedding of blood, and slander.'^{37.}

"The rabbis said: 'Anyone who makes a vow and delays to fulfill it will bury his wife and bring death upon himself. If he makes a vow and fulfills it he is rewarded for the vow and payment.'^{38.}

The rabbis suggest three things upon which man should contemplate so that he should not come into the hands of sin -- (1) "Know from whence you come, (2) know whither you go, and (3) know before whom you are destined to give an account."^{39.}

III Worthy Acts

The underlying motive of all Hebrew literature is righteous living. No matter whether you study the teachings of a Moses, a Jesus, a Karl Marx, one finds that ethics and morality lie at the roots of their respective philosophies. "What is good is beautiful" epitomizes Israel's philosophy and doctrine to all mankind. Leviticus Rabbah discusses at great length those principles that make for righteous living. Though these doctrines are set forth to guide the Jew in his daily life they are by no means intended for him alone. The ethical and moral lessons are for the Jew in particular and for all mankind in

general.

A. Man -- Social Being

The rabbis dwell upon the principle of cooperation between man and man. Man is a social being and as such has certain definite communal responsibilities. In Jer. 50.17 we read: *כִּשְׁלֹחַ צֶמֶד* - "Israel is a scattered sheep." "Why this figure of speech? Because if the sheep be smitten on its head or on one of its limbs all of its limbs feel the pain. So with Israel. If one member of the community sins all Israel feels it."^{40.} Another illustration of this point: "Many men were aboard a ship. One of them took a borer and began to bore beneath his own place. The other passengers on the ship said to him: 'What are you doing?' He replied: 'That's my business. I'm boring under my own place.'^{41.} The borer failed to realize that by so doing he jeopardized all those on the ship.

There are four kinds of plants that compose a ceremonial object. The four plants lend themselves to allegorical exposition. "The fruit of the Hadar tree symbolizes Israel. Just as the Ethrog has both taste and fragrance so Israel has among them men who possess Torah and good deeds. The branches of palm trees apply to Israel. Just as the palm-tree has taste but no fragrance so there are those who possess Torah but not good deeds. The boughs of ^{trees} thick/

apply to Israel. Just as the myrtle has fragrance but no taste, so there are those who possess good deeds but not Torah. The willows of the brook apply to Israel. Just as the willow has neither taste nor fragrance, so Israel has those who possess neither Torah nor good deeds. What does God do? It is impossible to destroy them. God exclaimed: 'Let them all be tied together in one bunch and they will atone one for the other.'^{42.} "Just as the four kinds of plants combine to form one complete ceremonial object, the shortcoming of one is redeemed by the strength of the other, and the preservation of the whole is preserved."

B. Leadership

Man has his responsibilities to society but greater still are the responsibilities of leaders. Before one can merit the position of leadership he must give evidence of his willingness to accept burdens so as to release them from the shoulders of the people. He must be willing to make sacrifices for another. He must possess a genuine love for his people. He must be the exemplar of the highest qualities -- unselfish, loyal, and a desire to keep people guiltless.^{43.} A leader must be vitally concerned with the essential problems of his community. "When a king enters a province with whom does he speak first? Is it not with the market commissioner of the province?"

Why? Because he is concerned with the leaders of the community.^{44.} A leader must clear the path of obstacles so that others may not stumble.^{45.} A leader must be one who lights candles in order to illumine the way for the multitude. *למה נאמר כי צדיק יסודותיו כצדק אלהים ישרים יסודותיו*^{46.}

Israel's leaders were to be men of intelligence, not men of physical and military prowess. The survival of Israel depended upon its scholars. The age factor was secondary. *כי יסודותיו כצדק אלהים ישרים יסודותיו*^{47.}

Wealth is not a prerequisite for leadership. A midrash tells us that "one of the people of the land brought gold, rubies, and other precious metals for offerings to the Tabernacle. Moses' soul was sadly distressed for he brought nothing. God exclaimed: 'Thy speaking (lips of knowledge) is more precious to me than all else', as it is written *אשר ידבר פיך*^{48.}"

A leader must be a humble man. Moses was a humble person and God called upon him to be His servant. God selects only the humble to perform His tasks. "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." *כי יסודותיו כצדק אלהים ישרים יסודותיו*^{48a.} "God revealed Himself from the midst of the thorn-bush. Moses hid his face from Him. Thereupon God said: (Ex. 3.10) *אמר אליו ואלהים*

At the Red Sea God had to insist that Moses carry out the privileged tasks. Moses did not push himself forward. He tried to make himself inconspicuous.^{49.}

Once a leader is recognized his standards should not be lowered to meet the standards of the people. To cite an example: Aaron made the Golden Calf with the purest of intentions. Aaron wanted to show the ineffectuality of the calf and thus turn the people to God. Aaron's standards became relative whereas they should have been absolute. Because of this God punished Aaron. God is rigorous with leaders.^{50.} The standard of the priest (leader) must be the standard of the people. They must rise to his level of morality and ethics.^{50a.}

The people owe respect to their leaders. The people should be submissive. "What wings are to the fowl, leaders are to the people."^{51.} Many of the priestly passages have been interpreted and subsumed under the heading of leadership.

C. Charity

The finest collection of midrashim in Lev. Rab. is that dealing with the general theme of charity. There is a plethora of material and one that deserves considerable attention.

The Jew was always concerned with the alleviation of suffering -- whether it be of a fellow-Jew or fellow-man. Some people were wont to give man the exalted position

49. 1.5 50. 7.1 51. 11.8 50a. 24.7

he rightfully deserved. "Once R. Joshua b. Levi went to Rome. There he saw marble pillars covered with tapestries so that they might not crack in the heat or congeal in the cold. He saw there a poor man who had a reed mat under him and a reed mat over him."^{52.} Rome was more interested in the preservation of its marble pillars than its human beings.

"The rabbis taught: 'Let not the commandments connected with the poor be a light thing in your eyes.' The loss of it entails 24 curses and the reward 24 blessings."^{53.}

וְהַיּוֹדֵעַ לְעוֹלָם -- 'He who is gracious unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord.' "A poor man has 2 perutahs and needs one more to buy a loaf of bread. By giving him that perutah the charity-giver has helped sustain that individual. As the charitable man helped the poor so God will help the more fortunate person when he is ill and death is imminent."^{54.} "Very often a poor man complains about his lot. This person has this and that and look at me? He begins to have his doubts about the justice of God. A man who helps the poor is considered as though he made peace between the poor and God."^{55.}

When an affluent person loses his money and needs charity be careful how you give that aid. Do not shame him. "It once happened that a rich person lost his money. A man approached him and said: 'I hear that you have come

into an inheritance in some distant land. Take this article and when you receive the inheritance you will repay me.' The once affluent man took the article and then the other said: 'This is a gift.' For such gracious tact the man is recompensed, as it is written *לְחַיֵּי יְהוָה תִּשְׁלַח*

לְחַיֵּי יְהוָה תִּשְׁלַח (Ps. 41.1)^{56.}

"Life is like a wheel. Remember that the wheel of fortune turns. The rich man may become poor and the poor rich. A rich man who has a *מַלְאָכָא* but does not invite or associate with his relatives because they are poor is foolish. They should remember that all comes from God."^{56a.}

The giving of charity is not a one-sided transaction.

"The rich man benefits the poor with his alms. The poor man benefits the rich by giving him the opportunity to perform a meritorious deed."^{57.}

"More than the householder does for the poor, the poor does for the householder. The householder helps the needy but the needy place spiritual benefit upon the giver. When a poor man comes to your door remember that God stands at his right -- Ps. 109.31. *יְהוָה עִמָּךְ*

יְהוָה עִמָּךְ. If you give, know that God is there and will give you your reward. If you do not contribute, know that God stands at his right and will punish you."^{58.}

One should not rob and steal in order to give to charity and thus be considered a philanthropist. Better

is he who gives \$1.00 to charity honestly made than \$1,000 through embezzlement and graft. It is not the amount that counts but rather the means by which the money was earned. This thought is enforced by the proverbial saying concerning "the prostitute who sells her body for a basket of apples and distributes its contents among the sick."^{59.}

One contention is held that an investigation should be made with regard to the poor who ask for clothing. But no questions should be asked if it is a matter of food. The sages said: No investigation should be made even for clothes. His flesh should be considered as your flesh.^{60.}

A charitable person is not only one who offers help to those in need. Charity should also be extended to those who are not in need; e. g., "Abraham provided food and kindness to those who did not need food and kindness (angels). How much more so that one should offer to those who need it."^{60a.} "The Ammonites and Moabites did not show kindness to those who did not need kindness (Israel). Israel was well provided for -- nevertheless they should have displayed a charitable attitude toward those who come from a journey and give them food and drink. The Ammonites and Moabites were punished. They could not come into the assembly of the Lord."^{61.} Here is a case where a people did not ^{need} help yet God punished the heathens. How much more the punishment for a people who

do not show kindness to a people that need it.

There are those who cannot afford to give charity. Unto those the rabbis say: "If you have nothing to give comfort the person with kind words." Say: "My soul goes out to you because I have nothing to give." You are amply rewarded for this.^{62.} The collectors of charity

could not demand charity from those who could not afford it. The rabbis made one exception to this rule. You can demand for the wages of scribes and Mishna-teachers.^{63.}

"A rich man must never say to a poor man: 'Go out and make your own.' To that individual God admonishes: 'It is not enough that you have not given him anything of yours, but you must set an evil eye upon what I have given him, must you?'"^{64.}

There was a man called Abba Judan, the Deceiver, because when first approached he would not give to charity. He was really not a dishonest man but rather very cunning in the performance of meritorious deeds. After all the people contributed, he gave as much as all of them combined.^{64a.} There was method in his madness. The people gave more so that charity should not suffer by his abstinence.

Visiting the sick is subsumed under the category of charity. One who visits the sick reduces the illness of the person by 1/60th. An objection was raised. Suppose

60 people visited the sick would his illness be removed? The rabbis said: 'Yes, if these visitors would love him as much as themselves.' Anyway, the sick would get some relief by the visitors."^{65.}

D. Peace

"Great is peace, for all the blessings are included in it."^{66.} With regard to the performance of commandments, Scripture says: "If such and such happens, but with regard to peace it states emphatically: "Seek peace and pursue it."^{67.} "The Torah was given at Sinai only after Israel was united and at peace."^{68.} God is called Peace.^{69.} We read in Jud. 6.24: And he called Him Lord, Peace!

When God created man he had to fashion him in such a wise as to create no strife between the celestial and terrestrial beings. Before man was created the heaven and earth had an equal number respectively of God's handiwork. When he came to create man God said: "If I create him from heavenly substance the heavens will be more numerous than the earthly substance. By the same token if I create him from earthly matter the earthly matter will be more numerous than the heavenly matter. What did God do? He created man both from the heavenly and earthly so as to maintain peace."

Scripture falsifies if necessary to keep peace between individuals. Falsehoods are permissible in order to

preserve peace; E. g., note the incident in Gen. 18.12
70.
between Abraham and Sarah.

R. Meir was a famous peacemaker. The following story is told of him: "He used to sit and expound in the Synagogue every Sabbath eve. One time he gave a very lengthy discourse and, as a result, a certain woman came home late that evening. Her husband was quite furious and demanded an explanation for her tardiness. She told him. He swore that she could never enter the house until she spat in the rabbi's face. The charge was a difficult one. By means of the Holy Spirit the Rabbi knew what had transpired between the two. He pretended that his eyes were sore and announced in the Synagogue, 'Let any woman who is able to cure a sore eye come and do it.' Her neighbor said: 'Now is the time to spit in his eyes and get back into your house.' The woman went to the rabbi and he said to her: 'Are you able to use a charm for the eyes?' 'No', she replied. 'Then spit seven times in my eyes', he said. She followed instructions. Then he said to her: 'Go, tell your irate husband that he wanted you to spit only once, but you have done it seven times.' His disciples said: 'Is the Torah to be despised in this way?' Meir replied: 'Should not the honor of Meir be like the honor of the Maker?' If Scripture allows the Divine Name, written in holiness, to be blotted out by water for

the purpose of establishing peace between husband and wife
should not I do the same?" 71.

If C hears A slander B, C should not tell B about it. He should not create a situation for strife but do his best to keep the peace. ^{72.} Preventive action is essential

for peace. "A person should always seek to make peace between two quarreling persons. He should act as the mediator to seek a cure. ^{73.} This may be referred to as the curative method of establishing peace. Even in times

of war one should enter in peace. Peace overtures should
be exhausted before the launching of war.^{74.}

An entire liturgy is climaxed with the peace idea.
 "All the blessings and good deed and consolations that God
 brings unto Israel are sealed in peace; E. g. (a) *הַשְׁלָמָה*
וְהַשְׁלֵמוֹת שֶׁל כָּל הַבְּרָכּוֹת וְהַחַסְדִּים וְהַנְּחֻמִּים שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָנֵי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

This was likewise true when the sacrificial cult prevailed.
The sacrifice of the peace-offering (*p. n. s. b. 123*)
is mentioned last. (Num. 29.39).
76.

Peace is the climax of all things in this world.
When the Messiah (Messianic age) comes he will be ushered
in in peace.

E. Repentance

Judaism does not believe in the doctrine of original sin. Judaism states that man has a *נפש* as well as a *גוף*. Because of the *נפש* he

has definite shortcomings and is subject to sin. Some antidote, therefore, must be provided for his salvation. Man can find salvation through the medium of repentance.

"Repentance must be genuine. Only then can the individual become perfectly and harmoniously joined to God." ^{78.} "A wicked man who has repented is accepted by

God, as it is written, (Ps. 32) *יְהוָה יִסְּחֶרֶף עֲוֹן וְיִכַּחַשׁ חַטָּאת*. ^{79.}

"When Cain went forth, Adam met him and asked: 'What transpired at your trial?' Cain answered: 'I repented and I was pardoned.' Adam said to him: 'I did not know that the power of repentance was so great.' ^{80.}

There is a difference of opinion among the rabbis concerning the relative effectiveness of prayer and repentance. Some maintain one to be more effective than the other.

"Rabbi Judah says: 'Repentance effects half atonement and prayer effects complete pardon.' When Hezekiah prayed fifteen years were added to his life. *וְהֵשִׁיב ה' אֶת הָאֲבִיב*

וְהֵשִׁיב ה' אֶת הָאֲבִיב ^{81.} *וְהֵשִׁיב ה' אֶת הָאֲבִיב* ^{81.} Is. 38.5 *וְהֵשִׁיב ה' אֶת הָאֲבִיב*. Here prayer effects complete pardon.

Another rabbi claims that prayer effects half-atonement. When Moses prayed for Aaron he prayed for his sons as well. As a result of his prayer two of Aaron's four sons were saved. ^{82.}

Great is confession. Confession brings honor to

God. The reward of confession is life in the World to Come. No matter how big a scoundrel, (e.g. Achan) how incorrigible a person -- by virtue of confession he receives the same kind of reward as the noblest of persons. Achan will lie side by side with Abraham and Moses. By means of confession a penitent person shows others how to practice penance. He sets a way for transgressors. For this he will behold the salvation of God.

Part IV. Conclusion

[illegible]

The results preached to the people. They did not indulge in the habit of making sweeping generalizations, but they rather confined themselves to those that revealed the life and character of their people and communities. Their message was of import to every Jew regardless of station in life.

The rabbi, like the prophets of old, usually ended their sermons with Messianic announcements -- messages of hope and comfort. They taught their people that to be Jews was a privilege no matter how high the cost. That every misfortune would not destroy the Jew's character, that every adversity strengthened his indomitable will to live, that in one repeated situation after another he found confidence and strength to overcome all his difficulties. This was the faith of the Jew, and it was the faith of the rabbi, and it was the faith of the people.

Leviticus Rabbah, aside from its many teachings on the general themes of God, Israel, Torah, Man, is a literary masterpiece. Its outstanding features are its clarity and elaborateness; its dramatic vitality of the various discourses through the medium of various literary devices. The rabbis gave concreteness to their abstract thoughts. They dealt with their themes with such consummate skill and thoroughness that the reader feels the subjects have been exhausted leaving nothing more to be desired.

The rabbis preached to the people. They did not indulge in the luxury of preaching on sweeping generalizations, but they rather confined themselves to themes that moulded the life and character of their people and communities. Their message was of import to every Jew regardless of station in life.

The rabbis, like the prophets of old, usually ended their sermons with Messianic announcements -- messages of hope and comfort. They taught their people that to be Jews was a privilege no matter how high the cost. That every misfortune moulded the Jew's character, that every adversity strengthened his indomitable will to live, that in one hopeless situation after another he found confidence and cheer, can be attributed in no small measure to the vision, the insight, and the unshakeable faith of the preacher.

Often the Jew sinned and turned aside from his God. Here, again, the rabbi admonished his people, but in very

much the same spirit that a father chastiseth his son. The rabbis were men of conviction. They clung tenaciously to those principles and ideals they held sacred. Fearlessly and courageously they hoped and preached for righteousness, justice, and peace. Their preaching was not in vain for they imbued their people with a love for the good and holy that has ever been their heritage from the very dawn of history.

1. Strack: Introduction to Talmud and Midrash
2. Harnack: History of Jewish Literature
3. J. Theodor: Monographs für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums Jahrg. XX.
4. Weiss: Dar. III.
5. J. Jacobstam: Leviticus Hebrew (Soncino Press)
6. Twiss: Der Midrash Vajikra Samson
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7. **Wuenschel: Der Midrash Wajikra Rabba**
8. **Zunz: Die Gottesdienstliche Vorträge des Judentums.**

ERRATUM

1a. The following words should be inserted following
"nourishment": so God needs no nourishment. As the
soul sees but is not seen