

JONAH GERONDI

HIS LIFE AND ETHICAL WRITINGS AND THE ETHICAL  
LITERATURE OF HIS TIME.

THESIS

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## INTRODUCTION

A work of this sort must of necessity be limited in scope and somewhat fragmentary in character. The four chapters herein included represent but a small part of the work that can and let us hope ]- some day will be done in bringing to light this rather unusual character, Jonah ben Abraham of Gerona. No attempt has been made at any careful comparison of his work with that of the other ethical writers of the Post-Maimonides period. The conclusions reached may not be altogether fair and will probably be refuted by some future student of the subject. This effort can hardly be called more than introduction to the study of the life and writings of Jonah Gerondi; his influence upon his own time and his place and importance in the history of Jewish Literature.

The first chapter traces the development of Jewish ethics from the time when it was part of religion and inseparable from it to the time when ethical writings constituted a separate and distinct though equally important branch of Jewish learning. Then follows a brief biography of each ethical writer of the Post-Maimonides period- from the 13th to the 16th centuries inclusive- together with a short resume of his ethical teachings. It is by no means an exhaustive study. It is simply an attempt to present an historically ethical background for the study of the thesis subject and to bring Jonah Gerondi in line with the other Jewish ethical writers of his time. The German writers are introduced first after which come the French

and Spanish. At the end are found those of Italian origin and all others who occupied a place of lesser importance in Judaism.

The second chapter gives an historical account of the Maimonides controversy and the part that Jonah and his teacher, Solomon ben Abraham, took in it. The participants are ranged, each on his own side, Maimunist or Anti-Maimunist, and his part in the controversy is briefly stated. The first battles in this theological war were waged in the East after which the scene shifts to the continent of Europe. The last half of the chapter is devoted to the biography of Jonah. It represents a rather careful study of the somewhat meagre sources and aims to present the facts from an unprejudiced and unbiased point of view. Every authority is quoted either in the text or in a foot-note and due place is given to every opinion no matter how unauthoritative. The chapter concludes with a short comparison of Jonah's and Maimuni's legal writings.

The third chapter is a presentation of Jonah's theological and ethical views. The Shaare Teshubah is outlined in detail because it represents Jonah's dissatisfaction with Maimuni's Mishna Torah and his efforts to displace it with a code of his own. Jonah's views are presented under two heads, viz, theology and ethics. Under the title Theology appears a discussion of his views on sin, atonement, repentance, et al. Under Ethics, the subjects, charity, reverence, for teachers and parents, attitude to women, attitude to Gentiles,

attitude to fellow-Jews, and personal propriety are discussed.

The fourth chapter is a translation of the Iggereth Teshubah. This is most likely the first book that he wrote in Toledo. It does not represent his best effort nor is it the book which proved to be most popular. It did not exercise an influence as great as that of the Sefar HaYirah nor does it contain the latter's lofty sentiments. But it is the book which is most typical of Jonah's ethical writings. His works on this subject are, on the whole, guide books for the regulation of daily conduct. And the Iggereth Teshubah is the book which he devoted most definitely and completely to a discussion of the laws governing every day life.

The Biblical references have been carefully investigated and are accurately quoted. The Hebrew terms are transliterated and in many cases a foot-note explains their meaning. The whole chapter represents the effort to present a literal translation in good idiom-  
atic English.



CAP. 1

THE ETHICAL LITERATURE

of the

POST - MAIMONIDES PERIOD.

From the earliest times religion and morals were inseparable in Jewish writings. The Exegetes and law-givers were the teachers of morality. Religion covered the entire sphere of life and would not tolerate any division of authority. In fact, it was impossible to bring about any such division. The proper human relationships, just conduct, moral attitudes, ethical business dealings, -- these were the predominant characteristics in all religious teachings. Yet the effort to separate the two is apparent as early as the Tanaitic Period. The fact that a place was made for the Pirke Aboth in the Mishna, that these ethical writings maintained their identity indicates clearly that the process of specialization had already begun. Later separate ethical tracts for the regulation of daily life came into existence. But it was not until the 10th century that we find a book of decided ethical tone, Tana de be Elijahu. \* Up to that time moral literature appears as Commentary to the Aboth, or as halachic and exegetical additions to other works.

Religious philosophers, however, continued to include ethics in their field of endeavor. Especially is this true of Maimonides.\*\* And really popular ethical

\*See Winter & Wuensche Vol. 3 P 628. also Ibid. Vol.1 P 651.

\*\*See Maimonides Jad HaChazakah

works did not begin to constitute a separate branch of Jewish Literature until about the 13th century. The Sifre Musar, as they are called, which appeared at this time differed from the ethical treatises of former times in that they contained a minimum of the religious. They devoted themselves in a large measure to Greek Philosophy, Hindu Mythology, etc. \* They are evidently the product of a time and age when religion was brought into universal prominence because of the dire persecutions which the people had to endure. The teachers wanted to show that religious practices were only the means to a moral life. Evidently these practices had come to be regarded as religion itself. The purpose of the books was to bring the ethical content of religion to the masses. In an age when the Jews were suffering untold agonies, when vast numbers of the faith were subjected to the most inhuman tortures and cruelly slaughtered, it is only natural that there should spring up in the Jewish heart a feeling of intense hatred and bitter antagonism toward the Gentile. For the purpose of counteracting the influence of environment upon the Jewish spirit, i.e. in order to prevent the Jews from becoming

\*See Guedemann Quellenschriften Introduction P XIV

bitter and vindictive, the pious teachers earnestly enjoined upon their people the practice of love and forgiveness. Tho suffering intense agony, they must not return the hatred of their persecutors. They must hallow and revere God by bringing to its highest expression the ethical spirit of the Jewish religion.

These Sifre Musar also had a distinct form. They appeared largely as the last will and testament of one martyr after another. And since the last wish and request of a dying man has always been held sacred, these testaments enjoyed a wide circulation and a reverence almost equal to that with which the Bible was regarded. They were originally intended only for the family of the martyr but soon became so popular that their origin was forgotten. They contained for the most part religious and moral teachings but they covered a wide area and included exhortations to self-control, modesty, sobriety, sanctification of life, industry, integrity, and cleanliness in body and dress. They strongly advocated a well-regulated thoroughly consistent life. They taught regard for the life, honor, and possessions of neighbors. They enjoined rectitude, reverence, patience with and tolerance of non-Jews as well

as Jews. With practically no exception every one of these martyrs urged his remaining relatives and friends to refrain from hating the non-Jew. The perversion of justice in order to favor the Jew or to wreak vengeance upon the non-Jew was discountenanced. If a Jew has become a murderer, you become his accomplice when you afford him protection. 'If a Gentile is in trouble and needs your help, you lose your heritage in the house of Israel, if you fail to help him.' Treat the Jew no better than the Gentile, and the Gentile no worse than the Jew, this was their constant preaching. They also insisted upon humane conduct in the treatment of animals and issued a solemn caution against all forms of cruelty. Some of these books were written in Yiddish-Deutsch but most of them appeared either in Hebrew or in German. The following pages do not constitute an exposition of the content of the Sifre Musar nor an account of the life of each of their authors. The effort is here simply made to present to the reader a picture of the Jewish ethical teachers and their writings before, during, and after the 13th century. In other words, we are preparing a literary background for the study of the life and ethical works of Jonah Gerondi.

Yehudah ben Samuel ben Kalonymous known also as Yehudah the Pious and Yehudah of Regensburg lived at the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century. Of his life we know nothing except that he was a descendant of Eliezer the Great (1050) and that he was a mystic of the intensest sort. "Mysticism in Germany settled itself not merely in the depths of the Kabalah but also in the innermost recesses of the human heart and drew therefrom its costliest pearls which were later included in the Sifre Musar. This is especially true of Yehudah the Pious."\* He penetrated into the very depths of the human soul; he knew how to reveal the hidden thots of the heart and win men for the noblest and best that Judaism teaches. Rab Yehudah urged his people to guard against ingratitude, tale-bearing, and a revengeful spirit. "Treat servants well." "Don't ask God to give you another wife but implore Him to make her more favorably disposed toward you". He cautioned against improper relationships between father and daughter and between parents and children generally. Honesty in parents begets honesty in children; a proper home environment will result in good children and bad parents usually have bad children. It was only natural, the times in which he lived brought it

\* Winter & Wuensche Vol. 3 P. 630

about that together with lofty ethical teachings and pure moral principles, there should also appear in his work some elements of superstition. Yet these are of minor significance compared to the practical value and the inspirational influence of his life and sayings upon his and succeeding generations. "To bring to its fruition the noblest in man and the highest in Israel, to find the loftiest truths in the holy books, - this was his goal." \*

Only fragments of Rab Yehudah's works remain. The Sefar Hakabod was most likely written by him. Concerning the Sefar HaChasisidim there is a difference of opinion as to how much he wrote. All scholars are agreed that he did not write the entire book. \*\* Whoever the authors may have been, the book gives us an excellent picture of the conditions as they existed among the Jews in Yehudah's time. "A whole century lies before us within its pages..... As the solitary pillars which rise from a heap of ruins tell us of the beauty and splendor that once stood here but also remind us of the present poverty and squalor; so is the Book of the Pious a solitary pillar

\*Zunz Zur Geschichte P 125

\*\*For a complete and thoroly critical analysis of the book see Guedemann Geschichte des Erziehungswesens Vol. 1 P 281 and f.

✓ rising from the wretchedness and the misery of the 13th century Judaism." \* The book contains a long list of prohibitions. The author had probably learned by experience that a too intimate contact with Christians results in outbreaks against the Jews. He therefore advises his people to have little to do with Christian priests. He even goes so far as to prohibit the keeping of Christian and Hebrew books in the same drawer or carrying them on the same pack animal. ✓ These commandments may seem narrow and bigoted but their purpose was to protect the Jews against Christian persecutions rather than to stir up hatred in the Jewish heart. The book contains rules for the transaction of business and the maintenance of proper marital relationships in which a love for all mankind is the guiding and controlling thought. The spirit of the commandment "Love thy neighbor as thyself" permeates the entire book.

\*Guedemann Geschichte des Erziehungswesens Vol. 1 P 178



Eleasar ben Yehudah of Worms was a pupil of Yehudah the Pious. He wrote Tosephoth to the tractate Babba Kamma, Commentaries to the Pentateuch, *common to 27.3. 5* and the Five Rolls, and considerable Religious poetry. He was also ~~something of~~ a mystic and had drunk deep of the waters of the Kabbalah. The Crusaders killed his wife, his two daughters, and his son, and robbed him of the very ~~little~~ *few* earthly goods that he possessed. Yet he never murmured against God nor lost his love for his fellowman. He consistently preached love and kindness to all men. His book was named Rokeah because the sum of these consonants is equivalent to the sum of the consonants in his name. The predominant note in all his writings is God, the Provider and Father. How marvelous is his guidance! How wonderful is his protection! "When nations attacked you and you held firmly to your faith, and were willing to give up your life for it, so also in peace times, fight evil desire and hold fast to the good. Make the fear of God and study of the Torah your constant companions in the struggle. God will reward you in accordance with your resistance to evil." He cautions repeatedly against pride, against secret sin,

against envy, against laziness, and against Epicureanism. Particularly does he inveigh against untruth and deception. "Don't deceive your fellowman. God is Truth and because man lies he dies before his time." To this great soul in whom the spirit of love burned with an unquenchable fire, God was the end and aim of all human activity. To return to him in humility, to serve him with gladness, to praise him in the midst of suffering and pain, - this was his message to the people of his time.

Ascher ben Yechiel (1250-1327) was born in the Rhine region and was a pupil of Meir of Rothenberg. An outbreak against the Jews which resulted in the death of 100,000 of his people, forced him to migrate to Toledo where he became the Rabbi of the largest and best organized Congregation in Spain. His chief work is a compendium of the Talmud similar to that of Al Fasi but his ethical writings are contained in his will to his children. The Hanhagah, as this document is called, contains 131 short sentences, divided into 6 parts. In the first 24 sentences he speaks in the 3rd person. Paragraphs 25-46 begin with a letter of the alphabet in regular order and

the rest are prohibitions beginning with "al." Rab Ascher urges his children to be circumspect in speech, manners, and habits; to trust in God; to give money away carelessly for He will repay the giver. He advises non-resistance to evil and a meek acceptance of rebuke even under the most trying circumstances. "Do not treat another man roughly even if he speaks slightly of your parents." He cautioned his children against ostentation and flattery, against controversies and a controversial attitude. "Do not aim to have the vain reputation of winning out in a debate with a wise man. You will not be wiser as a result of it". (The harmful effects produced upon Judaism as a result of the activity of the Anti-Maimunists may be responsible for this caution.) He enjoins his children to treat guests hospitably, to refrain from revelry and drunkenness, and to treat their wives properly. "If your left hand <sup>sends</sup> her forth, let your right hand bring her back." At the same time he cautions against engaging in foolish conversation with one's wife. To live a well-ordered, thoroughly temperate life was his ideal that he set before his children. To say grace and wash hands at meal times, to be sincere in your prayers, to instil confidence rather than fear into the hearts of servants and companions

at home, - these constitute the proper mode of daily conduct.

Yehudah ben Ascher followed his father, Ascher ben Yechiel, as Rabbi of Toledo. His ethical contribution is included in the Schalscheleth HaKabbalah and is called Iggereth Tokhoth. It is also a last will and testament and includes a small family chronicle which gives us a horrible picture of the frightful sufferings to which the Jews of that time were subjected in Germany and of the awful dangers with which they were daily threatened. He tells his children that man's purpose in life is not physical satisfaction but service to God. Sustenance is necessary for life just as oil is essential for light. But just as too much oil will extinguish the light and too little oil will starve it, so too much food will ruin the spiritual life and too little will destroy both spiritual and physical. Like his father and most of the ethical writers of his time, he advised a well-regulated, thoroughly balanced life. "We are laborers before God; we receive pay for our work." Learning, he says, carries with it responsibility. Failure to discharge the obligation involved will result in a heavy penalty. To talk about God at table and to read good books is a duty. Among the books which he recom-

mends to his children are Bachya's "Duties of the Heart" and Jonah Gerondi's "Iggereth Teshubah."\* "Be true; don't be a mocker, don't bear false witness; either shalt thou be a tale-bearer, nor shalt thou take a bribe, nor be a hypocrite. Honor every man and thereby honor thyself." These constitute the type of Mitzvoth which Yehudah enjoined upon his people.

The writer of the book called sometimes Orchoth Zadikim and sometimes Sefar HaMidoth is unknown.\*\* The book became very popular and was translated into Yiddish-Deutsch several times. Its popularity may be due to the very simple and humble instruction that it contains. Exhortations to cleanliness of table, bed and body made a strong appeal to the masses. The body is God's image and should therefore be kept perfectly clean. Modesty, humility, before learned men but even before inferiors, a vital interest in widows and proselytes, - these are the proper methods by which we show our appreciation of God. Like Yehudah the Pious he issued a prohibition against doing good for personal reasons but rather for the sake of God. He urged his readers to be merciful toward non-

\* Beth Talmud Vol. 4 P 345

\*\* According to Guedemann the author is Lipman Muehlhausen. For his reasons, see Geschichte des Erziehungswesens Vol 3 P 223 f. See also same Vol P 242 Note 2  
According to Zunz the author must have lived in South Germany about the middle of the 15th century. See Zur Geschichte P 129.

Jewish slaves, not to over-work or scold them. "Our forefathers considered the welfare of their slaves before their own ". And what is even more exalted, "Pray for your enemy that he may learn to serve God". The beauty and loftiness of this teaching and of the teachings of the whole book cannot be overemphasized, particularly when we remember that it was written in a time when the direst persecutions were being heaped upon the Jews and when the most natural reaction would have been a fierce antagonism and a bitter and revengeful spirit.

Abraham HaLevi Horowitz lived in Lemberg about 1590, and came of an old and prominent family. He was a pupil of Moses Isserles. His ethical contribution, contained in his parting instruction to his children, is known as *105712 W?* and has 18 chapters. The chapter on Business Transactions and the other on Proper Conversation are perhaps the most typical of his style. He says that the first question God asks of the soul that stands before his throne is, "Were you honest in business?" Therefore every man should keep a strict record of everything; he should take a trial balance at least 3 times a year. He should not depend on loans but rather on his own efforts. But if he must borrow, let him pay his debts promptly and ungrudgingly; for only thus is God pleased. On the other hand, a man should not drive his debtors too

hard nor be in a hurry to sue them for debt. In the chapter on Conversation, he tells his children to train themselves to speak quietly and calmly until it becomes a habit, and to exercise self-control even in the heat of the discussion. Further, "Let your word be reliable. 4 classes cannot appear before God, - liars, hypocrites, scorners, and slanderers. Beware of such people. Seek only the company of the wise".

Hirsch Kaidonower remained with his father, Aaron Samuel, who when he was compelled to leave Vilna on account of the persecutions against the Jews, settled first in Fuerth and then in Frankfort where he became Rabbi. After his father's death, Rabbi Hirsch continued his father's work. He wrote Kaw HaYaschar which is thoroughly imbued with Kaballah and which enjoyed a wide circulation probably because of its mystic darkness. The Zohar and other Kabbalistic works are mentioned on almost every page. The book must have had a peculiar charm for the people of that day because of its religious fervor and intensity. He himself translated it into Yiddish-Deutsch before his death in 1712. We find enumerated in the book 24 persons who have no inclination to repent. Some of these are, He who thinks he'll sin and then on Yom Kippur be forgiven. He who seeks honor through the misfortune and shame of a fellowman. He who accepts charity without needing it.

He who pronounces a curse on a community. Such a man debases both the community and Judaism. Elijah and Isaiah were both guilty of such a sin because they condemned without first imploring God's mercy. Let no preacher pronounce a word against the congregation until after he has given the matter very careful consideration. In this last-mentioned prohibition, Rabbi Hirsch was even more specific than Ascher ben Yechiel. It seems both were actuated by a desire to avoid in the future all such dire results which were brought on by the activities of the Anti-Maimonides party.

Moses of Coucy lived at the beginning of the 13th century. He was a pupil of Simon of Sens and traveled extensively in France and Spain. His ethical teachings are by no means of the lofty spiritual quality which characterize those of Yehudah the Pious or those found in the Orchoth Zadikim, yet he lays down some very practical suggestions for the regulation of every day life. His book is a compendium of Mosaic Laws and is called Sefar Mitzvoth HaGadol or Semag. It is in two parts, the one devoted to the 248 commandments and the other to the 365 prohibitions. The author tells us that he who mistreats a non-Jew desecrates God, for the people will say that there is no law among the Jews. He enjoins humility, for upon the humble rests the divine spirit and he who



abases himself is as though he had brought sacrifices for all his sins. And the wishes of the humble are fulfilled without repetition. Further, he urges honesty in business and fairness toward contemporaries, both Jew and Gentile. But the greatest service is love to God, evidences of which love are Sabbath observance, Circumcision, and Tephillion. He who is young in God's service should say daily, "To-day I'll be a true servant of God; I will guard against hatred, anger, lying, strife, and envy. I will not look at women and I will forgive those who have wronged me". The purpose of the book, the author tells us, is to correct the mistakes which Maimonides made when he failed to include any reference to his sources". 1.

Isaac Aboab lived about 1300 and wrote Menorath HaMaaor which he divided into seven parts to correspond with the seven lights of the sanctuary and with which he aimed to light up the heart and soul of the Jews. The book is in reality a collection of ethical and religious Haggadahs. Aboab was apparently acquainted with philosophy and knew Plato and Aristotle but he drew from secondary sources. Of his life we know nothing except that he lived in Spain. The book devotes several chapters to a discussion of the Duty of Truthfulness in which the author warns against deceit of all kinds. Untruth, he says, leads to all manner of evil, causes idol-worship, withdraws attention from God,

and is equivalent to murder. Let your yea and may be reliable and dependable. Six things God detests and the seventh is an abomination unto Him: - a proud look, a false tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that cherishes thoughts of injustice, feet which hasten to do wrong, false and slanderous evidence, and he who brings enmity between friends. But all these evils come because man accustoms himself to untruth. 1.

Rab Salomo Al'Ami of Portugal witnessed the frightful persecutions of the Jews in Catalonia, Castile, and Aragon in 1391. He declared that these misfortunes were sent as a punishment for the moral and religious apostasy of the Jewish people. He gives us an insight into the deplorable state of Jewish morals and religion in a letter of reproof which he sent to a pupil of his and which became known as the Iggereth Musar. The character of the instruction and the fervor and intensity with which he wrote indicate that Rab Salomo must have been a thoroughly pious and deeply religious soul. In the letter, he mentions a controversy which divides the Jewish camp against itself, the Talmudists on the one hand and the advocates and adherents of Greek Philosophy on the other. In addition are the indifferent Jews whose sole aim and purpose seems to be the gaudy display of their wealth. Of true culture, humility,

1. Fuerstenthal Menorath Hamaaor

and modesty they know nothing. Hence disaster was inevitable. Rab Salomo continues to describe the universal disregard for Jewish learning; how the teachers and rabbis of Israel are being neglected; and the general religious apathy which exists among the Jews. He reminds his pupil of the Jewish disasters since 1148. He mentions several massacres and expulsions from England, France and other countries. "Enemies rose up against us and the pious of God were consumed by fire and sword.... The Torah was burned and God's people became the spoil of robbers and plunderers. And there survived that terrible day only a few grapes and berries here and there and they prefer death to the life which is before them. Misery and poverty is our lot." After picturing the sorrows and agonies of the time, Rab Salomo continues with some very practical and constructive advice. Search the Scriptures and find there the laws by which life should be governed. God's laws should be sign-pointers in life. Avoid those who use the Torah for selfish purposes and be scrupulous in religious observances. Observe holidays and Sabbaths carefully. Don't be too intimate either with woman or youth. The former leads astray, the latter is thoughtless. Have good faithful servants and be clean in body for thus only can you be clean in soul. If the enemies of Israel try

to dissuade you from Judaism, go where you can live a good Jewish life. Jellinek who published this letter in 1872-1 under the title Iggereth Musar VeHaamunah, said of it, "The rich, the prominent, the learned, merchants, Rabbis, leaders, Reform and Conservative, - all could learn from this little book what obligations Judaism imposed upon its adherents".

R. Jechiel ben Jekuthiel lived about 1228 and came from the Roman family of Anaw. He experienced much sorrow in his life; even his children became estranged from him and greatly increased his anguish. He became rigid and austere in manner and his attitude toward his contemporaries was by no means a mild and gentle one. With the rise of education and science in Italy, Jews were thrown into much closer contact with Christians. And the result of the Christian influence was a certain laxness in Jewish morals and religious observances. To bring the Jews back to the old Jewish ideal was the object of his book. It has been published under the title Beth Midoth and also Sefar Maaloth Midoth and gives evidence of the author's vast knowledge and inherent culture. He has no patience with the fool. Wisdom is great, he says, for the wise man is humble, kind, good, meek, etc. Good manners constitute his adornment. But a fool is a fool even when he is grown up; he seeks out bad qualities in his neighbor while the wise man seeks only good. It had been published several times before.

the good. Yet even a fool's company is preferable to that of a proud man for the latter is an enemy of all mankind. Therefore, R. Jechiel urges his readers to be humble and meek, to treat wife and children well, to banish anger and thoughts of revenge, and to love every man even the humblest.

Eliezer ben Isaac lived about 1050. He was a descendant of Abun and wrote *Orchoth Chayim* in which he lays down some very practical principles for every day life. He urges honor, reverence, and fear of God, care in speech, and moderation in all things. He tells his readers to visit the sick, to comfort the mourning, to be merciful and humble in prayer, and to control evil impulses. He teaches kindness to enemies, - "Don't rejoice over his fall but help him to rise", - and issues prohibitions against anger, injustice, and cruelty.

Moses of Evereux lived about 1240. He wrote a religio-ethical treatise which was included in *Kol Bo*<sup>1</sup> and whose aim and purpose seems to be to make the presence of God a reality. The book repeatedly reminds us that in all things we stand before Him and therefore we should guard against anger and pride; we should search our hearts and test our ways and banish all thoughts of evil. We should treat all alike, rich and poor, weak and strong, educated and ignorant.

1. A collection of ritual and civil laws. See J.E.Vol 7  
P 539

Berachja ha Nakdan ben Natronai lived in Burgunday about the middle of the 13th century. His book of Ethics, פְּרָשָׁן is divided into 13 sections, each dealing with or advocating a certain phase of ethical conduct, i. e. self-control, justice, honor, virtue, etc. He also wrote a book of Fabels in which he lays down rules for upright living. "Don't search for honor and it will come to you. Reward comes to him who is righteous and he who is worthy of honor will bow before the lowly".

Elieser ben Samuel ha Levi lived in the early part of the 14th century. In his will he urges his children to be honest and upright in their business dealings with all men and to be circumspect in prayer. In his ethical book which he wrote previously, he enjoins absolute faith in God and points out the necessary pre-requisites before a man can come into intimate contact with Him, - cleanliness, humility, forgiveness, mercy, truth, love of fellowman, cberity, and sympathy even for animals. In chapter 19, he mentions 30 things which every man should think of and take earnestly to heart at least twice a day. For example, God made you out of nothing; and purely out of love because he was not duty bound to do so. God rules the world, plants, animals, etc. He has given you everything, a mind,

the Holy Law, and the ability to understand it. He has given you a soul. What are you doing for its welfare? The wonders of Nature are before you. Do you appreciate them? Punishment comes to you. Do you accept it as an evidence of God's interest in you? In Chapter 26, R. Elieser enumerates 5 acts which it is hard to atone for, 5 sins which it is hard to forgive, and 5 habits from which it is hard to break oneself. His conclusion is, "Love God and all physical pleasures will fade into insignificance".

The Little Book of the Pious was written by Mose Kohen ben Elasar who lived in Koblenz about 1473. He gives his son some very practical regulations for daily conduct. He urges him to practice love, to be kind to animals, and to regard all bodily necessities merely as a means to procure strength, in order to be better able to study the Torah; to be humble and modest, to beware of insulting another in public, and to be truthful even in jest. This little book constitutes one of the few evidences of the cultural status of the time.

In addition there were a number of ethical writers of lesser importance. R. Meir ben Baruch of Rothenberg wrote "Well of Living Waters" which consists of 4 divisions each bearing a separate title, - Tree of Life, Way of Life, Source of Life, and Path of Life.

The book contains exhortations and regulations for daily conduct, eating, sleeping, prayer, etc. There is a little book called  $\gamma\psi\iota\chi\eta$  whose author is unknown. It treats generally of the satisfied life and particularly of temperance in eating and drinking.

R. Lipmann aus Muehlhausen in Prague in the 15th century wrote an ethical book called Nizzachon in which he also urges strict temperance in all things even in worship and the love of God. In 1430 "The Faithlessness of the Time" was written probably by R. Matatia. It is a prose poem dealing with the old question, the Problem of Suffering, and urges confidence in God. R. Isaac ben Elieser lived about the latter part of the 15th century. He was a great admirer of Moses ben Eliezer Hadarschan and praises him very highly in his little book Sefar HaGan which is an ethical treatise divided into 7 parts to correspond with the 7 days of the week. Toward the close of the 15th century R. Jochanan Luria wrote a short ethical book called Hadrachah. A compendium of Jewish writings called Hatadir appeared in 1380 in Rome and contained several ethical treatises. Gates of the Tree of Life was written by Benjamin ben Abraham of the family of Anaw in the 13th century. It is a poem of exhortation composed of 63 strophes alphabetically arranged. Each



strophe of Gate deals with a virtue or a vice, i. e. love, hospitality, faith, confidence, grat~~i~~itude, etc. deceit, treachery, impudence, pride, etc. A metric poem by an unknown author called "The Basis of Piety" urges piety and the practice of virtue as well as the study of the Torah. The author also enjoins meekness, modesty, patience, humility, and grat~~i~~itude, and warns against the vices contrasting with these virtues. A prose poem under the title "The Basket of Achitub, the Physician" was probably the work of the Rabbi by this name in Palermo. The idea underlying the whole book is Dante's Divine Comedy or the corresponding work of Immanuel. 1. There was also a book of morals called Sefar HaJashar mentioned by Judah ben Asher in his Testament to his children. It was alleged to have been written by Serachja haJewani haLevi and appeared first in Constantinople in 1526. The Testament of Jacob ben Asher, a younger brother of Judah, who compiled the Turim might also be included among the ethical works of the time.

1. For a thorough and complete exposition of the book, see Guedemann Geschichte des Erziehungswesens Vol 2 P 202- 3

CAP. 11

JONAH GERONDI AND HIS TIME

The separation of religion and philosophy into two branches of learning was the distinct contribution of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204). His effort to reconcile the two resulted in his making religion subservient and philosophy superior. This was regarded by the Orthodox Jews as sinful. And his attitude toward the Agada was to them nothing less than heresy. There were many Jews however, who were ardent admirers both of Maimuni himself and his philosophy and they became his staunchest defenders in the controversy which continued long after his death. A large part of the opposition was due to envy and jealousy on the part of his contemporaries. His lofty idealism and his spiritual refinement so far outshone that of any other scholar of his time that he became the object of slanderous and malignant attacks.\* At the same time, there were many in the anti-Maimunist party who sincerely and conscientiously believed that it was their religious duty to repel this devastating attack upon Judaism. His attitude toward miracles, his conception of prophecy and divine communication, his doctrine of immortality, his analytical explanation of the ceremonial laws and his critical and rational treatment both of Bible and Talmud were to them the most destructive influences in Jewry, a very grave menace to everything they held

\*Bruehl Jahrbuecher fuer Juedische Geschichte und Litteratur vol. IV P.1-2. Also Graetz Geschichte vol. 3 P.475

dear. Another group of anti-Maimunists consisted of many of his contemporaries who acknowledged his genius and his piety and were greatly impressed by his powerful personality <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ who severely criticized his views and assailed his writings. Of the Maimunists there were also two groups, viz- the enthusiastic adherents of Maimonides, those who accepted his doctrine as a new revelation; and those who rigidly insisted upon freedom of thought and liberty in research.

In the East, Samuel ben Ali ha Levi first sought to discredit the great philosopher by an attack upon his view of resurrection. But his efforts proved fruitless. Daniel ben Saadyah, a disciple of Samuel's, continued his master's work. He charged that Maimuni was a heretic because he refused to accept the Talmud in toto as inspired truth. Joseph ibn Akin, Maimuni's favorite pupil, was so incensed at Daniel's attitude that he succeeded in having him excommunicated after which he died of grief. And thus all anti-Maimunist activity ceased in the East.

In France and Spain, Maimuni's theories were variously treated. Some deplored them, others ~~§§~~ were greatly influenced by them, and still others tried to reconcile them with Talmudic Judaism. Meir ben Todros Halevi Abulafia (1180-1244), a young learned but proud and arrogant scholar, was the first to attack the Maimonides philosophy in Spain. He was severely rebuked by Aaron ben Meshullam of Luvel, an ardent Maimuni defender. The con-

troverſy continued intermittently during the laſt years of the 12th century and until the death of Maimonides in 1204. In Northern France Samſon of Sens led the anti-Maimuniſts. In Southern France there was conſiderable religious apathy among the Jews and no one had ventured to expreſs open diſapproval of the Moreh Nebuchim until Solomon ben Abraham of Montpellier (מלך שלם בן אברהם see Michael Or Chayim P.477), a pious and zealous Talmudiſt, declared war on the Maimuniſts. He felt that to tolerate Maimonides' views would mean the complete annihilation of Judaism, and, with characteristic zeal, he vigorously continued his attack upon the diſintegrating influence. But Rabbis would not come to his aid; there was hardly a Jewish leader in Southern France who was willing to join him in his campaign. Only his pupils Jonah Gerondi and David ben Saul ſtood with him. And therefore he reſorted to excommunication. He pronounced a ban upon Maimunis works and againſt all who attempted to comment upon the Bible in any but the traditional Rashi faſhion. This ſtep of Solomon's was the torch which ſet the flame of diſcord burning in Jewry. Congregations were divided againſt themſelves and againſt each other and everywhere the religious controverſy was waged in the moſt uncompromiſing manner. David Kimchi, a grammarian and Bible expoſitor, took up the cudgels in Maimunis defense. He made journeys into ſeveral of the provinces in the intereſts of his party and in Burgos he was driven out thru the influence of Joſeph ben Todros, a brother of Meir Abulafia.

Alfonso. In Catalonia, Bechai ben Moses, the personal physician of the King of Aragon Jayme I declared the ban upon Solomon and his two disciples <sup>in August</sup> 1262. Solomon, on the other hand wrote letters warning against Kimchi, "the man with the beard." Kimchi replied calling Solomon a knave and a fool. Judah Alfakar, physician to Ferdinand III harshly rebuked the aged grammarian. The Arabic translators Samuel ha Levi ibn Chasdai and his brother Yehudah defended Maimuni. And Moses ben Nachman (1195-1270?), a man of conscientious piety and pure moral temperament but thoroly imbued with a belief in authority, took his stand with the attacking party.

The conflict continued unceasingly. There were charges of heresy and threats of excommunication. Both factions resorted to every expediency to gain adherents. The Maimunists were especially anxious to win over the French Congregations. Samuel ben Abraham Saporta sent a very convincing letter to France. This letter together with the influence of Moses of Concy (see above P. 15) resulted in bringing a number of the French Rabbis to the Maimunists side. Solomon was thus practically excommunicated by both French and Spanish Rabbis. Nachmani realized that his side was losing out and decided to attempt a compromise. He proposed to remove the ban against the philosophic

portion of Maimonides' code but to continue the condemnation of the Moreh and the new method of Biblical and Talmudic interpretation. But the Maimonists were too zealous and had been stirred too deeply to compromise and Nachman's proposal received very little attention. Gradually Solomon realized that he was being forsaken. His disciple David ben Saul attempted to regain for him his lost sympathy but in vain. Solomon, thereupon, decided upon a course of action which led to most disastrous results. Pope Gregory IX had determined to eradicate all heresy in France and had appointed the Dominican and franciscan Friars to conduct the Inquisition. Solomon appealed to them, and they needed no second invitation.\*

\*Lowenthal denies that Solomon appealed to the secular authorities. He places the entire blame upon Solomon's zealous followers. The fact that his name is treated with such reverence in the Halchic Literature is an indication that he was in no way responsible for this bit of treachery. Had he jeopardized Jewry in any way, if there had been the shadow of a suspicion that Solomon had lent himself to such traitorous conduct his name and teachings as also that of his followers would have been peremptorily eliminated from Jewish Literature. Further, the only positive evidence is that of Hillel ben Samuel of Verona, a physician and pupil of Jonah Gerondi. His report written 60 years after the event, bears so many evidences of an unreliable memory that the only thing we can be certain of is the event itself.--"und es ist nicht das erste mal dasz unvernünftige zeloten schlecht vollendet haben was ruhige meister gut begonnen haben." Löwenthal, Jonah Gerondi P.7-8.

The Moreh had been translated into Latin and they probably feared that the new philosophy might pervert their own people. So in 1233, they made a public demonstration and burnt all the Maimonides books that could be found in Montpellier. Ten years later a similar demonstration occurred in Paris when the Talmud and other books, about 1200 volumes in all, were destroyed. At the same time more than 3000 Jews were killed.\*

The Jews in France and Spain were horrified by such results and Solomon was universally condemned. He had invoked the aid of a prejudiced and "Jew-baiting" clergy; he was guilty of the worst sort of treason. Everywhere among Jews feeling ran high against this traitor to his people. In spite of Judah ben Joseph Alfachar's attempt to justify his conduct, Solomon was discredited, several of his adherents were cruelly punished by having their

\*Hillel ben Samuel erroneously says that the burning in Paris occurred 40 days after that of Montpellier. See Graetz Geschichte der Juden vol. 7 note 5; Steinschneider Jewish Literature P. 90. Jost says that Montpellier at that time (1234) belonged to the King of Aragon and the French Government had no authority there. Of the bloody deeds of which Hillel speaks the other sources know nothing. See Jost Geschichte des Judentums und seiner Sekten P.12 Note 1. Lowenthal says that the books Moreh and Madaa were first publicly burned at Paris and that later a similar effort was made in Montpellier. But the instigators were punished by having their tongues cut out. Solomon was not subjected to this punishment, a further proof that he had no connection with the appeal to the secular authorities. See Lowenthal Jona Gerondi P.6-7, and Page 7 note 1. Brann says that the burning in Paris occurred simultaneously (1233) with that in Montpellier and that Solomon was responsible for the Montpellier and Jona for the Paris conflagration. Brann, Geschichte der Juden und ihrer Litteratur Part 2 P.208.



tongues cut out and all anti-Maimunist activity for the time being ceased.\*

Rabbenu Jonah was born in Gerona in 1180. His father Rab Abraham, was a pious and learned man. In his youth, Jonah went to Frankfort in order to attend the flourishing Talmud Torah located there. Rab Samuel ben Senior (רמ"ש in Or Chayim) and Rab Solomon ben Abraham of Montpelier were among his teachers. And there must have been others whom he hunted up in North and South Germany, for in the Halachic Literature of later times, Jonah appears as the champion of the views of the רמב"ם. He was a first cousin of Ramban who also came from Gerona. Later they were also related by marriage when Jonah's daughter married Ramban's son. It seems that both Jonah and Ramban had the same teachers in their youth and that a very intimate association continued to exist between them. Jonah wrote the Ramban, "May blessing come upon you because you have multiplied the seed of Amalek."\*\*

When Jonah died his daughter was about to give birth. Apparently it was the custom at that time and among the Jews of Toledo

\*Graetz Geschichte Bd. 7, S.56; Jewish Encyclopedia vol.11P.456

\*\*This is a striking passage and has been quoted by several writers. It seems that a Gentile woman who was pregnant was afflicted with some sort of disease. Nachmani cured her of the disease and enabled her to give birth naturally. Hence Jonah congratulates him. He has brought another soul into the world even tho it is a non-Jewish soul. See Michael Or Chayim P.477

for the father of the first born child to name the child after his family. When therefore the child which was both Jonah's and Ramban's grandchild was born, Ramban said, "Altho it is my privilege to call him by my name, yet I want him to be called Jonah after his mother's father because, 'The sun rises and the sun sets' (Eccl.1:5). When the one's sun sets, let the other's sun rise." Jonah dedicated one of his books to Ramban. (מִנְחָה לְרַמְבַּם)

17273 ) Ramban called Jonah "a holy man, a man of God," and wrote "Thou our Rabbi, may God grant thee life." Jonah's father and Ramban's mother were brother and sister. They had a brother whose name was Joseph and whose son's name was also Jonah. Some say that Jonah ben Abraham was a pupil of Nachmanis, but of this there is no positive proof. He was, however, the teacher of Hillel ben Samuel of Verona in Barcelona. He also instructed Rashba but it is not definitely known whether in Barcelona or Toledo.\*

While Jonah was still a pupil of Solomons, the second outburst of the Maimonides controversy occurred. The Moreh Nebuchim had been translated from the Arabic and its content had begun to influence the people. Solomon felt that Judaism was being exposed to a very grave danger and with his two pupils he boldly assumed a hostile attitude toward the Maimonides system of philosophy and religion. We cannot be certain what part Jonah took in the

\*Loewenthal says it could not have been in Barcelona because when Rashba was a boy of school age, Jonah was already in Toledo. See Loewenthal Jonah Gerondi P.10 note 2. Ben Adreth's year of birth is unknown but in the writings of the close of the 13th and beginning of the 14th centuries he is spoken of as a (ר'). See Perles Solomon ben Adreth P.58

campaign that followed. It is probable that he was active in the anti-Maimunist party and ably championed the cause of his teacher. But that he took any part in the movement which led to the burning of the Maimonides books at Montpellier and at Paris is highly improbable. Altho Hillel of Verona, Jonah's own pupil, speaks of his teacher as the head and leader of the wicked men of France,\* yet Abraham Maimonides, son of the great Moses, in his book *Milchamoth Adonai* in which he justifies his fathers philosophy, mentions David ben Saul as one of the disciples of Solomon but says nothing about Jonah.\*\*

In a controversy of this sort, personalities would inevitably creep in. Because of his firm and decisive stand, Jonah could not escape having his family affairs brought to light. His opponents discovered that his great grand-father in addition to his legal wife, had another wife who was the mother of his children. He had therefore violated the law as expounded by Rabbenu Gershon and Jonah was an illegitimate child. Nachmanides was thoroly aroused. He declared that he had patiently endured the insults of those who deny God's free will and life after death. But now that his pupil was being attacked he would not be silent. And he launched out into an extensive dissertation showing that such a marriage

\*See Loewenthal *Jonah Gerondi* P.8 Note 3.

\*\*See Abraham Maimonides *Milchamoth Adonai* P.25.

was perfectly legitimate and that even in later times the custom of having more than one wife still prevailed in Spain.\* But the Jews of France had come to look upon concubinage with such horror that Nachman's efforts proved fruitless as is shown by the following ironic epigram composed by Beracja ha Lev.

Wahr ist das wort ans volkes mund,  
Doch lieb ich recht und frieden im Bund.  
Nicht gilt für werth der Tauben brut,  
Man hält sie doch für Altäre auch gut.\*\*

After the controversy had spent itself, Jonah went to Barcelona where he became principal of a school and where Hillel of Verona was his pupil. It was in Barcelona that he wrote his first book, most likely the Iggereth Ha Teshubah. After the death of Meir Abulafia, Jonah was called to the influential community of Toledo thru the efforts of R. Jehudah Alfachar. This is the opinion of Loewenthal\*\*\* Practically all other authorities\*\*\*\* maintain that Jonah was in part at least responsible for the burning of the Talmuds in Paris. But he repented, realizing that it was a punishment from Heaven because of his opposition to Maimon's

\*Concerning the controversy as to the legality of concubines see Bruell Jahrbuch IV Berichtigungen S IV

\*\*I use Bruell's translation. See Bruell Jahrbuch IV P.25. The Hebrew word for Jonah is dove.

\*\*\*Loewenthal Jona Gerondi P.9-10

\*\*\*\*Graetz Geschichte vol. 7 P.99. Steinschneider Jewish Literature P.90 and Catalogue Bodleiana 1422.Jewish Encycl. P.637.

writings. He made a public confession of his penitence in the Synagogue at Paris and solemnly vowed to go to Palestine and at the grave of Maimonides and in the presence of 10 people beseech forgiveness and pardon from the great man whom he had so wilfully slandered and maligned. At Montpellier, he made a similar confession and then started on his journey. But he was detained first in Barcelona and then in Toledo.\* In both places because of the wide spread hostility to the Talmud, he was persuaded by the Jews to remain and teach. In Toledo his death occurred ~~and~~ suddenly and as a punishment for having failed to fulfill his vow. The fact that he wrote so extensively on the question of Repentance and the fact that he always mentioned Maimuni's name with great reverence during his stay in Barcelona and Toledo is the proof upon which these authorities base their contentions. Loewenthal on the other hand insists that the only evidence is the report of Hillel of Verona which cannot be relied upon (see above P. 30 ). Further, Jonah's desire to make a pilgrimage to Maimuni's grave cannot be construed as a self accusation. It was most likely only an indication of the high regard Jonah always had for the great teacher. Isaac Israeli, composer of Jesod Olam, writes, "In our days, there came to Toledo, many wise men, great and learned, R. Meir Hakohen

\*Brann says he wandered from place to place from one community to another, acknowledging everywhere that he had sinned against Maimonides and vowing to make a pilgrimage to the grave of the great man in order to implore his forgiveness. See Brann Geschichte der Juden und ihrer Litteratur vol 2 P. 211

of Narbonne and Rab. Jonah chasid of Gerona. They advanced Torah study and raised up many disciples."\*

In Toledo Jonah used the Halachoth of Al Fasi as the basis for his lectures which were later collected by his pupils and published under the title "Teachings of Rab Jonah on Berachoth." He was famed for his piety and was held in high esteem by his contemporaries. Rabbenu Jonah was his honorary title and he was frequently designated as "The Pious."\*\* His death in 1263 brought to a sudden end his life of useful activity. It was an event of great sorrow, for Jonah belonged to the great men who combined in themselves methodical and thoro knowledge together with pedagogic ability. Famous as a skilled expounder of Talmud and interpreter of religious law, he exercises a profound influence upon his own and later times. Nachmanides composed the following lamentation upon the occasion of his death.

Weep on the day which has been set aside for all time as the day of mournig, the day on which misfortune has increased, on which the old lamentation is brought back. Therefore I weep and mourn, for fallen is the strong wall, robbed is the "Stirnblech" and the holy "Kopfbund" of the High Priest; gone is the crown and the diadem, Rabbi Jonah, the master of virtue, the inimitable in purity. Where is piety, where is humility, where is temperance where sobriety? Where is mishna and Gemara,

\*Yesod Olam, Cassels ed. P.35.

\*\*The term ר'ון is frequently applied to Jewish writers and teachers and means "Authority on Morals and Ethics." Sachs Religioese Poesie der Juden in Spanien P.273 Note 1.

where is knowledge of Bible and tradition, of Talmud and its commentators of thoro penetration into the spirit of our Teaching. Weep at this Mer, it carries the tablets of law and commandments. Shattered is the altar, gone is atonement! One thing comforts me; When I sink into the grave then will I joyfully see your face. May you shine with the glow of the heavenly light.

The inscription upon his tombstone reads as follows-

Sons of Zion, weep at this grave for the sun has been buried in the dust of the earth. Ye Heavens, clothe yourselves in sadness. The stars are ashamed and the moon is pale on the day that the crown and the glory of the Torah have departed. In the month of Marcheshvan the clouds hid it. In the year 1263 let there be no exultation. His place of learning is disturbed as a flute player. His Torah is recited in bitterness as a homeless dove. Who will close the breach, who will spread out the curtains of my tent as did Jonah.

In this Grave is hidden the father of learning  
The Pride of Israel and Judah,  
The Teacher who proclaimed the hidden things of wisdom and brought to light its meanings;  
And revealed its advantages;  
Source of wisdom and understanding,  
Bearer of light that cometh from wisdom and insight;  
The Great Teacher, The Pious Rabbenu Jonah of blessed memory,  
Son of the honored and the wise Rab Abraham of Gerondi.  
May his soul be bound up in the bundle of life;  
And may the tombstone of his grave be an altar of Atonement  
For all who remain behind.

His grave was the place to which many pious sould made pilgrimages. Later, however, the ground was plowed and his grave was lost. Only the stone remained\*(x)

\*(x)A year before the Jews were driven out of Spain, Rab Isaac of Leon who had died several yrs before, appeared to his wife in a dream and told her to remove the stone from his grave and have the ground plowed so that no one should know his last resting place. When she informed the wise men, they decided to obey his commands. There were buried there also Rabbenu Ashher, Rabbenu Jonah and many other noted men over whose grave the plow was drawn and no one knows their burial place to this day. See Emek habacha von R. Joseh ha Cohen Dr. M. Wiener translator P. 65

There is a striking similarity between Jonah's and Maimuni's works. Both had the same purpose but aim to attain it thru different ways. Maimuni codified the Halachah and presented the first systematic arrangement of Jewish law. He bridged the gap between traditional Jewish wisdom and philosophy. He was a rationally and philosophically trained soul and he had to interpret the Aggadah allegorically in order to deduce a philosophic meaning. His creed is a statement of Jewish principles based upon the 613 commandments. Jonah knew the Yad Chazakah and Maimuni's commentary to the Pirke Aboth. But he considered it necessary to make a different arrangement from that which Maimuni had made. His order is found in the third book of the Shaare Teshbah. He was not satisfied with Maimuni's view on Repentance and so he wrote a treatise of his own on the subject. Further Jonah did not find it necessary to reconcile Judaism with philosophy and science; perhaps because he was not sufficiently well-versed in non-Jewish knowledge. His teacher, Solomon, was unable to understand Maimonides correctly and had no conception of a philosophic Judaism. While Jonah was better able to grasp the meaning of the great philosopher, yet since his training had been so thoroly Talmudic, any departure from the traditional thought and method was regarded by him as injurious to the best interests of Judaism. He did not find it necessary to reconcile Judaism with Philosophy and science because non-Jewish teaching was not suf-



ficiently authoritative for him. He placed Rabbinic wisdom above everything else; the Talmud was the final authority in all matters. While he knew many non-Jewish sources, yet he felt that all questions could be explained and Judaism justified thru its own teaching. He uses the word Emunah quite frequently but has no systematic arrangement of belief as had Maimuni.

CAP. III

JONAH GERONDI'S ETHICAL WRITINGS

The ethical works of Jonah Gerondi include Sefar HaYirah, Iggereth Teshubah, Yesod HaTeshubah, and Shaareh Teshubah. Their names would indicate that they are primarily works on repentance; but while this subject looms large in each, yet generally speaking, they are guide books for the regulation of daily conduct. The author lays down rules for every phase of life, religious and secular. He goes into minute details in such matters as Tephillin and Niddah. He prescribes the punishment for the violation of each commandment and carefully and systematically provides the proper sort of repentance in each case. At the same time, these books contain some very lofty ethical concepts. Consideration for the feelings and sensibilities of another is emphasized again and again. To live justly and honorably and temperately is enjoined in each book repeatedly. The burden of his message is, "The end of the matter, all having been heard; fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole law". Conservative and legalistic by nature, he insisted that to fear God meant observance in every detail of the ritual law as well as a proper and just attitude toward fellowmen.

Nevertheless his books exerted a tremendous influence. Younger authors used his material extensively. In Rab Asher ben Yechiel's Hanhagoth, Jonah's influence is particularly noticeable. Whole sections are taken literally from Gerondi's works. Asher's son, the composer of the Turim also borrowed many a sentence. Isaac ben Eliezer of the middle of the 14th century took practically all he wrote from Jonah's

Sefar HaYirah. The extent of his influence can be seen in the fact that R. Mose Chagis in his popular book on morals published ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Sefar HaYirah almost in its entirety without revision or commentary.\* It is this book which seems to have been more popular than any ~~other~~ other. In the Middle Ages it appeared under the title Chaye Olam and was used widely as a source book for moral and ritual instruction. Its author was unknown. It was quoted in two places by Joseph Caro in Orach Chayim. The Little Book of the Pious (see above P 22) also contains a quotation from it. It was at first ascribed to a certain R. Yitzchak and later to a certain R. Isaac ben Maeir and was finally identified with Jonah's Sefar HaYirah.

The Shaare Teshubah is the most systematically arranged of the 4 books. It treats the subject of repentance most fully. The Yesod begins with a ~~Mosaic~~ <sup>mosaic</sup> of Biblical verses as an introduction, then follows a prayer beseeching forgiveness, after which we have a series of homilies including practical suggestions. The Iggereth begins with a single Biblical quotation which serves as the text for the first day, - the book is divided into seven sections, one for each day. The rest of the sermons deal with ritual and ceremonial laws. The Sefar HaYirah is a guide book for ritual and ethical duties of man from the beginning of his day's work to the end with a short appendix on duties of the Sabbath.

Not only is the Shaare Teshubah the most systematic ; it is, in fact, the only book in which the author makes any pretense at following any definite outline. The Gates of Repentance are 4 in number. The first gate contains an introduction dealing with the roots of

\*Bruehl Vol. 5 P.83-93

repentance, followed by an enumeration of the various stages in the process of return;- 1. Regret 2. Forsaking sin. 3. Grief. 4. Distress. 5. Sorrow. 6. Shame. 7. Humility. 8. Depression. 9. Sublimation of passion. 10. Correction. 11. Self-examination. 12. Self-condemnation. 13. Confession. 14. Prayer. 15. Correction of Perversions. 16. The Doing of Righteousness. 17. Retaining memory of Sin. 18. Resisting temptation. 19. Restitution.

The second gate points out the six ways in which men are aroused to repent:- 1. Troubles. God afflicts us with a purpose, 2. Old age. When a man reaches 60 he is bound to reflect upon the error of his ways. 3. Upon hearing the words of the wise. 4. Upon chancing to read Torah. During the 10 days between Rosh HaShono and Yom Kippur, man knows that God is judging him and therefore he must of necessity reflect upon the character of his life. 5. One day before death which means every day. For man never knows when the end comes.

The third gate is a compendium of Jewish law. It is an attempt to codify the legal documents which have accumulated through the centuries. Evidently Jonah felt the inadequacy of the Mishna Torah; it seems it was too philosophic and not sufficiently religious for his purpose. And therefore, he propounded a Jewish legal code of his own. It contains 11 sections:- 1. Importance of the words of the Sopherim. 2. Importance of the positive commandments. 3. Concerning prohibitive laws the transgression of which must be repaired by a succeeding act, i.e. a prohibition transformed into a command. 4. A prohibition the transgression of which cannot be replaced by any succeeding act. This class is further sub-divided into 5 groups in accordance with their

dependance upon , (1) the heart, (2) the tongue, (3) the faculty of sight, (4) the faculty of hearing, (5) the control of the hand.

5. Prohibitions containing action. 6. Death by God's hand. 7. Importance of excommunication. 8. The Four Deaths of the Beth Din. Altho the Temple is destroyed these deaths continue. 9. Sin under duress. 10. Sin which deprives the sinner of the life to come. 11. Punishment which comes under 4 heads:-(1) Scoffers, (2) Liars, (3) Hypocrites, (4) Slanderers. These 4 groups are further sub-divided as follows,- Scoffers are those who (a) ruin another's reputation, (b) make light of another's success, (c) mock another man, (d) use vain words. Liars are those who (a) falsify, (b) deceive to another's hurt, (c) practice fraud, (d) deceive without a purpose, (e) make promises without intending to fulfill them, (f) abuse confidences, (g) lead others astray. (h) ascribe to themselves qualities which they don't possess, (i) give perverted testimony. Hypocrites are those who , - (a) realize another has sinned but tell him that he has done well, (b) praise a wicked man in public, (c) praise a wicked man in private, (d) associate with a wicked man, (e) abuse public confidences, (f) are not zealous for the welfare of others, (g) fail to rebuke their neighbors when they have done unrighteously, (h) hear evil but pay no attention to it, (i) honor the wicked. Slanderers are those who ascribe a defect to a fellowman when they know it doesn't exist, (b) mention a man's father's faults in public, (c) who go about tale-bearing, (d) who begin unpleasant rumors, (e) who practice obscenity of speech, (f) who whisper impossible tales.

The fourth gate discusses the subject of atonement which com-

prises the following steps,- 1. The reading of the Parahah Olah(Lev.1:3-17) and Tzabh(Lev.6). 2.Temperance on Erebh Yom Kippur. 3. Prayer and Repentance. 4.Righteous Deeds. 5. Fasting, tears, bending knee, and afflicting the soul.

So much for Gerondi's law. A discussion of his theology and ethics follows. It has already been pointed out that in Jewish writings prior to the 12th and 13th centuries, it was impossible to separate ethics from theology and religion. While these books are rightly called ethical works and served as such in their time, yet the idea of God as the motivating influence in all things looms so large that it would be impossible to properly present his ethical views without including his theological concepts. The following pages are devoted to this purpose.

### Theology

His views on theology are classified as follows:-  
 Atonement and Repentance. Sin is sickness of the soul. Just as the body occasionally becomes sick and requires the services of a physician, so the soul occasionally becomes diseased and requires the healing power of God, the Great Physician. But man must himself be interested in his soul's welfare, otherwise God cannot help him. Repentance is purely a personal matter between man and his Creator. Refusal to repent makes matters worse. This world is a vain place; our days are vanity. They are like a field which we cultivate carefully but which produces very little. Therefore man cannot afford to waste time in sin. Let him think of his latter end and turn to God. For God loves him who repents and is ever ready to help in the process. The Malitz is constantly

advocating a man's cause before God and the moment he indicates a desire to return, God comes to his assistance. No man should be discouraged ~~xxx~~ because of the magnitude of his sins. If he thinks his sins are too great for God's forgiving power, he is being deluded by Satan. For God's mercy is unlimited.

Man should repent every day. He should be ready for death at all times. Like the woman who, when her husband went off intending to return 6 weeks later, clothed herself in her best garments. The neighbors asked the reason for this and she replied that she was getting ready for her husband's return. So man should always be ready to return to his eternal home. All year he should search and test himself, but on Yom Kippur especially, should he make a very careful analysis of himself. Sins against God are atoned for on Yom Kippur but the sins against man are not atoned for until man is reconciled. If the sin is robbery, then the sinner should go to him who was sinned against 5 times, if necessary, in order to effect a reconciliation. If he sinned with words, he need go only 3 times but in the company of others if possible. Repentance is the basis for atonement. Formerly man atoned for his sins by bringing the sacrifices Zebach and Pesach but now atonement is made with words of the Torah. Every man should guard against sham repentance. He should not "bathe with a bug in his hand". He who is truly penitent will confess daily before breakfast, before the evening meal and at bed-time. After a month of such continual confessions, a man will be strong in the fear of God. Those who repent are greater than those who have always been righteous, for repentance goes all the way up to God. He blots out our sins and they are complete-



ly lost to memory.

**Fasting.** Jonah opposes fasting and advocates continual temperance. It is better to eat moderately throughout the week than to set aside a day for fasting and then eat gluttonously the remaining days. In this connection we find the only personal reference in all his ethical writings. He says, "If a man is as weak as I am and can't observe all the fasts, he should diminish his pleasures". This statement appears in the Yesod HaTeshubah and was probably made when he was an old man. Likewise, in the Yesod<sup>do</sup>only, <sub>^</sub>we find any discussion or even mention of the subject of Fasting.

**Commandments.** To observe a positive commandment is called Yiras Shamayim; to observe a prohibition is called Moreh. He who obeys a prohibition, his reward is as though he had done a Mitzvah. He who forgets one thing he learned violates two commandments. He who has Beth HaMidrash in his city and fails to go there, he violates all the commandments and deserves death at the hands of Heaven. The two great commandments are the practice of charity and the observance of the Sabbath; but the Sabbath is equivalent to all the other commandments. He who desecrates the Sabbath destroys the whole Torah and deserves death. Rejoice on the Sabbath, it is the memorial of the Exodus from Egypt and a day of rest and cessation from toil throughout all Israel. Obey the commandments without fear or hesitation and pay no attention to the ridicule of others. Be hospitable, but if it is necessary to make a choice between commandment observance and hospitality, then by

all means obey the commandments.

Retribution. Sin will always be punished either in this world or in the world to come. In the case of tithing, we are sure that faithfulness will have its reward. Otherwise no man should serve God for profit. Trust in him at all times and be fearless. He may not reward immediately; his service may entail difficulties and sufferings but eventually every man will reap the benefit of his good deeds or the penalty for his sins.

Prayer. Prayer is a daily duty. It should be sincere and earnest and offered with the purpose of acquiring God's favor. At the same time, it should be in accordance with all the prescribed regulations. 'After eating wash the hands and say the blessing. Recite the Shema before going to bed. Draw out the Echod, bow at the Boruch, and rise slowly at the Shem. At the Oseh Shalom bow and bend toward the Aron HaKodesh; take three steps backward and then return to the same place. During the Eighteen Benedictions, answer "Amen" to each. He who answers "Amen" is greater than he who makes the Berachah and the gates of Heaven are opened for him. Dont go out of the Synagogue during the reading of the Torah. Dont talk in the Synagogue. While studying or praying, dont touch your body; if you do then it is necessary to wash your hands immediately.

The Tephillin are absolutely essential in prayer. Great care should be taken to place them on the head and arm on the exact spot where the law prescribes. He who recites the Shema with the Tephillin on his head and arm, he has received the yoke of the Kingdom of

Heaven. The transgressors in Israel are those who fail to put on the Tephillin.

### Ethics

Charity. Before the cry of widows, let your wives be widows and before the cry of orphans let your children be orphans; i.e. imagine they are your own. To oppress widows and orphans is one of the sins for which the sinner deserves death at God's hand, even if the oppressed do not cry out to God.

Jonah has a very modern program for social service work. Each community should have men, chosen and picked for their special fitness and aptitude, to <sup>do</sup> the necessary philanthropic work. The women ~~in~~ of the community should also organize themselves and choose a woman whose sole duty it will be to give charity wherever the case requires it. The purpose behind all this is rather interesting. While it is all done in the name of Heaven, yet there is an ulterior motive. The Women should give their town a good reputation so that the young men of other towns should be <sup>eager</sup> ~~desires~~ to marry their daughters.

Charity is a very important function. Because of the absence of charity, Sodom and Gemorrah were destroyed. A man may have Torah and wisdom and knowledge, but if he has not charity, it "availeth him nothing".

Reverence. The name of God should not be mentioned when naked or in the presence of a naked man or in any unclean place. Swearing falsely

is a desecration of God's name. Worshipping ~~and~~ idols is slighting God and therefore not forgiveable as other sins. Hold God's name in reverence. Don't swear by his name or by truth, for God is truth. / 2

Reverence for parents is almost as great a virtue as reverence for God. To honor father and mother is a positive commandment and means, Don't sit in his presence, Don't hide his words and lessen his fame, Don't humiliate him. He who fails to honor parents properly is worthy of death by stoning. If your father has transgressed, don't tell him, "You have transgressed" but say to him, "Father, thus and thus saith the Torah. Due honor and reverence should also be accorded an older brother, a step-mother, and a step-father.

Reverence for teachers is also a great virtue. He who shares his seat with his Rabbi deserves death. He who teaches Halachah in the presence of his Rabbi deserves death. He who fails to show honor to a learned man is an Apikoros. Pay close attention to all the teachers of the Torah. Go to meet them and rise before them twice a day. They are God's representatives and deserve your unmitigated reverence and regard.

Attitude to Fellow-Jews. He who insults his neighbor in public has no part in the world to come. He doesn't know the enormity of his own sin and hence is incapable of repentance. The sin of injuring another's reputation in public is worse than the sin of seeking another's life because shame is more bitter than death. It is the duty of

every Jew to help his fellow-Jew in every way, to give whatever advice he is capable of giving, and to withhold nothing that might be of any value. If he sins, it is your duty to rebuke him; for all Israelites are responsible for each other's conduct. Don't taunt a proselyte with having left his people; receive him kindly and give him a full share in the house of Israel. Usury is strictly forbidden. He who practices it loses his champion before God, i.e. the Malitz.

And oppression by word of mouth is worse than cheating in business. He who raises his hand against a fellow-Jew, even he doesn't touch him is called a wicked man. If you slap the jaw of a Jew, it is as though you had slapped the jaw of the Shekinah. Don't be severe with Jewish debtors. Practice mercy toward the poor but severity toward those who make others sin. Be merciful to the poor. He who lends to the poor is greater than he who does charity. Don't hate anyone. In the second Temple, they studied Torah and obeyed the laws, but because of hatred among the Jews, God destroyed it. Don't take or give bribes, neither of money nor of words. Don't curse a judge, for thus you might make him render an unjust decree. If anyone curses you, go out of his way. Quarrel with no one; deceive no one. Be busy in study; it is the best antidote for all social ills and personal discomforts. If a man mistreats you, control your anger against him. It is better to bite out your tongue than to tear your garments in anger. Don't be a hypocrite; don't ask a man to lend you anything unless you are sure he will lend it to you with his whole heart. If you know that your oath will be suspected, do not swear, even though truth is with you.

Attitude toward women. Gerondi's attitude toward women is rather two-sided. On the one hand he regards them as dangerous; they lead a man astray and make him unfit for Torah study. They are ambitious and selfish. He cautions against engaging in lengthy conversations with them; with one's own wife as well as with the wife of another. 'Don't touch another man's wife; don't think of other women. Don't quarrel with your wife or engage in obscene conversation with her'. At the same time they are obligated to inspire their husbands and sons to study. When the latter come home from their daily tasks and are tired and inclined to vain words and foolish thoughts, it is the duty of the wife and mother to place a Sefar before them, to encourage them in study and make everything comfortable and convenient, so that the Torah should not be neglected.

Attitude to Gentiles. Jonah's attitude toward the Gentiles cannot be called a favorable one. He places them in the same category as a dog or cat and issues several prohibitions concerning them. 'Don't let Gentiles find favor in thine eyes. Let not their favor be toward you.. Don't deceive anyone, not even a Goy. Don't cause anyone to sin, not even a Gentile. Don't sell him a brick or wax for use in idol worship, neither give him the limb of a living animal (one of the seven laws which even Gentiles must obey is the law prohibiting the eating <sup>of</sup> the limb or flesh of any animal which continues to live after the limb or flesh has been cut off). Everything from which a Jew is forbidden to derive any benefit is forbidden to be given as a gift to Gentiles; neither may

it be given to a dog or cat as food. Don't give a Goy Orlah or meat cooked in milk. A Jew should not reap a Goy's Orlah, neither for pay nor for nothing; neither should he give a Goy his own wine to drink. The Nervus Ischiadicus should not be given to a dog, cat, or Gentile.

Personal Propriety. Be modest in dress and proper in manner when going to bed at night. Don't walk naked into a dark room. Your bed should always stand between Mizrach and Maarib. Guard against pride; even a King should be humble. Pride is one of the severe sins. A wise man will not boast except in the fear and service of God. The learned man who is not humble deserves death because he turns people away from the Torah. Seek peace and pursue it. Israel's mission is to establish peace on earth. Therefore a true Israelite will make peace his sole aim and purpose.

CAP. IV

A TRANSLATION

of the

IGGERETH HA-TESHUBAH



1st Day

"After the Lord your God shall ye walk and him shall ye fear, and his commandments shall ye observe, and unto his voice shall ye hearken, and him shall ye serve and unto him shall ye cleave," (Deut.13:5), "Who does not fear thee king of the Nations, for unto thee is it proper. Among all the wise men of the nations and among all their kings there is none like thee." "The end of the matter, everything having been heard, fear God and obey his commandments for this is the whole man," (Eccl.12:13). The fear of our God, praised be his Name forever, is the foundation of the Torah and the source of all commandments and enlightenments and disciplines, as it is said. "The fear of God is a fountain of life to turn aside from the ensnarers of death;" read וְיִירָא (Prov.14:27).

A pleasant fortress and a wall high and great and extending up to Heaven is the fear of God. It never departs from the soul of man as it is said, "But be in fear of God all day," (Prov.23:17). The sun of religion shines upon the soul and all its secret parts to rule by day and by nite over its thots. And this is the foundation of the soul as it is said. "Remember this and show yourselves firm, ( וְיִירָא instead of וְיִירָא as our text reads) bring it again to mind," (Isa. 46:8).

At all times Yirah is the light of shame upon the face of man as it is said. "That his fear be upon your face that ye

sin not," (~~Ex~~<sup>Ex</sup>.20:20), And our Rabbis may their memories be a blessing, said, It is this shame which is seen upon the face of man and indicates that shame leads to Yirah and therefore our Rabbis said "It is a good sign when man is ashamed."

"The Lord thy God shalt thou fear, him shalt thou serve, to him shalt thou cleave, and by his Name shalt thou swear," (Deut.<sup>10:20</sup> 10:20). Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice tremblingly, (Ps.2:11). Serve the Lord with gladness, come before him with joy (Ps.100:2). And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you "what is this service of yours?" Then shall ye say unto them as follows. This service is due to the fact that we are duty bound to be servants of God blessed be he and blessed be his Name forever for he has created all beings, everything that is called by his Name to serve before him and to do honor to its creator. We have a portion and a share in his service above that of all nations because he has brot us forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage in order that we should be his servants. The servant is duty bound to perform the work of his master as his chief occupation. But if he makes his own work of prime importance, he has not the characteristics of a servant but evil is his heart in the performance of the work of his master. Therefore it is our duty to make the chief aim of our work Torah, Yirah, and good deeds. This is what our Rabbis said in the Aboth of Rab Nathan, "He who makes Torah primary and his work secondary he will be first in the world to come." Behold the be-



no more than 3 fingers.

It is a duty to attach a Mezuzah at every door post of the rooms of a house. Our Rabbis said. "He who has Tephillin on his head and arm and Zizzith on his garment and a Mezuzah on his door post, he is sure that he will not sin as it is said "A three fold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl.4:12).

It is a duty to pray everyday morning and evening. It is forbidden to taste anything before prayer as it is said, "And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee," (Ex.23:25). This service here mentioned is prayer. No work should be done before prayer, and he who rises early and greets his neighbor at his gate before prayer, he is as tho he had made him a high place.

It is most important in prayer that the mind be prepared and all thots of business be excluded as it is said "To serve him with all your heart" (Deut.10:12). Our Rabbis said "What is this service in the heart? The answer is prayer." A man should rise for prayer reverently as it is said, "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice tremblingly, (Ps.2:11). Our Rabbis said "A man should rise to pray humbly and if he prays without a prayerful mind, he must go back and pray again. But if he brot his mind back to the first Berachah\* altho he sinned and

\*Probably the ברכה / 1st the first of the 18 Benedictions

did not keep his mind on his prayer during the remaining Berachoth, he does not need to go back and pray again.

While the reader is repeating the 18 benedictions, it is a duty to answer "Amen" to each benediction and to follow closely so that one should know where to answer Amen. There is a double reward for this as tho a man pray twice, one after the other. Our Rabbis have said in the Midrash "If you pray and have not directed your heart toward prayer and if you pray over again,\* then be certain that your prayer has been heard." A man should be careful not to say anything about his business or about secular matters in the Beth Hamidrash for "his sin is greater than he can bear" (Gen.4:13). Especially be careful not to say anything while the reader is praying. It is the duty of the whole congregation to rebuke him, restrain, and prevent him from sin, for all beings were created for the glory of God and if your heart is turned away and you do not hear when they praise him and recite songs to him where is the honor and where is the fear?

It is the duty to go early to the Beth Hamidrash. Our Rabbis said "He who goes early and late to the Beth Hakneseth, he will increase his days." And further our Rabbis said "He who is counted among the 1st 10 his reward is as great as that of all." He who goes to the Beth Hamidrash early and late in this world, he is worthy of doing so in the Beth Hamidish as it is said "Happy are they who dwell in thy house, they contin-

\*Read מן not מה

ually praise thee, (Ps.84:5). He who loves to go to the Beth Hamidrash, he loves God as it is said. "How lovely are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts" (Ps.84:2).

## 2nd Day

It is the duty to study Torah everyday as it is said "And it shall come to pass because ye hearken to these ordinances and keep and do them" (Deut.7:13) and it is said "That ye may learn them and observe to do them," (Deut.5:1). Our Rabbis said "The study of Torah is above everything else put together." They say in the Sifre that just as the reward for the study of the Torah is greater than the reward of the observance of all the commandments so the punishment for neglecting the study of the Torah is greater than the punishment for all the other sins. We find in the first Temple that God overlooked idol worship, the uncovering of nakedness, and the shedding of blood but he did not overlook the sin of neglecting ~~of~~ the Torah as it is said "Who is the wise man that he may understand this and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken that he may declare it. Wherefore is the land perished," (Jer.9:11). "And the Lord said

"Because they have forsaken my law which I have set before them," (9:12).

He who desires to be saved from the bitter punishment and from this great sin let him busy himself with the needs of the students and the Rabbis, those who study in the name of Heaven and let him help to pay them in order that they shall be established in his city; and there will be those who are studying the Torah because of him. Our Rabbis say in the Bible, namely as it is written. "It is a tree of life to these who lay hold upon it," (Prov.13:18). It does not read *וְהַיִּדְיוֹנִים* those who teach it but *וְהַיִּדְיוֹנִים* those who make strong because they support the students and Rabbis.

When men cease from their work and their business and they go to their homes or they sit on the corner and are idle or discuss idle matters great is their end and the sin is very heavy because they despise the Torah. For they believe there is no limit to the gift of the Torah rewards. Why? Because they do not turn their steps to the Beth Hasefar to study. Is not man eager and does he not hurry to his work and his business when he knows that all his vanity? How can he forget the life of the world to come? How can he fail to give a portion of his day or an hour of his hours to study? (how can he fail) to say in his heart,

it is time to work for the Lord to read the Torah and to be busy with the commandments and righteous deeds? It is a transgression. He has surely transgressed before the Lord. Our Rabbis say concerning the passage "Because he hath despised the word of the Lord and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him," (Num. 15:31), that anyone who is able to study the Torah and fails to do so, he has despised the word of the Lord. Therefore it is the duty of every man to set aside a place in his house to study there the laws or the Bible, or Psalms, or the prayer book. And when he turns from his work and from the transaction of his business he should go there to study or to read. By doing this he has given his soul wonderful counsel to keep it from destruction. He will think of his end and he will ponder over his latter days just as our Rabbis say "Keep 3 things in mind and you will not fall into the power of sin. Know whence thou hast come and whither thou art going and before whom thou wilt in the future render judgement and account." Moreover he shall incline his heart when he reads the words of this book and if he sees that he has obeyed all the words of this book to their full value, his heart shall rejoice and he shall be exceeding happy. And when he transgresses one of these commandments he should confess the sin which he



has committed. Our Rabbis say, he should repent that same day, perhaps he'll die tomorrow and so all his days should be devoted to repentance as it is said "Let thy garments always be white and let thy head lack no oil," (Eccl.9:8). It is decreed that every man should punish himself literally or with half a shekel to do charity every time that he fails to go to the Beth Hakeneseth\* and to the place where there is one book of the holy books to study there.

A man should always seek the welfare of his people and his friends in all matters which are pleasing to himself as it is said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," (Lev.19:18). Our Rabbis said that this is a great rule in the Torah because on account of peace did Israel establish the Torah. Our Rabbis say that peace is greater than everything else. Therefore we say in our prayer "Bringer of peace and creator of everything." The prayers of the Congregation are heard if they are offered in peace and all the ways of the Torah lead to peace as it is said "And all its paths are peace," (Prov.3:17). Israelites are lovers of peace; God created them in peace. Peace makes certain all the benedictions as it is said "The Lord will bless his people with peace," (Ps.29:11). Therefore the assembly of Israel is called

\*House of Assembly or Synagogue.

Shulamith\* and the assembly of idol worshipers is called "Haters of peace."

It is the duty of Israel to choose picked men who will establish peace between man and his wife and between man and his neighbor and in whose hands will be the power to force and incline men to peace. And these chosen men shall be men who know how to appease and reconcile men and how to establish peace. They cannot be irritable or quarrelsome as it is said, "A wrathful man stirreth up discord" (Prov.15:18) and it is said "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov.15:1). Our Rabbis say concerning those who establish peace, "Men of pleasantness are we, and bring-ers of peace." Our Rabbis say, peace. Concerning those men who bring peace that they are sons of the world to come.

A man should take care not to curse himself or his neighbor neither by name nor by a nickname. He deserves the lash for such a thing. This is one of the greivous sins in the Torah as it is said, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law-----to fear this glorious and awful name;" because you did not remember what you were warned, you did not recall it. The Torah has already cautioned that a man should not curse his neighbor as it is said "Thou shalt

\*One of the personages in the Song of Songs.

not revile God nor curse a ruler of thy people (Ex.22:27). And it is said "Thou shalt not curse the deaf" (Lev.19:14). This means every man. The Torah does not condemn to the lash him who has cursed his neighbor until he curses him by name or by a nickname. A man should be careful, when he wants to verify his words and says this thing is true so help me God, (he should be careful) not to say it unless it is true because this is an oath and is called the oath of the curse.

A man should take care not to mention God's name in vain as it is said "The Lord thy God shalt thou fear" (Deut.6:13). Our Rabbis interpreted this in the section Kedoshim that this passage is intended to warn men not to mention God's Name in vain. And he who mentions the name or its equivalent should be careful to mention it with fear and reverence. Those who do not mention it with fear and reverence, they do not know God as it is said "Israel doth not know. My people do not consider" (Isa.1:3). So our wise men have said in the Midrash to Leviticus A man should be careful not to mention God's name except with clean hands and in a clean place. And if he is not certain whether the place is clean or not, he should not mention it at all, just as our wise men explained in Berachoth. Further our wise men said that the word of the Lord is despised,

that is, the words of the Torah are being mentioned in filthy alleys.

It is forbidden a man to think about another man's wife a commandment of the Torah it is, as it is said "That ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes" (Num. 15:39). Our Rabbis said, "The heart and the eye are the agents of sin." (Talm Y Berachoth 1:36) It is forbidden to think of any woman or girl. In those traditional words\*\* "I made a covenant with mine eyes; how then can I look upon a girl?" (Job.31:1). Everyone who looks at the wife of another, weakens the strength of his good inclination and its glory is turned to destruction. Thus did our Rabbis say, "He who thinks of sexual matters, his sexual vitality will be broken," (Sanh.92<sup>a</sup>). He who does not lift up his eyes to another man's wife, he has merit and his eyes will behold the pleasantness of God according to measure in return for his service because he did not feast his eyes upon a forbidden sight. Our Rabbis say. "He who restrains his eyes from beholding immoral sights, he has merit; he will receive the Shekenah\* as it is said, "And restraineth his eyes from looking upon evil (Isa.33:15) and it is said "Thine eyes shalt see the king in his beauty." (Isa.33:17)

\*The divine presence.

\*\*Job, is not taken literally in the Talmud.

It is forbidden to touch a woman either her hands or her face or any of her limbs. It is a Torah prohibition as it is said. "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him" (Lev.18:6). Thus the law is clear. This approaching means touching either the hands or the face or any limb in order to derive pleasure from the touch. This is one of the greivous sins mentioned in the Torah. It is made clear in the Masekta Sanhedrin that a man should rather commit murder than transgress this commandment. Concerning this Solomon the King in his wisdom says, "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands as hands; whose pleaseth God shall escape from her but the sinner shall be taken by her," (Eccl.7:36). It is forbidden to think of a woman even a girl. It is a Torah prohibition. It is worse to think of a girl than to touch her because by thinking one transgresses a Torah prohibition as it is said, "Thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing" (Deut.23:10). Our Rabbis interpreted this, "that a man should not harbor thots of impurity by day lest by nite he become a Baal Keri, God forbid."

A man should be careful not to become a slanderous gossip. Thus our Rabbis said "He who engages in calumny, he is as an atheist," as it is said "Who have said "Our tongue will we make mighty; our lips are with us: who is Lord over us," (Ps.

12:5). Thus it is forbidden to listen to a denunciation. Our Rabbis said "Four classes will not receive the Shekinah; namely, scoffers, flatterers, drunkards, and slanderers. A man should guard against tale hearing as it is said "Thou shalt not go about as a tale bearer among thy people," (Lev.19:16). It is the duty of every man to be merciful and not cruel as it is said "Thou shalt not harden thy heart nor shut thy hand from thy needy brother" (Deut. 15:7).

A man should guard against pride and a presumptuous spirit for it is an abomination before the Lord as it is said, "An abomination unto the Lord is every one that is proud in heart (Prov.16:5). As it is said "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren" (Deut.17:20), As it is said, "Then thy heart be lifted and thou forget the Lord thy God" (Deut.8:14). A man should take care not to hate his neighbor as it is written "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart" (Lev.19:17). Our Rabbis said The 2nd Temple had the Torah. Why then was it destroyed? because of the gratuitous hatred which existed therein. And gratuitous hatred leads man to commit the many sins mentioned in the Torah. Our Rabbis said the commandment love thy neighbor as thyself is the whole Torah because thru love of neighbor and peace did Israel establish the Torah.

✓ 11/1  
12/12

11/15 75

## 3rd Day

Many think the soul will not be destroyed when it is kept from good and restrained from uprightness. They do not know, they do not understand that, he whose eyes are closed to charity his evil is very great and his sin exceedingly greivous. Indeed robbery is one of the severer sins but the sin of failing to do charity is worse than robbery as it is said. "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom-----the hands of the poor and needy she did not strengthen" (Ezek.16:49). Altho the men of Sodom were men of violence as it is said "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners" (Gen.13:13) yet the Scripture makes them transgressors chiefly thru their wealth because they did not help the poor and the needy; as it is said, "Beware that there be not a base thing in thy heart-----and thine eye be evil against thy needy brother and thou give him naught and he cry unto the Lord concerning thee and it be sin in thee" (Deut.15:9). Indeed the Zar Ayin (the restrained eye i.e. He who turns his eye away from the needy) is the base thing and is an evil name among the names of the wicked. And so it says concerning Nabal. "Let not my Lord, I pray thee, regard this base fellow, even Nabal, for as his name so is he," (1Sam.25:25). Our Rabbis explained in the midrash

to Psalms that he was called a base thing because he was a Zar Ayin. Our Rabbis say further that he who fails to do (closes his eyes from) charity, is as tho he served idols. One of the foundations of the reverence for God is to do good as it is said. "I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desireth life-----depart from evil and do good," (Ps.34:12). Solomon of blessed memory said, "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed for he giveth of his bread to the poor," (Prov. 23:9).

Many know that it is a duty to do charity and the reward for doing it but they do not know how great is the practice of charity. The truth of the matter is, and it is firmly and surely established, if a man wants to do charity but is poor and cannot afford it, charity is nevertheless in his right hand without money and without wealth. In the breath of his lips and in the words of his mouth is charity clothed as a coat of mail. He is great among the doers. He is exalted and distinguished in great deeds more than the most eminent, more than those who scatter and do charity. When he speaks comfortingly to the poor his words are soothing to the needy and he brings him relief from his work and from the toil of his hands and he sustains him, raises him up., and encourages him in his work which is greivous to the soul of the lowly.

12/1/10



Our Rabbis said that he who gives a coin to the poor, he is blessed with 6 blessings and he who consoles him with words, he is blessed with 11 blessings as it is said "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry" (Isa.58:10). This is a case of soothing words and of revealing to him a good will with a perfect heart and willing soul. Do <sup>you</sup> not see what is written in the Parashah Beer Heteb\* "His reward is greater by far than he who does charity and he gets blessings, many and greater than the former. And the 2nd is he who lends to the poor to help him along; as it is said "It is well with the man who dealeth graciously and lendeth" (Ps.112:5). Our Rabbis said that he who lendeth is greater before God than he who does charity. The 3rd is, he who gives to him good and worthy counsel for his releif and advantage. He shall receive reward for his counsel because the man is happy when he observes the love of his neighbor who is interested in his work because of his sympathetic imagination, as it is said "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel", (Prov.27:9). And the 4th he shall submit his suggestions for doing charity and righteousness to the community and he shall receive the reward for the community which he has turned to righteousness and for the souls for whom he is responsible. He shall merit the reward for the charity which was done at his sug-

\*Deut.27:8

gestion as it is said, "But the liberal deviseth liberal things, (Isa.32:8). Our Rabbis laid down the rule "He who makes others do is greater than he who does." This is love of rightness. All those who direct properly, they strengthen their own hands so that they keep to their paths and increase strength. Our Rabbis say in the Midrash "I am asleep but my heart is awake." I am asleep because of the absence of charity but I am awake in the practice of righteousness.

False swearing is worse than idol worship. Just as the Torah in the 10 commandments caution against vain swearing as it is said concerning idol worship. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God" (Ex.20:5). That is, altho I am kind and merciful, I am angry at idol worshipers and false swearers. "He will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex.34:7). Altho I forgive those who repent in all other transgressions, I will not forgive him who has sworn falsely.

He who serves idols desecrates God as it is said "From his seed has he given to Moloch" (Lev.20:3) He who swears vain oaths, he desecrates God as it is said "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely so that thou profane the name of thy God, I am the Lord" (Lev.19:12). Whenever the Beth Din (Assembly of Judges) need to impose an oath on a man and he knows that he is unable to swear by the truth, he is fur-

bidden to say "I swear" in order to frighten his neighbor into compromising with him. Thus do they say in the Mechil-tah "Whence do we know that a man should not take it upon himself to swear? as it is said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex.20:7) so also "Thou shalt not utter a vain report" (Ex.23:1) Its explanation is "Thou shalt not receive a false report."

Slanderers, tattlers, and those who tyrannize the land of the living, will go down to Gehennim and there they will be condemned for all time.

He who embarrasses his neighbor in public and does not repent, has no portion in the world to come and his repentance is not repentance until he reconciles his neighbor.

It is forbidden to distress a Jew either by word or deed as it is said. "Ye shall not wrong one another" (Lev.25:17). Our Rabbis say that Scripture speaks concerning injury by word of mouth. The word "injury" is the same as "distress." When the Scripture warns concerning material injury it does so in connection with a commercial transaction, namely, "If thou sell aught unto thy neighbor or buy of thy neighbors hand, ye shall not wrong one another," (Lev.25:14). He who inflicts pain upon a widow or an orphan, merits death from Heaven as it is said, "Ye shall not afflict the widow or the fatherless child, if thou afflict them in any way-----

my wrath shall wax hot against you and I shall slay you"  
(Deut.22 :23).

He who lends his money unsuriously, he sinks and his wealth is completely destroyed because of this evil. Even the money that he acquired by the sweat of his brow, the wealth which he accumulated righteously, one coin acquired thru usury, destroys all. He will not be wealthy nor will he establish his strength but his end shall be destruction. As our Rabbis have said, "This comes and destroys that" as it is said, "He that putteth not out his money on interest nor taketh a bribe against the innocent, he that doeth all these things, he shall never be moved" (Ps.15:5). This teaches us that he who practices usury he sinks, he does not rise as it is said. "He that augmenteth his substance by interest and increase, gathereth it for him who is gracious to the poor" (Prov.28:8). He who practices usury will not rise when the dead are resurrected as it is written, He hath given out upon interest and hath taken increase; shall he live? he shall not live" (Ezek.18:13). Our Rabbis said "Altho there is a defending angel for him who commits all the other sins and mentions his merit in his behalf yet he who practices usury does not have such angel to champion his cause.

The sin of obscene speech is one of the greivous sins which destroy the world as it is said, "Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men. Neither shall he have

compassion on their orphans and widows for every one is ungodly and an evil doer. Every mouth speaketh wantonness. For all this, his anger is not turned away but his hand is outstretched still," (Isa. 9:16).

It is a great virtue to fear God and to know the ways of repentance. "Obtain a master for yourself and acquire a companion and always discuss with him the fear of Heaven and consult with him constantly concerning the amendment of your deeds. How will you be saved from sin and from everything that comes against you? As it is said "Then the fearers of the Lord spoke each to his neighbor and the Lord listened and hearkened, and it was written in the book of memorial before him." (Mal. 3:16) They tell us in the Aboth de Rab Nathan, Rabbi Akibah says, "He who associates with sinners altho he does not do according to their deeds yet shall he receive punishment like theirs."

Conclusion of the first Drush.

#### 4th. Day

A man should not sew a woollen garment with a linen thread; neither should he sew pillows and wool blankets with anything but hemp or wool thread. Even if there are 10 blankets, one

on top of the other, and there is Kilayim\* in the one at the bottom, he should not sit on the top one.

A man should not shave the corner of his beard. He should not do as those who hold up (to the chin) a bunch of (foreign) hair and then shave the rest with a razor (on the plea) that they have made a mistake. It is impossible to do this without committing a sin. A man should cut his whole beard with scissors and should not let a razor go over any part. He who is especially careful will cut with the scissors even the neck. Thus do they do in this province in France. Indeed, to shave the neck is not forbidden by the Torah because there is no corner there. But our Rabbis forbid passing a razor over the hair of any part of the body even under the arms, because it is like the custom of women. It is permitted, however, to use the scissors.

The fat which is upon the nervus ischiadicus is prohibited by the Torah. Everything from which we are forbidden to derive pleasure, we are forbidden to sell or to give as a gift because it will serve to advantage. It is forbidden to give it to a cat or to a dog as food.

If a Cuthite servant girl has placed a pot upon the fire and has cooked broth, that food is as the food of Ben Drasai\*\*

\* The forbidden union of heterogeneous elements.

\*\*He cooked his food until it was only 1/3 boiled see Talm Jerushalmi Sabbath 14<sup>a</sup> Also Levy's Chaldaish und Hebraisch Woerterbarch under נסיון

that broth is forbidden food and the pot and the dishes should be broken. Altho a Jew lights the fire, the Cuthite servant should not put the pot or the frying pan on the fire but by the hand of the Jew himself shall the pot come upon the fire.

The pan that is taken to the oven by a Gentile, if no Jew watches, the meat or the food is N'belah\*. For we suspect perhaps the Gentile made a change. Thus our Rabbis said "Jewish meat in the hands of a Gentile is prohibited until there is a seal within a seal (tightly sealed).

If a Jewish woman goes to the oven in the house of the baker and puts a peice of wood in the oven to make it Kosher, her reward is very great. An Ishmaelite woman, who takes a ritual bath, if she does not believe in the Torah of Moses and in the commandments which it is the duty of every woman to observe,--she makes Yayin Nesech\*\* by touching and she is as a Gentile in all matters. Wine into which a little honey has been poured and which a Gentile touches becomes Yayin Nesech. A gentile should not put grapes in a vat when the wine has begun to ferment,--neither at the beginning of fermentation nor at the end. Cheese of a Gentile is prohibited in any place. Also, milk which has been milked

\*Food, the eating of which is a punishable offense.

\*\*Wine from which a libation has been poured on the altar.

by a Gentile without Jewish supervision is prohibited food.

Orlah\* is certain. It is practiced even outside of Palestine, even by Gentiles. The fruits of the first 3 years are forbidden. But if there is a doubt, Orlah is permitted.

The vineyard in the fourth year is prohibited without redemption. But one vine stalk grafted upon other plants is not subject to the law of 4th yr. redemption. How is it redeemed? as it is explained in the Mishnah in Massek-ta Kilayim.

It is the duty of every Jew to separate the Hallah\*\* from the dough and to recite the blessing "Blessed art thou O Lord our God King of the Universe who hast sanctified us by his commandments and commanded us to separate the Hallah." Barley requires 43 eggs and the third and fifth of an egg according to sum of the consonants in Hallah (חלה). If there is a doubt whether there is in the dough sufficient according to measure, you separate the Hallah without the blessing as is explained in Tur 14 Cap. 321

A grafted vine is prohibited even outside of Palestine;

\*Fruit of trees of the first 3 years.

\*\*The priests share of the dough.



that is if there are 2 different kinds beside the vine; for example wheat and barley but one kind is permitted outside of Palestine. The grafting of trees of different species (apple and date for example) is prohibited by the Torah even outside of Palestine. But to graft trees of the same species (apple and pear) is permitted even in Palestine. Copulation with an animal is prohibited by the Torah.

The first born of a pure animal is prohibited until there occurs in it an acquired blemish as for example a broken or a mutilated leg or a blinded eye; then the priest may slaughter it. He may also give a Jew some of it to eat. If a Jew owns an animal in partnership with a Gentile, he is free from the law of the first born. A Jew is forbidden to derive benefit from the first born of an ass until he has redeemed it with a kid or something equal in value and has given the redemption to the priest.

It is the duty of every father to redeem his first born son and to give 5 Sela to the priest. The equal of 5 Sela is 12 Dinars as it is explained in the words of our Rabbis. And if the father doesn't redeem him, he should redeem himself when he grows up. The priest may return the 5 Sela if he so chooses. But it is forbidden to bargain with the priest

in the beginning with the view toward having the gift returned.

A man is forbidden to render any sort of decision either in civil or ritual cases after drinking. Thus did our Rabbis say, "He who drinks a fourth of a measure of wine shall not teach as it is said, Drink no wine or strong drink" (Lev.10:9) and further it is written "that ye may teach the children of Israel (Lev.10:11).

Every new metal vessel which has been acquired from a Gentile requires dipping in a pool or in the river. Every old metal vessel which has been gotten from a gentile, must be rinsed thoroly and scoured with hot water and then dipped in water. The following blessing must be recited, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe who hast sanctified us by his commandments and taught us concerning the dipping of vessels." Earthen vessels covered with lead must be dipped, some say with a blessing others say without a blessing.

#### 5th Day

It is forbidden to kindle a light or do work on Erabh Shabboth after the setting of the sun, that is at dusk.

If the day is cloudy it is forbidden to kindle a light until it is certain that the sun has already set.

It is forbidden to rent or to lend an animal to a Gentile if it will be in his possession on Shabboth. He might do some work with it on Shabboth and Israel is commanded to let the animal rest on the Sabbath.

It is forbidden on the Sabbath to add hot water to the broth in a pot to warm it. He who does so is as he who cooks on the Sabbath.

A man is forbidden to be concerned about his business on the Sabbath even to think about it; as it is written, "And thou shalt do all thy work" (Ex.20:8). Our Rabbis said, "Let all thy work be in thine eyes as tho it were done so that thou should's't not be thinking about it." Thus do we say in the prayer, "Perfect rest, contentment, ease, and assurance." And in the grace at meals we say "that there be no trouble and disturbance on the day of our rest." A man should not concern himself with vain things on the Sabbath but he should enjoy the day; he should spend his time on Torah, the Scriptures, or on the Halachoth as it is said, "Ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and ye shall praise the name of the Lord your God" (Joel 2:26). On the Sabbath nite it is forbidden to kindle a light or to do any work until after the Hab-

adalah\*.

It is forbidden to bake and cook from Yom Tob to the week day or from the first day of the holy period to the second. It is forbidden to pluck off the feathers of a fowls neck for slaughtering purposes on the holiday; the plucking should be done on Ereb Yom Tob. It is forbidden to do any work on Hol Hamoed\*\* except the work which is permitted in the words of our Rabbis. They tell us that he who makes light of the feativall periods, is as he who serves idols as it is said "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou observe" (Ex.34:18) and near it is the verse "Thou shalt make thee no molten Gods" (Ex.34:17). Rashi interprets it, he who does work on Hol Hamoed degrades the festivals. Our Rabbis explained concerning the festival that when the scripture says, "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou observe," it means a prohibition against doing work on Hol Hamoed.

A man is forbidden to smite his neighbor; even if he does not smite him; if he merely raises his hand against his neighbor, he is called a wicked man; as it is said "And he said to the wicked man why wilt thou smite thy neighbor," (Ex.2:13). The future tense is used, not the perfect. A man is forbidden to smite his wife unless he

\*The ceremony which marks the end of the Sabbath.

\*\*The half festive days intervening between the first and last days of Passover or Sukkoth.

smites her in order to rebuke her for a sin. A man is forbidden to be a hypocrite, -to say one thing and think another. It is forbidden to create a false impression even upon a Gentile.

Our Rabbis said, "He who breaks the yoke of the commandments, is one of the wicked." In general this means, he who says I will observe the whole Torah except one of the commandments which my fathers did not teach me or because I have not been accustomed to observe it from my youth; or because the men of my city did not observe it. Our wise men say that man is an apostate and concerning him it is said, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not (all) the words of this Torah" (Deut. 27:26). A servant does not say to his master, "I choose these duties and I refuse to do those." He who commits one sin a hundred times is as tho he had committed a hundred sins as our Rabbis said, "If he says to the Nazarite "Do not drink, do not drink," twice; and he drinks he merits punishment for each prohibition. This is what is meant when it says, "For there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7:20). If, God forbid, it seems right to a righteous man to disregard presumptuously one commandment only, if he stumbles in sin one time, let him confess

his sin, and humble himself, and afflict his soul and return unto the Lord and he will pardon him.

He who says grace at meals should raise his hands in the basin before he says the blessing as it is said, "Sanctify yourselves" (Lev.11:44) this is the water of the first washing "Ye shall be holy" (ibid) this is the water of the second washing (washing and rinsing). Heil

He who reads the Torah should say "Bless ye the Lord who is to be blessed" with a loud voice. And those who hear should answer, "Bless the Lord who is to be blessed forever." In this way the grace at meals, they should answer and he should repeat after them. It is a duty in the morning and evening to say the Parshah Tamid which is the offering in the evening as in the morning. You begin, "And God spake to Moses, Command the children of Israel" until "a sacrifice of fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Num.28:1-8).

#### 6th Day

The third Drush or lecture, "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel" (Ex.

19:3). When the Torah was given Moses was commanded as follows,--first to the house of Jacob. These are the women to whom he proclaimed the subject of each chapter and a short exposition because they could not understand it in full. Why was he commanded to speak to the women first? because they send their sons to school and take care that they should busy themselves with the Torah and they have compassion upon them when they come from school. They set their hearts at rest with soothing words so that they should always be interested in the Torah and not cease from studying. They teach them fear of God in their youth as it is said, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov.22:6). We find therefore good women love Torah and Yirah. Hence good women are able to revive the souls of their husbands when they come home, each from the work he has done, and are tired and worn out and do not think of devoting some time to the Torah because of fatigue and business cares. It is the duty of women to remind their husbands to open a book and concern themselves with Torah and not spend their time idly. For the punishment for neglect of Torah is greater than all the sins in the Torah. Moreover they should remind their husbands to look into the Iggereth HaTeshubah\* which we have written. And they should inform them and their sons of

\*Letter of Repentance.

the contents of this Iggereth for thru it do they merit life in the world to come.

Ye shall warn the children of Israel against their uncleanness,--a warning to the children of Isarel that they withdraw from their wives at the time of menstruation. How long before the menstrual period shall they withdraw? a day or a nite. They who heed this warning, merit children of prominence as it is said, "And that ye may distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean and that ye may teach the children of Israel" (Lev.10:10-11).

A woman should wash her head at the time of her regular bath. She should search her entire body and cleanse it with water before she plunges so that there should not cleave to her flesh any foreign substance such as dough or clay or fat or anything whether it is small or large. And if she has cleansed her head and searched her body and before taking her plunge, makes and gives some broth to her son and then takes her dip, she has not fulfilled the law of Tebilah\*; something may have clung to her body. Therefore, it is proper for a woman to wash, search, and cleanse her body before dipping. She should do nothing for

\*Ceremony of ritual purification.



her children which would in any way make it possible for something to cleave to her body. She must cut her nails before Tebhilah, and take off all rings from her fingers and all adornments from her body so that there should be no foreign substance either on her body or in the water. She must tie up her hair but without ribbon or string. A Jewish woman must stand beside her and watch closely to see that nothing of her flesh or hair remains out of the water; it is a tendency for the hair to float on top of the water. She must watch carefully that there should be no dirt under her toenails during Tebhilah so that there should be no foreign substance either on her flesh or on the water. While she is immersing she must work her thighs just as she does when she stands and kneads dough. A woman continues to be in her menstrual period until she has immersed herself in the river or in the pool. During the days that she sees blood and during the time that she wears white garments\* the law is the same. We make the law more severe in all things while her menstrual period is upon her. We do in everything as is explained in Tur 14.

A woman should be careful to maintain peace between herself and her husband so that she be beloved and pleasing to him. As our Rabbis say, "children of strife and of hatred; they are impudent, rebellious and transgressors". Let a woman be humble in her purification ceremony and a modest manner will come to her thru it. So let her be humble in all her activities for

\*The days after menstruation during which white garments are worn while marital contact is still prohibited.

thru her humility, do her children become upright and modest. She should be humble so that other men beside her husband should not be thinking about her; for they who keep in mind her hands or her face will go down to Gehennom. Her punishment will be exceedingly great because she has made them sin and men have stumbled because of her who did not practice humility.

A woman should be sure to pray morning and evening for her sons and daughters that they be God fearing; that they be assiduous in Torah study and in the commandments. The chief merit of a woman in the next world is that her children do the will of God and fear him. When she is in the Academy on high and her children are busy in Torah study and in the fear of God; this is counted as if it had happened in her life and she occupies the higher realms in the other world.

When she does charity she should pray at that very moment with clean hands. She should pray that her sons be fearers of God and industrious in the Torah and in the commandments; for a man's prayer is heard at the time that he is carrying out a commandment. One of our wise men was accustomed to give a coin to charity whenever he prayed in order to confirm what was written, "In righteousness will I behold thy face (Ps. 17:15)

## 7th Day

When a woman lights the candles on the Sabbath eve, she should be sure to pray at that very moment for her sons that they be successful in Torah study and the commandment observance. She should pray, "May it be thy will that my sons shall enlighten the world in Torah, in the commandments, and in fear of God." For this is an appropriate prayer while she is lighting the Sabbath candles as it is said, "For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is a light" (Prov.6:23). One of our wise men was accustomed to pass a certain house and he saw that they were very punctilious about kindling the Sabbath and Hanukkah lights respectively. He said, "Know that from this house shall go forth two great men." And his prophecy was fulfilled.

During the days that a woman is with child she should pray constantly that the child may fear God and be wise in heart and zealous in Torah study and commandment observance and consistently philanthropic. David the King had many wives. In the days of their pregnancy they were accustomed to make vows and pray that their sons should be mighty men of valor and of fine build and worthy of all the virtues that they might prosper in the affairs of estate.

Bath Shebah the wife of King David said, "I am not like the other wives of my Lord the King. For all my vows during my period of pregnancy are that I might bring into existence a son wise in Torah, in fear of sin, and skilled in prophecy. Now hearken, O God, unto my voice and make Solomon my son wiser than all men. I did not ask that God grant that my son Solomon shall rule in his fathers stead. But the wives of my Lord prayed for their sons that they might be worthy of the Kingdom. Therefore the Kingdom shall not be theirs because they made Kingdom their chief prayer while I made the service of God my plea." Thus did Bath Sheba say, "What is my son? What the fruit of my womb? and what the result of my vows?"

Ezra, to him be peace, declared that a woman should rise early and bake in order that there should be nice warm bread for the poor when they come to the house in the morning; and she should not give it to them stale. For just as a woman divides her bread among the hungry cheerfully and with dignity, so will she receive a double reward from Heaven. Our Rabbis said, "He who gives a coin to a poor man, he will be blessed with 6 blessings and he who comforts him with words is blessed with 11 blessings."

It is proper that good, honorable, and humble women

should have duties performed for them and for the benefit of the daughters of the city that a good reputation might go before them. They should choose a good reliable woman to collect money for garments for the poor, to give life to many people, and to satisfy the longing soul. Every woman who does the work which she is able to do for the establishment of this custom, should give a coin a week.

She should not vow to do this always but she should give whenever her heart prompts her. She should work so that the coin will be the result of her own efforts and the toil of her hands and it will be as if her hands were dropping myrrh as well as it is said, "My hands dropped with myrrh" (Cant. 5:5).

It is proper for a man, that he might prove to himself his fear of God, to acquire for himself a companion or a teacher with whom he can constantly discuss the fear of God. And if one of his companions sins or becomes lax in his duties, then his companion should rebuke him and remind him of the commandment observance and caution him accordingly with regard to the Tephillin; also that he should not engage in idle conversation in the house of learning and especially while the reader is repeating the 18 benedictions. They should remind each other to read the Igerreth HaTeshubah every week and to question each other concerning the content of the book. If there are principles

which anyone has not established, his companions should urge him to establish every principle therein contained. Behold it hath been told us, this is the proper approach to repentance and is pleasing to God as it is said, "Then those who feared God hearkened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his Name" (Mal.3:16). So should they caution one another not to swear falsely either by God's name or a nickname, either in the holy tongue or in another language. A man should not adjure himself or his neighbor either by name or by a nickname. It is fitting and proper that a man fine himself a fixed sum, small or large, if he transgresses in this way.

Every man should study the Iggereth Ha Teshubah in a group either in his house or in the house of learning. There will be added to him the zeal of his neighbor. At stated times it might be read in toto and at other times only in part. But a man should incline his heart to observe what he reads so that what he utters carelessly with his lips should not remove from the heart of man his trust and his faith in God, as it is said "Trust in him at all times (Ps.62:9). It is further said, " My soul waiteth

for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning"  
 (Ps.130:11) According to his fear of God will his faith  
 increase as it is said, "Ye that fear the Lord, trust in  
 the Lord" (Ps. 115:11)

The whole world was created for the glory of God as it  
 is written "Everyone that is called by my name and whom  
 I have created for my glory" (Isa.43:7). He who would honor  
 God must honor his father and his mother. Our Rabbis said  
 "When a man honors his father and his mother, God says,  
 "I am exalted among them as tho I dwelt in their midst and  
 they were doing me honor. The best method of honoring father  
 and mother is to instill into them a calm spirit either  
 by words or deeds. And he who distresses them with words,  
 greater is his sin than he can bear. Our Rabbis tell of  
 2 men, one gave his father stuffed birds to eat yet God  
 banished him from the world. The other man honored his  
 father and mother and inherited this world and the world  
 to come as it is said "That thy days may be long" (Ex.20:12)

## CONCLUSION



While Jonah may have exercised considerable influence upon his own time, for us his ethical writings have little value. Here and there he has some lofty ethical concepts, as for example, Don't ask a man to lend you anything unless you are sure he will comply with his whole heart. Also, The sin of shaming a man in public is greater than the sin of killing, for shame is more bitter than death. But most, if not all, of his really fine ethical declarations are borrowed either from the Talmud, the Pirke Aboth, or contemporary ethical writers and re-stated in different language. Occasionally he uses an Aggadic figure, e.g. The sinner who fears he will not have an advocate before God to plead his case, asks God to hew out for him a place under the throne of glory so that his prayer should not return unanswered. But in general his style is uninteresting and unattractive. His prohibitions and commandments follow each other monotonously. As the instance quoted above will show, his conception of God is almost anthropomorphic.

His religious ideal is purely legalistic. He has detailed regulations which women must observe in their menstrual periods. (see translation of the Iggereth Teshubah, P 77). Failure to observe the laws concerning prayer is criminal; and prayer, while it should be sincere and earnest, is nevertheless only valid when offered in accordance with prescribed regulations.

His ethical ideal is confined to Jews alone. Gentiles are inferior. Nowhere do we find the magnanimous attitude displayed by

some of those noble souls who lived and wrote during those troubled times. He loved his people with a deep and undying love; he was sincerely and staunchly devoted to the Torah. But he was limited in his outlook and almost bigoted in his religious conceptions. Altho it seems quite certain that he had nothing to do with the burning of the Maimonides books in Paris or Montpelier, yet he must have been a vigorous opponent of the Maimonides school of thought. He was a conservative, to say the least.

There can be no doubt that he was a pious Jew, capable of deep religious feeling. But he could not rid himself of the legal attitude toward religion which he inherited from his teacher; nor could he bring himself to regard any extra-talmudic authority as binding. Jewish tradition was to him of paramount importance.