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The Utilization of Classical Rabbinic Sources in the Works of Three Ethical Thinkers

James L. Simon

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
1983

Referee: Professor Jakob Petuchowski

This thesis is dedicated to my father,

LAWRENCE S. SIMON

whose modesty, dignity and integrity
set a standard which I have always sought
to emulate. He has been a constant provider
of love, patience, and support. He is truly
the source of all my values.

Acknowledgement

It is not an exaggeration to say that the highlight of my Rabbinic studies has been the opportunity to study with my thesis advisor, Dr. Jakob Petuchowski. It has been a privilege to work with such an outstanding scholar, and I have benefitted greatly from my exposure to his awesome grasp of Jewish thought and tradition. Much of what is good herein is directly attributable to his guidance, interest, and assistance. Needless to say, I would be honored to follow the halakhic directives of Mishnah 2.11, Babah Mezia, should the occasion ever arise.

DIGEST

This work is an analysis of the manner by which three classical Jewish ethicists, Bahya Ibn Paqudah, Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto and Israel Salanter, utilize classical Rabbinic sources to support their ethical teachings.

I have chosen these men because of their influence on the development of classical Jewish ethical thought, and because each of them authored a major piece of ethical work which had a substantial impact on the communities for which they wrote.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first three chapters, I analyze the manner in which each individual thinker utilized Rabbinic sources to support his teachings. Rather than analyze the entire work of each individual, (Bahya's Duties of the Heart, Luzzatto's Mesillath Yesharim, and Salanter's Musar Letter) I have selected representative sections of each of these works which yield sufficient material for a comprehensive analysis. Each chapter includes a brief biographical sketch of each man.

In the fourth chapter, the conclusion, I offer a summary of my analysis and a comparison of the way each of the three men utilized their sources.

I find that each of the three share much in common in their use of Rabbinic texts. They rarely used texts in a defensive manner, rarely misquote texts, and often

utilized the texts to support larger philosophical issues which were common to all three.

Yet, each of them possessed a unique style. Bahya utilizes texts sparingly and carefully, using them to illustrate or amplify points which he has previously articulated. Luzzatto cites many texts and utilizes them for their cumulative value. It is common for Luzzatto to use Rabbinic texts in order to rebuke, and often he lets the texts speak for themselves. Israel Salanter employed texts in a traditional manner in order to support his ethical writings, which constituted a somewhat radical departure from classical ethical thought. Salanter often utilized texts which served a polemical as well as philosophical function.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an examination and analysis of the manner by which three classical Jewish ethicists, Bahya Ibn Paqudah, Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto and Israel Salanter, utilize classical Rabbinic sources to support their ethical teachings.

I have chosen these three for a number of reasons. First, each of them is considered to have had an important influence on the development of classical Jewish ethical thought. Second, each of them authored a major piece of work which devotes itself to key ethical questions and ideas. Third, each of these three works had an important impact on the communities for which these men wrote. Finally, though each of these men lived at different times, many scholars have ascribed common threads to their thinking. This too was a factor in my decision to analyze their writings collectively.

I have divided the thesis into four chapters. In each of the first three chapters, there is an analysis of the way in which each individual utilized Rabbinic sources in the work that he authored. Rather than analyze the entire work, I have tried to select representative elements of each author's work which would yield sufficient material for a comprehensive analysis. Each chapter includes a brief biographical sketch of each man, as well as prefatory notes to his work.

In my conclusion, I offer a summary of my analysis. In this summary, I attempt to look at them as individuals as well as compare the way in which they used their sources.

CHAPTER I

Bahya Ibn Paqudah

Despite his importance in medieval Jewish philosophy, the key facts concerning the life and work of Bahya Ibn Paqudah are shrouded in uncertainty.

We do know that he was born sometime between 1050 and 1060, and lived in Muslim Spain; probably Saragossa or Cordova. He was a dayyan (judge of a Rabbinical court) as well as a payyetan (a composer of liturgical poetry). As to the latter, there is some dispute concerning Bahya's authorship of a number of piyyutim.[1]

The subject of this chapter is his most famous work, Kitab al-Hidāya ilā Fara'id al-Qulūb (Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart). Just as uncertainty prevails as to where and when he lived, so too is there controversy concerning the dating of al-Hidāya.[2] Most scholars generally date Bahya's work around the last part of the 11th century or the early part of the 12th century.

We also know that Bahya's treatise (written in Arabic with Hebrew letters) was first translated into Hebrew by Yehuda Ibn Tibbon (1120 - 1190) in 1161 as Hovot ha-Levavot. Ibn Tibbon's translation was not only one of the first books ever to be printed in Hebrew (Naples, 1489) but it came to be used as the source for all subsequent editions, which include eight foreign language translations.[3]

Hovot ha-Levavot (translated henceforth as Duties of the Heart) is Bahya's self-described attempt to compile the first systematic post-Talmudic ethical work. In ten chapters (including a short appendix) Bahya probes deeply into the relationship between the external duties (the duties of the limbs) and the internal duties (the duties of the heart). Whether or not Bahya's desire to systematize ethics was successful is not a question for this thesis, despite the fact that it is the subject of much debate among scholars. However, what is generally not in dispute is that Duties of the Heart is no mere theory of social ethics, but an important personal ethical work which illustrates man-God relationships as opposed to man-man relationships.

The key ethical sections of Bahya's work are to be found in Chapters 5-9. In order to adequately summarize Bahya's sources, I have chosen to focus on four of the five purely "ethical" chapters: Chapter 5, Unity of Conduct; Chapter 6, Humility; Chapter 7, Repentance; and Chapter 8, Moral Stock-taking.

Since this chapter focuses on the limited question of Bahya as ethicist, I have generally refrained from analysis of the earlier (and more philosophical) chapters of Duties of the Heart. The reader who is interested in these chapters as background material is advised to consult the first four chapters of Bahya's work.

A. Unity of Conduct

The fifth chapter of Bahya's treatise (On the Pure Devotion of All Acts to God Alone) represents the first attempt at synthesizing prior philosophical concepts with concrete ethical behavior. Whereas previous chapters of Duties of the Heart have concerned themselves with issues such as unity of God, the aspects of meditation, and the singular obligation to render obedience and reliance to God, Bahya now moves forward to emphasize the importance of יחוד המעשה, which I have translated as "unity of conduct."

Inherent in this treatise is the notion that deeds can only be sincere if the intent underlying them is also sincere. A unity of conduct which harmonizes both thought and deed is seen as the quintessential level to which man can aspire, and ascension to that level can only be attained with the understanding that man's actions must be God-directed as opposed to man-directed.

It is important to note that given the relationship between intent and conduct, Bahya focuses on the former and tends to minimize the importance of the latter. It is for this reason that this chapter generally lacks specific suggestions of deeds which can and should be performed. Instead, Bahya focuses on the process of unity of conduct, and provides the model by which one may achieve the larger goal.

The one who seeks unity of conduct must overcome three obstacles - ignorance of God, the Law, and the Evil Inclination, which Bahya refers to as the "instinct." The third obstacle encompasses the other two, in that the instinct serves to convince man that worship of men is more important than worship of God, and that law is an unnecessary tool in achieving this goal. Since the instinct has the capacity to spoil the pure intent of the deed (if not to abrogate it completely) Bahya focuses on the instinct and the pivotal role it assumes in hindering unity of conduct.

As to the first two obstacles, ignorance of God and law, Bahya points out that man's conduct is flawed by virtue of the fact that ignorance of the importance of obedience results in actions which are undertaken for a reason other than God's sake. Bahya cites Pirke Aboth, 2.5:

> An empty-headed man cannot be sin-fearing,
> nor can an ignorant person be pious.

R. Travers Herford[4] points out that these descriptions of human character traits are but part of the larger teaching of the Mishnah, which also speaks of the negative characteristics of those who are shy or passionate.

In this sense, there are certain human characteristics which are not inherently evil (i.e., they are neutral descriptions of psychological traits), but which do hinder one in the pursuit of certain goals in certain circumstances.

Bahya appears to understand the text in a similar manner, using the Hebrew words בור and עם הארץ to emphasize that ignorance in this context precludes one from becoming a ירא חטא or חסיד. If there is a distinction between the two, it may be that the בור is ignorant of his obedience to God, which precludes him from becoming a ירא חטא. Accordingly, the עם הארץ who disregards Torah in his life becomes the exact opposite of the חסיד. Hence, this text is a good illustration of Bahya's underlying statement concerning the negative characteristic of ignorance.

The threat of the instinct and the influence it has over man is great, Bahya tells us: "Your worst enemy in this world is your own instinct, which is woven into the power of your soul, combined with the nature of your spirit, sharing with you the rule of your bodily and spiritual senses . . . it is always aware of you . . . it never forgets you . . . it wears a robe of friendliness."[5]

One of the ways in which the instinct weaves its subtle power, according to Bahya, is that it makes you believe that once you have conquered it, it will never re-appear. Unlike most enemies, who will never challenge you again once you have overpowered them, the instinct is never persuaded by your victory, whether it occurs but once or a hundred times. And, unlike most enemies, the instinct is not satisfied with only one victory over

you, but will return again and again until he has killed you. The omnipresent nature of the instinct is such that Bahya cites as his proof text Aboth, 2.4:

Trust not yourself till the day of your death.

Herford interprets this phrase as part of the larger teaching of the Mishnah, which includes the famous saying of Hillel: אל תפרוש מן הצבור - "Do not separate yourself from the community." His understanding of the text assumes that Hillel's dictum was a lament concerning the defection of Hillel's trusted friend (Menahem) to the Essenes, and the latter part of the Mishnah is a subtle warning to those who might think that they could never do what Menahem did. However, Bahya's use of the text appears to be more illuminating, as it serves as a warning against self-confidence generally, especially in connection with the subtle yet pervasive influence of the instinct on man.

To Bahya, the seduction of the instinct takes other forms as well. It attempts to confuse man in connection with his obligations, and seeks to raise a number of questions which will diminish man's faith in God and in the laws which have been set down for man's protection.

One of the questions which the instinct raises is the importance of tradition. Bahya states that the instinct will try to persuade man that what was received

by way of tradition is only supererogatory and not obligatory. To refute this, Bahya cites Aboth 3.13:

Tradition is a fence for the Torah.

Here the text is used to support Bahya's implied assertion that the tradition has explained and elaborated as to how men should understand the duties which have been imposed on them, many of which are not discernible from the Scriptures themselves. Accordingly, the oral tradition (as exemplified by the use of the word מסורת) becomes the fence by which one understands the discipline which is inherent in the laws of the Torah, since without the fence one would lose their faith in the Torah.

Another area in which the instinct operates is to seize on the weakness of man's knowledge of God and the law and to exploit these weaknesses to the point where man becomes utterly confused and despairing, unable to see the truth and thinking that what is false is indeed true.

One of the ways in which man can fight this is to refrain from straying from the way of the ancients into innovations by relying solely on one's own judgements.

In this context, Bahya recommends taking on additional and voluntary duties for the sake of virtue. He says:

> After you have performed the duties imposed upon you, and you take on these additional duties with the agreement of your mind and the disagreement of your instinct, it is well indeed, for you are

> rewarded for it and at the same time you are not deviating from the opinion of the ancients concerning this for they have said:[6]

Aboth 1.2:

> Make a fence around the Torah.

Babah Metzia 30b:

> Because its inhabitants kept to the strict letter of the law and never did more than their bare duty.

Abodah Zarah 17b:

> Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, but one should study Torah and engage also in deeds of loving-kindness.

Let us examine each of these sources separately. As to Aboth 1.2, Herford sees the notion of a "fence" in a negative context, and says:

> The Rabbis always understood the term to mean the precaution taken to keep the divine revelation from harm, so that the sacred enclosure . . . might always be free and open . . . So far as the Torah consisted of precepts positive and negative, the "hedge" consisted of warnings whereby a man was saved before it was too late . . .[7]

Bahya's intent may well be to view the essence of the text in a similar manner to Herford, but his utilization of Aboth in this specific context appears to indicate that a "fence" can operate in a positive as well as a negative manner with regard to Torah observance. To Bahya, one constructs a fence by adding on additional duties to those commanded by the Torah, and while this can serve to enhance the carrying out of required duties, his use of the text here appears to be somewhat more of an illustration of his point than of support.

The use of the text in Babah Mezia 30b appears to be a much more correct use of the text, in that it appears within a context of a Gemara discussion which focuses on the duty of one to go beyond one's minimal responsibilities to others and fulfill the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law. The text implies that Jerusalem was destroyed because its inhabitants never observed the principle of לפנים משורת הדין. Inherent in the text is the idea that while the conduct of the people was technically correct, they were punished because of their inability to seek a true harmony between conduct and intent, which would have resulted in a more extensive understanding of their obligations.

To Bahya, this text is a good support for his thesis that a constant striving to achieve harmony via conduct and intent will result in the acquisition of a character trait which purifies one's actions and at the same time propels one towards even more duties as a form of discipline.

In Abodah Zarah 17b, Bahya quotes from the story of the arrests of R. Eleazar b. Perata on five charges and of R. Hanina b. Teradion on one charge alone. R. Eleazar lamented the fact that he had been arrested for so many charges and told R. Teradion that he (Teradion) was probably happy that he was only arrested on one, since his chance for release was much better than R. Eleazar's.

Teradion replied:

> Happy are you, who has been arrested on five charges, but will be rescued; woe is me who, though having been arrested on (but) one charge, will not be rescued; for you have occupied yourself with (the study of) Torah as well as with acts of loving-kindness, whereas I occupied myself with Torah alone.

The biblical quote which Bahya cites ("Now for a long season Israel was without the true God"- 2.Chronicles, 15) as part of his proof text is explained in the Gemara by Rav Huna, who says:

> What is meant by without the true God? - It means that he who only occupies himself with the study of Torah is as if he had no God.

Since the implied message within this chapter is that pure devotion is achieved by an understanding of all of the obligations which God (as opposed to man) imposes upon us, Bahya's use of this text is an excellent illustration of the relationship which exists between supererogatory acts and their ability to bring one closer to God.

Another subtle form of seduction which the instinct uses to hinder unity of conduct is to make man unaware that within all good deeds there is the presence of something which has the potential to spoil it. If man is not aware of this, mishaps will befall him and persuade him to abandon his quest to perform good deeds in the future.

In other words, man must be aware of the good as well as bad implications of his attempt to do good deeds, for with this knowledge will come a clearer understanding

of how to avoid doing evil. In support, Bahya cites Babah Bathra 89b (in connection with Rabbi Johanan Ben Zakkai and the defects which are found in weights and measures):

> Woe unto me if I speak and woe unto me if I do not speak. If I speak, deceivers will learn from my utterances how to commit frauds. If I do not speak, the deceivers will think that the learned do not know their wicked methods.

The text goes on to ask whether or not he spoke, and the answer is, he did, relying on the text 'For the ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them but the wicked stumble therein.' (Hosea 14.10) Here, Bahya uses this text in a correct manner, since Ben Zakkai is clearly viewed as being aware of all of the implications of what was apparently a simple good deed - exposing corrupt business practices. It is implied that in this context, Ben Zakkai's instinct operated so as to try to convince him not to expose the deception, under the theory that exposure would only give the deceivers more opportunity to engage in other similar practices. On the other hand, one could argue that the text supports Bahya's assertion that there are times in which an apparently innocent good deed has negative consequences, and that this text is offered to illustrate that point as well.

The instinct also acts to seduce man by praising him to such an extent that the instinct is able to convince man that he can show his devotion to God solely through his relations with other men.

As Bahya says (quoting the instinct):

> How happy I am with your situation, with your good faith, and your pure devotion to God. Indeed, you have reached such a degree of favor with God that none of your contemporaries can vie with you. This is more than enough as an expression of your gratitude to God for his graces and his favors which you have received. Now it is proper that you turn to pay some of the obligations you have towards others. You know that they constitute the means to your good and evil. You must realize by this time that your honor lies in their satisfaction with you and your failure is in their anger with you. Therefore, you must be prudent, you must satisfy them and gain their favor . . ."[8]

At the conclusion of this quote, Bahya has the instinct cite Aboth 3.10:

> He in whom the spirit of his fellow creature takes delight - in him the spirit of the Omnipresent takes delight.

The instinct utilizes the text to support the notion that flattery and currying favor with others is the key to Divine acceptance. Accordingly, Bahya quotes the instinct as erroneously utilizing a proof-text to illustrate how the instinct is able to act in a devious manner. In actuality, the whole message of this text is the message of the whole Chapter; namely, that the man-God relationship will affect the man-man relationship and not visa versa. The man who seeks to please others as a means toward pleasing God is the man in whom God delights.

From this description of the instinct's working methods, we see that it works like reason. The difference is that it reasons in a negative manner. Since the value

of the deed depends on the purity of the thought, (unity of conduct) it is crucial that man be able to distinguish between the arguments of reason and those put forward by the instinct.

B. Humility

Bahya's sixth chapter, which deals with humility, (translated as submissiveness - כניעה) follows closely upon the preceding discussion of unity of conduct (יחוד המעשה), the subject of the fifth chapter of Duties of the Heart.

To Bahya, the opposite of humility is גאוה, translated as arrogance or pride. The former trait acts as a negation of the latter, just as pride operates to negate the positive value of humility. In addition, humility functions to negate other similar (negative) characteristics which Bahya enumerates in detail.[9]

At the outset, Bahya identifies ten points pertaining to humility which will serve as the core of his discourse. These points begin with a basic definition of humility, move to the different kinds of humility, methods of achievement, and conclude with the benefits of humility both in this world and the next.[10]

In a discussion of the seven ways in which one achieves humility, Bahya states:

> When a man ponders on the omnipotence of the Creator and the unlimited powers of the Observer, who knows him both outwardly and inwardly, when he understands this important matter of the greatness mingled with modesty of the noble men of former generations as described by the ancient sages . . . then he becomes humble.[11]

To support this assertion, Bahya cites the passage in Sukkah 28a,

> They said of Jonathan b. Uzziel that when he used to sit and occupy himself with the study of the Torah, every bird that flew above him was immediately burnt.

The use of this source is somewhat puzzling, in that it comes at the conclusion of a discussion in the tractate which discusses the eight disciples of Hillel the Elder (Jonathan b. Uzziel being one of them) who were sufficiently worthy to merit the Divine Spirit resting upon them. A reading of the context in which this quote appears indicates that the merit of Jonathan was so great that the divine presence was an integral part of his existence and was powerful enough to cause heat to emanate from him when he was engaged in the study of Torah, thereby affecting others in the vicinity.

A much clearer use of a Rabbinic text appears in the context of Bahya's discussion of the ten qualities which man must possess for proper behavior in the area of humility.[12]

Here, Bahya enumerates the fourth quality as:

> Doing good to others, and speaking well of them, pardoning their faults and never slandering or defaming them, and overlooking their slander and defamation, even if they are not worthy of it . . .[13]

He cites as his proof text the incident in tractate Ta'anith 25b:

> R. Eliezer once stepped down to the reading desk and offered 24 supplications for rain, and there was no response. Rabbi Akiba stepped down and offered (three supplications, beginning) OUR FATHER, OUR KING . . . and his prayer was accepted. A voice proclaimed, "not because the latter sage was greater

> than the former, but only because the latter overcame his natural temperament while the former did not do so."

This appears to be a use of a text which illustrates the value of being able to overcome the negative characteristic of seeking revenge, even in a situation where one has done grevious injury to another's reputation by slander and defamation. To Bahya, there appears to be both positive characteristics which must be utilized in order to achieve humility, as well as negative character elements which must be avoided.

The use of this particular text is a good example of how one overcomes natural desire to retaliate and in the process gains greater merit than the one who speaks well of others but is unable to overlook slander which is perpetrated upon him.

Another quality which Bahya lists for humble behavior is humility in all worldly affairs. As he says:

> In all these, a man's conscience should be at one with his conduct and his private behavior should not be different from his public behavior.[14]

In support, he cites two passages from Aboth:

Aboth 4.4:

> Be low in spirit before all men.

Aboth 3.16:

> Be submissive to a superior, affable to a junior, and receive all men cheerfully.

It is interesting to note that Bahya's use of Aboth 4.4 is only partial, in that he deletes the latter part of

the verse, שתקוות־אנוש רמה (for the hope of earthly man is but decay), which changes the context of the text from one of simple humility to a larger teaching about the futility of those aspirations which depend only on the realm of physical and sensual matters.

However, the use of that text, plus Aboth 3.16, does appear to support the idea that humility is a trait to be practiced to all people according to their various degrees. Although the latter text appears to indicate that one should only act with certain types of humility corresponding to the importance of the person involved, the general thrust of the text points towards an overall standard of behavior which is of equal measure and importance.

In the conclusion of the chapter, Bahya speaks of the six benefits of humility. Of these six, three are associated with this world - one becomes satisfied with one's portion, one is able to endure when misfortune strikes, and one is more favored by people as a result of his humility.

Of the three benefits which pertain to the other world, the first is that, as a result of humility,

> The humble man is closer to the attainment of knowledge because he follows the learned, turns to them, and submits to them . . .[15]

The proof text for this quote is found in Aboth 1.4:

> Let your house be a meeting place for the wise, cover yourself (i.e. - sit) amidst the dust of their feet, and drink their words thirstily.

It is correct, for the one who is willing to open one's home, to sit at the feet of others intently, and to learn - this is the one who will gain knowledge. As Bahya states:

> The proud man cannot reach true knowledge nor attain utmost certainty, for he is too haughty to turn to the people who know God and his law.[16]

C. Repentance

Inasmuch as humility is the root of repentance in Bahya's ascending order of essential human characteristics, Chapter Seven (7) of Duties of the Heart emphasizes humility as the means by which one can achieve true repentance (תשובה).

In analyzing the utilization of Rabbinic sources in this chapter, it is important to note that Bahya stresses the man-God relationship as opposed to the man-man relationship. This does not mean that Bahya minimizes the harm which can be done by one human being to another, nor does he negate the requirement for man to seek teshuvah from another on account of his transgression. Rather, any sin against man is also a sin against God, and while the converse is not true, Bahya emphasizes that the ability to do teshuvah rests on man's ability to understand that his relationship with God is the essence upon which teshuvah is built.

To Bahya, there are two types of pious men, and it is important to understand the distinction between them as it appears in the context of the Chapter. One type is the tsadiq gamur, (the completely righteous) completely immune to sin and error. The other is the man who has repented of his sins. As will be seen, Bahya is most partial to the latter, since the majority of the pious belong to the latter class of those who have sinned and repented (and been pardoned), whereas not every pious

man is penitent. Although Bahya admits that those who are immune from sin may be of a higher rank, he focuses on those who have done teshuvah since they represent the greater number of people as well as the bulk of those to whom his work is addressed.

Within the context of repentance, Bahya delineates three classes of penitents who do teshuvah - the one who repents with his tongue, the one who repents in his heart and limbs, and most important, the one who fulfills all of the pre-conditions of repentance by constantly engaging in self-examination for wrongness of conduct coupled with a struggle to achieve a continuous process of repentance.

In the third section of the Chapter, Bahya discusses the importance of this last type of repentance. He says:

> He must make a reckoning of God's graces that he has received and of his own acts of disobedience which have taken the place of gratitude.[17]

In contradistinction to the other kinds of penitents, the third type of penitent involves himself in a constant process of reckoning which goes beyond the immediacy of the transgression and looks to the greater implications of his conduct. In support, Bahya cites Aboth 2.1:

> Reckon the loss incurred in the fulfillment of a mitzvah against the reward secured by its observance and the gain gotten by a transgression against the loss it involves.

To Herford, this Mishnah implies a balancing process, wherein the loss of the mitzvah (self-denial) is balanced by the "reward" which is divine approval. Likewise, the

"reward" of a transgression may involve some present gain or material advantage, but it is balanced by a loss of divine approval. Bahya understands the text in a similar manner, and utilizes it to illustrate the importance of man's careful consideration of the implications of his conduct in connection with other men as well as with God.

To Bahya, this text is illustrative of another of his themes which run throughout the Chapter, namely - that compensation and loss is of a two-fold nature, in that every precept which man performs (or fails to perform) has a spiritual as well as a practical effect. The man who engages in a constant process of self-reckoning will recognize that disobedience has the dual effect of disobedience against God as well as against man. Correspondingly, the reward received for performance of the precept becomes spiritual as well as material, in that inherent within the process of repentance is a moral value in and of itself which is independent of the act performed.

Implicit then in this theory is the idea that through this process man's character becomes changed and strengthened; he becomes more capable of being open to the importance of doing teshuvah.

But how is man aroused to repentance? In a later section in the Chapter, Bahya focuses on the God-man relationship by stating that reproving of man stimulates arousal.[18] To Bahya, the most exemplary method would be

self-reproval, based on man's love of God and understanding of the graces bestowed upon him as well as the corresponding obligation to obey all of his commands and prohibitions.

Another method of arousal comes from the reproof of God which is manifest by his prophets and Holy Books. These men and their teachings were in effect signs given by God. In support of this, Bahya cites Kiddushin 72a and Yoma 38b:

> Before Moses' sun had set, the sun of Joshua his disciple had risen. Before Eli's sun had set, the sun of Samuel of Ramah had risen. Before Elijah's sun had set, Elisha's sun had risen. On the day that Rabbi Akibah died, our saintly teacher Rabbi Judah the Prince was born.

The use of this text is somewhat problematic, for its midrashic origin (Koheleth Rabbah 1.5) is based on the key use of the word שמש (sun) to support the textual teaching that when the sun sets on one person, it rises on behalf of another. Since the context in Kiddushin 72a implies that a righteous man does not depart from the world until another like himself is created, Bahya's use of the text is somewhat forced.

In connection with an earlier reference to the need for constant self-examination, especially in regard to the man who repents only with his mouth, Bahya mentions a number of hindrances to repentance by saying:

> He thinks he will rid himself of his disobedience to God after he has achieved his purpose and satisfied his desire.[19]

In support, Bahya cites Mishnah Yoma 8.5:

> A man who says "I will sin and repent" will be denied the opportunity for repentance.

This is an accurate use of the text, for it amplifies Bahya's essential argument that there can be no repentance with reservations, especially if one assumes that he can forestall repentance to some later date. The Mishnah implies that the one who continues to sin will either never repent, and even if there is repentance, it will never be complete in the way it should be. To Bahya, this text supports his view that repentance must be present-oriented and continuous.

In a similar vein, Bahya notes an additional hindrance in the conduct of those who repent some of their actions but persist in others. The emotion of contrition is not sufficient unless there is an action which is consistent with the contrition. To illustrate the defect of this type of teshuvah, he cites Ta'anith 16a:

> If a person has been guilty of a sin and confesses it, but does not change his ways, what is he like? He is like a man who holds a reptile in his hand, and though he should immerse himself in all of the waters of the world, it will not avail to cleanse him; but if he throws off the cause of defilement, an immersion in 40 se'ah of water will be accounted to him as a cleansing bath.

Again, this is an accurate use of the text, and even though the point of the text relates to the lack of harmony between thought and deed, Bahya correctly uses the text to underscore the need for full repentance which has the effect

of changing one's character so as to never repeat the transgression in the future.

Assuming one has become truly penitent in accordance with the preceding discussion, is that person the equal to the pious men who have never sinned? Here, Bahya seems to indicate a positive response, yet for a different reason. Bahya supports the assertion that the penitent equals the truly righteous, but not because of any theological reason. Rather, he seeks to offer hope for those who are in need of contrition and does not want to place any obstacles in their path by indicating that their teshuvah will not place them on equal footing with the truly righteous.

Bahya utilizes two texts to show that the penitent can be equal to, and at times, superior to the pious man. In regard to the former, he cites Yoma 86a:

> If one transgresses an affirmative precept, the neglect of which does not involve the penalty of excision, and repents, he is forthwith forgiven.

To support his assertion that the penitent can be superior, he cites Berakhot 34b:

> Where the penitent stands, the one who is wholly righteous cannot stand.

(which relies on Isaiah, 62.19:

> Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near.)

While both of these texts indicate a positive merit for the penitent, Bahya employs the limited holding in

Yoma 86a to support his contention that the penitent is equal to the pious one, under the theory that the penitent realizes his (albeit limited) transgression, turns to God, and repents without repeating his sin in the future.

Accordingly, sensitive to his readership and mindful of his earlier point that there are few who are truly righteous, Bahya can then employ Berakhot 34b which implies that the process of teshuvah (which the pious does not have to engage in, since he has not sinned in the first place) puts the penitent on a superior footing to the one who has never sinned. What distinguishes the two men is the presence of humility in the penitent, who has engaged in a much more rigorous moral struggle to arrive at his current status.

Still, repentance is difficult to achieve. Bahya states that there are physical as well as other obstacles which hinder true repentance, especially when the transgressions involve other people. The sinner may be ignorant as to who he has wronged, unable to find the victim, or restitution may be impossible. He cites Gittin 55a:

> If one robbed a beam and built it in as part of a palace, the School of Shammai holds that the robber must tear down the entire structure so as to restore the beam to its rightful owner. The School of Hillel holds that the owner is only entitled to the monetary value of the beam.

The text from Gittin includes the line מפני תקנת השבים. (This ruling is for the benefit of penitents.)[20]

What is interesting to note is that despite the inclusion of the last part of the text, (which is a key explanation of the principle) Bahya uses this text for a very limited proof of how physically difficult it is to make restitution, even though the text is indicative of another interpretation.

Finally, in connection with the idea of hindrances to true repentance, Bahya speaks of those who mislead others and induce them to follow, which involves not only one's own sin but the additional transgression of inducing others as well. In support, he cites Aboth 5.18:

> Whosoever induces multitudes to be righteous, through him no sin shall come about; but he who causes the multitude to sin shall have no opportunity given to him to repent.

To Herford, this Mishnah is illustrative of the doctrine of imputed righteousness and sin, wherein one is held responsible for the others whom he has influenced. This responsibility works both ways, ascribing guilt as well as merit.

Yet, Bahya sees the Mishnah as supporting his idea that

> this way, he not only sins himself, but he leads others into error; so his sin keeps growing, and it multiplies itself as long as those who believe in him grow in number.[21]

This interpretation appears to be more correct, in that Bahya implies that as the following increases, the sinner becomes more convinced as to the rightness of

what he is doing and consequently moves farther away from the capability of realizing the error of his conduct.

In the concluding section of the Chapter, Bahya exhorts the reader to hasten in performing those acts of repentance. The implied assertion that one can clear their account with God assumes that one is actually willing to act while there is still time remaining. He cites two ethical maxims from Aboth:

2.10:

> The day is short, and the work is much.

5.20:

> Be strong as the leopard, light as an eagle, fleet as a hart, mighty as a lion to do the will of your father who is in heaven.

These texts are used to illustrate the very simple point that God's mercy in enabling man to correct his errors require man to take the first step and to do so before time (or God's patience) runs out. In one sense, then, these texts are an apt conclusion to the chapter, for they underscore an important theme which recurs throughout the chapter - the idea that teshuvah implies not so much God reaching out to man, but rather, the creation of a relationship wherein man desires to hasten so that he might be worthy of God's forgiveness. In that sense, Bahya's use of these texts takes on an additional purpose, to show us that teshuvah implies a man-God

relationship wherein God has enabled man to come to the point where he consciously seeks to rectify his errors.

D. Moral Stock-Taking

Bahya's eighth chapter, חשבון הנפש, follows the previous chapter on תשובה, Turning, and since Bahya illustrates that the former is an integral part of the latter, it is deserving of its own treatment.

To Bahya, the essence of moral stock-taking is man's understanding of the affairs of his world and of his religion, so that he may fully distinguish the nature of his obligations. This constant examination of one's obligation to God is a consistent theme in Duties of the Heart, and it forms the key ethical and philosophical base of this particular chapter.

Within the context of the five sections which make up this chapter, the third section on the aspects of moral stock-taking assumes a pivotal role, and it is that area which we will scrutinize most carefully. To Bahya, there are thirty aspects of moral stock-taking, and though they follow no particular order, their aggregate value provides a perceptive insight into his concept of self-reckoning.

One of the key aspects of moral stock-taking is man's accounting with himself concerning his obligation of devotion to God. The obligation of devotion must be pure, not only with regard to the unity of God generally, but also in terms of the purity of act towards God which is carried out by man.

In connection with the latter, Bahya states:

> . . . he must never have for his action any purpose other than God; he must not act out of love for the praise of men, or from a desire to please them, or from fear of them, in order to draw some benefit from his deed or to avoid misfortune, either in this world or the next . . .[22]

In support of this, Bahya cites Aboth 1.3:

> Be not like servants who minister to their master under the condition of receiving a reward, but be like servants who minister to their master without the condition of receiving a reward.

Herford understands the text to imply that man's service of God ought to be disinterested. The "reward," if any, which is due to man is not anything which is the object of selfish desire but rather divine approval, a sufficient reward in and of itself.

This apparently accords with Bahya's notion of pure devotion, which places supreme importance on the man-God relationship and the idea that the relationship itself is sufficient "reward" since it leads to entrance into the world to come.

Inherent in man's obligation of devotion to God is the idea that man must undertake an accounting of all of the various types of obedience. To Bahya, all of the actions done for the sake of God fall under one of three headings:

1) duties of the heart only,

2) duties of the heart and limbs together,

3) duties of the limbs alone.

In connection with (1) duties of the heart alone, Bahya stresses the importance of a complete devotion which frees one's heart of all thoughts pertaining to this world and its affairs so that it can focus on complete intention and conscience directed toward God.

To support this idea, Bahya cites the well-known Amorair dictum, מצוות צריכות כוונה (mitzvot require devotional intent) which appears in the Gemara in connection to the Mishnah in Masekheth Berakhot 2.1. The quote (found in Berakhot 13a) appears in connection with a Mishnah which says:

> If one was reading the Torah, and the time arrived for the reading (of the Shema); if he set his heart to it, he has discharged his obligation, and if not, he has not discharged his obligation.

Bahya appears to use this dictum to support his earlier contention, since the Gemara discussion appears in the context of whether or not one who was reading Torah (and who happened to come across the Shema) can possibly have the requisite kawanah (intent, coupled with devotion) to re-focus his attention on his obligation to recite the Shema. It is an accurate use of the text, since the underlying implication is that religious duties cannot be carried out in a mechanical fashion but only in the presence of specific intent towards the performance of the act.

To Bahya, the relationship between קבע and כוונה is crucial, in that absence of the latter diminishes the effectiveness of the former. This is especially true in connection with duties which involve both the heart and its members (like prayer). As he says:

> For you must know that words are a matter of the tongue, but meaning is a matter of the heart. The words are like the body of a prayer, but the meaning is like its soul. When a man prays only with his tongue, his heart preoccupied with something other than the meaning of the prayer, then his prayer is like a body without a soul, or a shell without contents, for only his body is present; his heart is absent from his prayer.[23]

In support of this statement, Bahya cites three sources:

1. Berakhot 30b:

   > A man should estimate for himself: if he feels that he can pray devoutly let him say the prayers. If he cannot do so, let him not say them.

2. Berakhot 28b:

   > Our Rabbis taught - When R. Eliezer fell sick, his disciples came to visit him. They said to him -"Our master, teach us the ways of life, that we may, through them, be found worthy of the life in the world to come." He said to them: "Be mindful of the honor of your colleagues, discourage meditation in your children and set them between the knees of scholars, and when you pray, know before whom you are standing."

3. Aboth 2.13:

   > When you pray, make not your prayer as a fixed mechanical task but as an appeal for mercy and supplications to the omnipresent.

The first text (Berakhot 30b) appears in the context of a Gemara discussion based on Mishnah 4.7, and the question of saying the Amidah twice. The discussion centers on R. Hiyya b. Abba's praying the Amidah two times and the reason for such an action. The text here is the dictum of R. Eleazar, and though it is not offered as the answer to the question of why R. Hiyya repeated the Amidah, its value reaffirms the general principle that kawanah is required in the context of prayer. In this context, Bahya's use of the text is accurate, since the underlying assumption is that one should defer prayer (or repeat it) in the absence of requisite kawanah.

The second text (Berakhot 28b) is more subtle, and Bahya cites only the last sentence of R. Eliezer's advice to his disciples. The phrase, דעו לפני מי אתם עומדים, which appears to be a general statement pertaining to humility before God, is interpreted (by Rashi) to mean that one must pray with reverence and devotion.

Bahya's use of this text is accurate for two purposes. Not only does the text support his specific teaching about the need for kawanah, but also serves to illustrate the general assertion which runs through the entire treatise - the idea that moral stock-taking requires cognizance of the man-God relationship and the obligations which emanate therein.

The third text, Aboth 2.13, is seen by Herford as illustrating the point that

> Prayer ought to be the free utterance of the heart . . . the inward spirit must be the master and not the slave of whatever outward form the prayer may assume.

Here, Bahya has a different understanding of the passage as opposed to Herford, who minimizes the importance of קבע and interprets the text as a clear statement favoring כוונה as the most important element in prayer.

Arguably, Bahya's use of this text is to show that prayer (which involves the heart as well as the limbs) by its fixed nature requires an extraordinary amount of intention by virtue of all of its fixed attributes. Hence, to him, it is not a question of either-or but rather a context which supports the idea that because of gebah, more kawanah is required. As a result of the increased intent, man is able to find new meaning to unchanging words.

To Bahya, prayer is composed of words and their meanings: the words need the meanings, but the meaning is in no need of words when it is possible to convey it with the heart. As he says:

> For the meaning is the root of our purpose and the basis of our intention.

In support of this, he cites Mishnah 3.4 in Masekheth Berakhot:

> One who is ritually unclean says the words of the Shema in his heart but should not recite the benedictory formula that introduces it, or the one that concludes it.

After citing this proof text, Bahya attempts to use this Mishnah as a further support by saying:

> They have even permitted condensing the regular prayer into a special short prayer. Were the words the mainstay of the prayer, we would not have been permitted to abridge them in any way.[24]

Bahya's use of this text is problematic, inasmuch as the ruling concerning the ritually impure man is based more on his status (as unclean) than on the question of his intention or devotion. The Gemara goes on to discuss this holding of the Mishnah only to conclude that the ritually impure man is entitled to say the Shema mentally solely because he should not have to sit and say nothing while others are engaged in the reading of the Shema and its blessings! While it is true that the Rabbis have permitted the condensing of the regular prayer into a special short prayer in times of danger, the use of this particular text is inappropriate to Bahya's larger point.

Another area of moral stock-taking concerns the negative implications of man's desire for the friendship and company of others. To Bahya, there is definite value in the virtue of isolation from others, primarily in avoidance of the evil which is entailed in mixing with groups of people.

This includes slander, gossip and one's desire to say things which will flatter others or bring praise to himself. If one is unable to avoid the company of others, one is still obligated (Leviticus, 19.17) to rebuke others for evil conduct.

To Bahya, there are three forms of rebuke - physical reproof, verbal rebuke, and reproof by the heart. The latter form implies one's conscious attempt to avoid the company of others who are known to be evil, especially where physical or verbal reproof is impossible. And yet, inherent in solitude there is another difficulty -

> But if you are living in solitude you are exonerated from the duty of exhorting them to do good and warning them to abstain from evil. And it is difficult to fulfill this duty and completely discharge its obligation.[25]

From here, Bahya continues and cites his proof text:

> It was taught: R. Tarfon said, "I wonder whether there is any one in this generation who accepts reproof, for if one says to him: Remove the mote from between your eyes, he would answer: Remove the beam from between your eyes"! R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: "I wonder if there is one in this generation who knows how to reprove." (Arakhin, 16b)

Bahya's use of this text appears to be in support of his general assertion that rebuke, in any form, is difficult to implement. Within the context of the Gemara in which this quote appears, the statements of R. Tarphon and R. Eleazar illustrate this exact point, inasmuch as those who are rebuked respond by criticizing the rebuker, and those who reprove others are often ignorant as to the

correct manner by which one should offer reproof so as not to embarrass the wrongdoer. Bahya uses the text in a correct manner.

Continuing in this area, Bahya states that one of the primary evils entailed in associating with others is the corruption of one's common sense and the strengthening of the instinct (yetzer) which comes from adopting the evil ways of the crowd which one follows. He cites three texts:

1. Aboth, 3.10:

   R. Dosa b. Harkinas said - morning sleep, midday wine, children's talk, and frequenting houses of assembly of the ignorant put a man out of this world.

2. Mishnah Sanhedrin, 8.5:

   A "stubborn and rebellious" son is tried on account of his ultimate destiny: Let him die innocent and let him not die guilty. For the death of the wicked benefits themselves and the world, the death of the righteous injures themselves and the world. Wine and sleep of the wicked benefit themselves and the world, wine and sleep of the righteous injure themselves and the world. The scattering of the wicked benefits themselves and the world, the scattering of the righteous injures themselves and the world. The assembling of the wicked injures themselves and the world, the assembling of the righteous benefits themselves and the world. The tranquility of the wicked injures themselves and the world, the tranquility of the righteous benefits themselves and the world.

3. Aboth, 1.4:

   Let your house be a meeting place for the wise, sit amidst the dust of their feet and thirstily drink their words.

As to the first quote from Aboth, Herford draws a very narrow interpretation and says:

> There is nothing to show the author of the saying intended anything more than a practical warning against hindrances to study. Laziness, unseasonable indulgence in wine, listening to idle talk, and the company of persons who have no care for religion, all tend to turn the mind away from the concerns of the higher life. The lesson is true so far as it goes, but it does not go very far (emphasis mine).[26]

In contradistinction, Bahya emphasizes (see underlined section) the latter part of the text and interprets the lesson as going much farther than Herford implies. To him, this is not a text which merely speaks of distraction, but rather one which indicates that idle talk and bad company have the potential to induce one to engage in types of evil which ordinarily could be avoided by solitude. It is for this reason that Bahya does not cite the full text, since it is readily apparent that sleep and wine are acts which in and of themselves can be carried out alone without any potentially negative ramifications. However, idle talk and associating with ignorant people have the potential to counteract the positive effects of solitude. Most sins, Bahya reminds us, only appear between two people, and in this context Bahya's use of the text is not only quite accurate, it offers an interpretation which is more perceptive and comprehensive than Herford's.

As to the second text in Sanhedrin 8.5, the context is fairly straightforward.

Citing the underlined portion of the text, Bahya focuses on the implications of the assemblies of the wicked. Their gathering together allows them to carry out their evil deeds in the company of many, (which is bad for the world) and their dispersion is good since the evil which they perform is a direct outgrowth of their being together. Bahya sees that this concept can be used in a positive context as well, and it is for this reason which he utilizes the third proof text, Aboth 1.4. Herford again offers a very narrow understanding of the text:

> As the Torah was the full and perfect revelation from God, those who were duly appointed to expound the Torah were entitled to be treated with the greatest deference and their teaching received as being virtually inspired. For the disciple to wait on the teacher is amongst the highest earthly duties and he would feel it an honor if the teachers used his house as a place of meeting.[27]

Here, Bahya differs from Herford to use the text to illustrate his point that the company of those who are wise can have the opposite effect of those who gather together to do evil. The solitude and the loneliness which Bahya speaks of should be understood only in the context of avoidance of those who gather to do evil.

This text is not a mere commentary on the importance of the student-teacher relationship, but a more important statement which illuminates the value of association with those who have positive characteristics. Bahya's

use of the text supports his contention and provides a deeper analysis than that of Herford.

Another area in which man must engage in moral stock-taking is the way in which God guards him from all kinds of misfortunes and ills of the world. As Bahya says:

> God saves him from all these, although he knows that he deserves them . . . for his earlier disobedience . . . his negligence in worship . . . his slackness in thanking Him and praising Him . . . All this time, God's graces continue to pour over him.[28]

To Bahya, when the intelligent man begins to understand this, then his gratitude to God grows strong and he seeks to return to Him and seek pardon.

To support this Bahya cites Berakhot 33a. Here, the Gemara recounts the story of R. Hanina Ben Dosa, the miracle worker. It appears there was a dangerous lizard that used to hurt people, and they reported it to Hanina. They showed him its hole, whereupon he put his heel over the opening, at which point the lizard came out, bit Hanina, and promptly died. Hanina took the dead reptile to the Bet Ha-Midrash and said: "ראו בני אין ערוד ממית אלא החטא ממית" (See, my children, it's not the lizard that slays, it is sin that slays!)

Although this story takes place in connection with the Gemara's discussion of Mishnah Berakhot 5.1 and the question of whether or not one can interrupt the Tephillah if a snake is wound around their foot, and while it can be

assumed that the story is inserted into the Gemara because it involves a reptile, Bahya uses the text for a purpose other than a discussion of the general principle of distraction from prayer.

Bahya's use of the text is to support his point that God protects man from misfortunes, especially if man is aware of God's protection and responds accordingly. Despite the fact that the commentators imply that there is a more logical explanation[29] for the lizard's death instead of R. Hanina's, there is an implied assumption that Hanina's understanding of God's grace and his avoidance of sin results in his triumph over the lizard. Used in this context, Bahya has cited this text accurately.

Man must also make a reckoning with himself concerning his ability to perform works of obedience, and must train himself to persevere until these works become like a habit. For the man who does such, God makes the pursuit easier by opening for him gates of knowledge and increasing his discipline.

As an example, Bahya refers to the study of the sciences and says:

> When a student exerts himself in his studies, he finds a supreme spiritual power in himself, something which cannot be acquired from any other human being.[30]

Bahya then cites Baba Bathra 12a, a dictum which appears in the context of a legalistic discussion of property which is to be divided between joint tenants:

> R. Abdimi from Haifa said - since the day the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to the wise. Is then a wise man not also a prophet? What he meant was this: Although it has been taken from the prophets, it has not been taken from the wise. Amemar said: "a wise man is even superior to a prophet."

The Gemara goes on to explain that the reason why a wise man is superior to a prophet is that the latter takes the statement (or the idea) from the former and reports it in the other's name. Accordingly, the prophet is inferior to the wise man, who has come across his statement in an independent manner and as a result of his wisdom. Since Bahya's use of the text is to support his idea that continuous study gives man a power which he cannot acquire from others, the use of the text in this context is accurate.

Continuing with this general idea, Bahya analogizes study with discipline in the context of the importance of perseverance and the resulting rewards.

The analogy is that the main purpose of the laws which pertain to the limbs is to arouse one to the commandments which pertain to the heart and the conscience. Since this cannot be accomplished without obedience, discipline and perseverance, God begins to assist man as he reaches the height of his capability, much in the same way that he assists the man who is engaged in the study of theoretical sciences. Whereas previously God opens the gate of intellectual understanding, here God

opens the gate for spiritual understanding and man can attain that which is beyond his power. This is the value of perseverance, and in support of this, Bahya cites two texts:

Sotah 49a:

> Study of the Torah leads to zeal, zeal leads to cleanliness, cleanliness to purity, purity to restraint, restraint to holiness, holiness to meekness, meekness to fear of sin, fear of sin to saintliness, saintliness to the holy spirit, the holy spirit to life eternal, and above all these is holiness.[31]

Aboth 4.9:

> Whoever fulfills the Torah in the midst of poverty will in the end fulfill it in the midst of riches.

The first text, known as the Saint's Progress, appears in at least three other areas of the Talmud and forms the basis of Moshe Chayim Luzzatto's Mesillat Yesharim, the subject of Chapter II of this thesis.[32]

In this particular context, Bahya uses the text to support his thesis that one who is diligent and persevering receives the ability to attain what is beyond his power through the help of God. In addition, the text implies that there is a type of ladder upon which the individual ascends, with each step representing not just success but reinforcement which allows the individual to continue his ascent. Finally, each step of the ladder builds on the other, requiring the individual to fully master one step in order to move on to the next highest step.

As to the second text from Aboth, Herford summarizes it as follows:

> Self-denial for the sake of Torah demands an effort of will; and one who has so devoted himself is less likely to forsake the Torah when the need for effort becomes less. Wealth has its temptations no less than poverty, but, while wealth tempts to the neglect of Torah, through pressure of worldly interests and claims, poverty presents difficulties indeed and hardship but spurs a man on to the goal of his aspiration. In either case, what is begun in youth is not likely to be altered in age.[33]

Herford's understanding of the text is correct even though his interpretation is quite limited, focusing on the question of devotion to Torah based on one's economic status.

Bahya appears to use this text for a much deeper interpretation, focusing on the idea that one who perseveres in Torah will eventually become rewarded because of his devotion. In addition, this text appears to illustrate Bahya's earlier point about God's reward to man, in that the man who perseveres with diligence is aided by God above and beyond what he is capable of achieving on his own.

Given the above, while one cannot dismiss Herford's interpretation as being inaccurate, it is possible to argue that Bahya's use of this text is a better illustration of his idea that God rewards the man who reckons with his ability to persevere in acts of obedience to God.

Finally, Bahya mentions that man must make a reckoning concerning his involvement with this world and his desire for it in preference to the other world.

In order to illustrate how to best resolve this tension, Bahya analogizes to the body and the soul, both of which need management and control. The body, which represents this world, needs attention and nourishment. However, one cannot neglect the soul completely, for this will cause injury to the body and eventual infirmity to both.

The solution, he tells us, is a compromise wherein one does not follow the ascetics or the sinners. And,

> You should rather follow the middle way, adhering to the other world, but also keeping to this one, for it is in this world that you supply yourself for the eternal one.[34]

In support, Bahya cites Aboth 4.16:

> This world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare yourself in the vestibule that you may enter the banquet hall.

Bahya sees this text as a metaphor for the idea that one has to balance the needs of this world with the importance of the world to come. In his context, then, it is not so much a question of one leading to the other, but a desire to balance the conflicting claims of both worlds. Accordingly, the vestibule is as important as the banquet hall and if one is sensitive to both, one will not extend oneself to the point where he finds that

he has become enslaved to one at the expense of the other, thereby causing grievous injury to both.

CHAPTER II

Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto

Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto was born in 1707 in Padua, Italy, to a family noted for its Jewish as well as secular scholarship. Under the circumstances, his Jewish education included much Talmud study, and his secular studies encompassed the study of language, including Latin and Italian.

Extremely precocious, Luzzatto had already authored a book (Leshon Limmudim) before he was twenty, which not only included Hebrew poetry but Luzzatto's own innovative theories concerning poetics and Hebrew verse.

It was at this time that Luzzatto deviated from poetry towards mysticism, under the influence of his foremost teacher, R. Isaiah Bassani. Bassani, whose father-in-law had been a follower of Shabbetai Zevi, was a serious student of kabbalah. Bassani's library of kabbalistic works plus his influence soon captivated the young scholar, who now sought to master all of the esoteric elements of Jewish mysticism. Soon after, Luzzatto wrote a complete commentary on the Torah in the style of the Zohar (a classic work on Jewish mysticism) which he titled Zohar Tinyana ("The Second Zohar").

Unfortunately, Luzzatto's mystical writings and activities came about at a time when the memories were still fresh concerning Shabbetai Zevi and the debacle concerning his claims to be the messiah.

Soon after word reached the Rabbinate in Italy concerning Luzzatto, he was excommunicated and a ban was placed on his writings.

Luzzatto left Italy with the intention of moving to Palestine, where he would be free to study and write. He eventually ended up in Amsterdam, where he was given a warm welcome by a Jewish community which was considered to be more liberal than its Italian counterpart.

It was in Amsterdam that Luzzatto wrote Mesillath Yesharim (1740) as well as La-Yesharim Tehillah (1743), a morality play. At the age of 40, Luzzatto left for Palestine with the hope of continuing on with his studies in Jewish mysticism. He died in 1747, not long after his arrival, and was buried in Tiberias.

Today, Mesillath Yesharim (The Path of the Upright) is still considered to be one of the classic treatises on Jewish ethics. Yet, there exists controversy concerning Luzzatto's motivations for writing such a work.[1]

The literary structure of Mesillath Yesharim derives from the famous baraitha of R. Phinehas ben Yair, found in Abodah Zarah 20b and commonly referred to as "The Saint's Progress."[2]

The baraitha enumerates nine character traits which interlock and eventually lead to holiness, the most important character trait.

Using the baraitha as a framework, Luzzatto has written twenty-six chapters which cover nine character traits in meticulous detail. Often, Luzzatto will use three or four chapters to cover one trait, which allows him to expound on its particulars, its acquisition, and the factors which detract from its acquisition.

I have tried to focus on three character traits which I felt were representative of Luzzatto's schema as well as susceptible to text analysis. I have decided to emphasize the twelve chapters of Mesillath Yesharim which delineate the three traits of Cleanliness, Saintliness, and Humility.

A. Cleanliness

In Chapters 10 - 12 of Mesillath Yesharim, Luzzatto focuses on Cleanliness, the idea that a person be completely clean of all bad traits and sins; not only those which are recognized as such, but also those which are rationalized. As to the latter sins, they are widespread only because the heart is still afflicted by the evil inclination and man is inclined towards a rationalization of his conduct as well as a relaxation of standards. The man who is free and clean of any trace of evil will not be swayed in any direction by the evil inclination, and will be truly able to withdraw from every sin which he had committed in the past, no matter how small.

To Luzzatto, there is a distinction between the נקי (the clean one) and the זהיר (the careful one), in that the latter is watchful of his deeds and does not sin in relation to what he knows and acknowledges to be sinful conduct. However, the נקי is able to go further than the זהיר, who is not able to remove lust from his heart but is only able to overcome it and resist its temptations. As for the נקי, who is also זהיר, the cleansing process allows him to reach a state wherein physical desire to do wrong is extinguished from his heart completely. Pure in body and spirit, he is unable to be deceived and is capable of reaching spiritual perfection.

Luzzatto quotes Babah Bathra 165a to illustrate the basic areas in which cleanliness should operate:

> The majority succumb to the sin of theft, a minority to illicit relations, and all of them to the "dust" of slander.

Here, the text is used as the framework for the chapter itself, since it is these three subjects which comprise most of his emphasis. In addition, the text is used to illustrate his distinction between the זהיר and the נקי, with the former being susceptible to the "dust" of slander by virtue of his inability to be "watchful" in connection with a sin which is subtle and difficult to recognize as evil. On the other hand, the נקי is able to purge even the "dust" of slander from his actions by virtue of his ability to recognize its pervasiveness and impact.

THEFT

The problem with theft, according to Luzzatto, is not that people are common thieves who routinely steal from their neighbors and then retain the property for their own benefit. Rather, the problem is more subtle and yet pervasive. Most of the people, he tells us, acquire the taste of theft in the course of their business dealings by saying "business is different."

This rationalization, coupled with the desirability of fraud, places man in a situation where he requires additional strength to vanquish the evil inclination and be clean of sin. In this context, Luzzatto cites Hagigah 11b,

> There is within a person a desire and a longing for theft and illicit relations,

the connection between the two being that both sins can be carried out covertly and with effortless rationalization.

In addition to the clear prohibitions against theft which can be found in the Bible and the Talmud, Luzzatto is concerned with those additional prohibitions which are designed to lead man away from the possibility of even contemplating an act of theft.

The utilization of texts by Luzzatto in this section is done with the simple purpose of illustrating and amplifying the basic prohibition (against theft) and acquainting the reader with the various prohibitions which surround the laws of theft and help to keep man far from transgression.

Texts are utilized to show that shopkeepers are forbidden to use manipulative tactics in order to induce prospective customers[3], nor are they allowed to sue "bait and switch" or other fraudulent business practices.[4] The amount stolen is also irrelevant, and the theft of a perutah is considered to be the equivalent of taking one's soul.[5] Even the taking of interest by a creditor is considered to be a form of theft.[6]

An even more subtle form of theft is the case of those who steal from employers by not working to their full capabilities. Luzzatto's use of texts here demonstrate

that prohibitions against theft include workers leaving their work for secular considerations[7], illustrated classically in the case of Abba Hilkiyah, who would not even return the greeting of scholars so as to not interrupt work he was doing for his neighbor.[8] The one who hires himself out has essentially sold himself to the employer for the day[9] and any utilization of these hours for personal benefit constitutes a form of theft.

In his attempt to show that theft from a person is even worse than stealing from God, Luzzatto cites Babah Bathra 88b:

> Ordinary robbery is worse than the robbery of holy things, for in the former case, "sin" is placed before "trespass" while in the latter case, "trespass" is mentioned before "sin."

While the Gemara relies on a somewhat unusual exegesis of Leviticus 5.21 and 5.15[10], a careful examination of this passage in relation to Luzzatto's utilization indicates that Luzzatto has perhaps misunderstood the text. The text is not so much concerned with who the victim of the theft is; rather, it places emphasis on the doctrine of trespass ab initio and the question of when the intent to sin was formed on the part of the offender.

In addition, Luzzatto implies that theft by its nature is a sin against God and carries with it severe consequences for the individual as well as mankind in general. Throughout the Chapter, texts such as these are cited:

1. Babah Qamma 94a:

   One who steals a measure of wheat, kneads it, bakes it, and pronounces a blessing over it, is not blessing, but abusing.[11]

2. Ta'anith 7b:

   The rains are held back only because of the sin of theft.

3. Sanhedrin 108a:

   R. Johanan said - Come and see how great is the power of robbery, for though the generation of the flood transgressed all laws, their decree of punishment was sealed only because they stretched out their hands to rob.

Note here that these texts are utilized by Luzzatto to prove a point which goes far beyond the sin of theft itself. His use of texts is to indicate that what appears to be simple transgression actually leads to conduct which has more serious repercussions. This is especially true in connection with the Babah Qamma text, which illustrates that the attempt to bless a stolen article results in a second desecration of God's name.

ILLICIT RELATIONS

Illicit relations pose a similar problem much in the manner of theft in that they represent a transgression which is desirable to the public as well as easy to rationalize.

For Luzzatto, illicit relations are similar to theft in the way in which they are to be understood within the context of his ethical and philosophical framework:

> The prohibition in the case of illicit relations is likened to that in the case of a Nazarite, where, even though the essence of the prohibition involves only the drinking of wine, the Torah forbids to him anything which has some connection with wine. Through what it says concerning a Nazarite, the Torah is teaching the Sages how to make "a fence around the Torah" by way of implementing the authority vested in them to reinforce the Torah's rulings.[12]

In addition to the actual deed itself, Luzzatto uses texts to amplify the additional prohibitions against illicit relations:

a. SIGHT - Shabbat 64a:

> Why did the Jews of that generation require atonement? Because they fed their eyes on impurity.[13]

b. SPEECH - Aboth, 1.5:

> One who converses at length with a woman draws evil upon himself.

c. HEARING - Berakhot 24a:

> Hearing a woman's voice is considered to be sexually enticing.

d. THOUGHT - Yoma 29a:

> The thoughts behind the sin are worse than the sin itself.

Here we have another example of Luzzatto's familiar style, which is the utilization of a number of seemingly unrelated texts which have the cumulative effect of focusing attention on the general prohibition of acts which have the capacity to lead one into illicit relations.

In each of the four texts, there is an implication that there exists a nexus between the prohibited act and

the desire to engage in illicit relations. For example, the Aboth text uses the term שיחה, which implies loose or idle talk, something approaching gossip. While conversation per se with one's wife is not inherently wrong, Luzzatto uses the text to illustrate his point that excessive chatter puts one into a frame of mind wherein he would feel equally comfortable with doing the same with a woman not his wife. This type of undesirable conduct is that which leads to illicit relations.

The same applies to the quote in Yoma 29a, which clearly refers to illicit relations and the idea that the thought of engaging in illicit relations is worse than the act itself, since the premeditated nature of the act implies that the desire within the individual is deeply imbedded.

COMMON SINS

Connected to theft and illicit relations is an additional category of sins which Luzzatto tells us grows out of the relationships between men and their association with groups. Although these sins merit independent attention, they should be understood in the context of those actions which lead to greater sins, such as theft and illicit relations.

Among these common sins are: verbal oppression, shaming, giving misleading advice, tale-bearing, hating, taking revenge, taking oaths, lying and desecrating God's name.

Luzzatto uses numerous texts to exhort as well as reprove the reader as to the negative aspects of these sins, all of which are counted as part of the pervasive "dust" of slander of which all are guilty.

For example, Luzzatto utilizes a number of texts found in Babah Mezia to illustrate the harm which verbal oppression causes.[14] In addition, he cites Aboth 3.11:

> Rabbi Elezar Ha-Mudai said: He who profanes sacred things, who neglects the festivals, who humiliates his fellow man in public, violates the covenant of Abraham our father, and who interprets the Torah in a matter contradictory to the Halakha - though he may have the knowledge of Torah and good deeds - has no share in the world to come.[15]

The use of this text is to place the perpetrator of public humiliation on the same plane as one who seeks to undermine God by rejecting those gifts which God has given to human beings for their own spiritual wellbeing. The one who humiliates another in public violates the dignity given to every human being by virtue of the fact that he was created in the image of God. In this context, Luzzatto uses the text correctly to illustrate this point.

Even the importance of rebuking a transgressor is a virtue which is limited by the prohibition against public humiliation, as seen by Luzzatto's use of 'Arakhin 16b:

> If he rebuked him and he did not accept it, whence do we know that he must rebuke him again? The text (Leviticus 19.17) states "surely rebuke" all ways. One might assume (this to be obligatory) even though his face turned color; therefore the text states: "Thou shalt not bear sin because of him."

This text is a good illustration of Luzzatto's assertion that verbal oppression is to be avoided at all costs, even when one is engaged in the mitzvah of rebuking a transgressor.

Even though the severity of gossip and slander is well known, Luzzatto is concerned with the "dust" of slander to which everyone succumbs. It is carried out with such profusion, he tells us, that it was necessary for the Sages to define it:

'Arakhin 15b:

> The majority succumb to the sin of theft, a minority to illicit relations, and all of them to the "dust" of slander. What is the dust of slander? One's saying "there is fire in the house of so and so . . ."

Notice that what has been said on the surface is not defamatory per se. Yet, it constitutes the "dust" of slander since the implication is that in so and so's house there exists a continuous fire which is used for sumptuous and extravagant meals, thereby labelling the occupant as wasteful. Hence, this text is a classic illustration of how one of the common sins begins, eventually leading to more serious examples of defamation.

Obviously, if one must avoid speaking disparagingly of others, (even though the remark may be factually true) lying is considered by Luzzatto to be "a far-reaching sickness which has spread far and wide among men." There are a number of classes of liars, which includes those whose profession is lying,[16] those who intertwine truth with falsehood to the point where it becomes part of their nature,[17] and a third class, who are described by Luzzatto as being "milder in sickness" than the first two types. This last group are not confirmed liars, and even though they have no evil intent, they prefer falsehood when the opportunity presents itself.

As to all three classes of liars, Luzzatto emphasizes that the duty of the individual is more than to merely guard against falsehood; rather, it is to withdraw oneself completely from all false matters. In support of this, Luzzatto relates the incident of R. Safra in Makkoth 24a, which is based on the exegesis of

And he speaks the truth in his heart.
(Psalms, 15.2)

R. Safra had an article to sell, but when approached with a firm offer while he was praying, he did not respond to the offeror. The offeror, thinking that R. Safra would not sell for that price, increased his offer. After completing his prayer, R. Safra informed him that he (the buyer) could have the article in question for the original

sum, inasmuch as R. Safra had intended to sell the article for that sum in the first place!

The text is used by Luzzatto for a two-fold purpose. First, it is a clear illustration of his thesis that one is under a far-reaching obligation to avoid falsehood at all costs, even in the situation where silence can operate as a form of untruth. Second, the text is a good illustration of how the desire for falsehood can originate or be destroyed in the heart, and though one may not actually speak an untruth, if the deceitful intent is present, it will manifest itself in deed sooner or later.

Finally, Luzzatto warns about desecration of God's name, the examples of which are numerous as well as significant. Man must be extremely jealous of God's honor and subject everything he does to great scrutiny and thought in order that it not give rise to what might possibly be a desecration of the name of Heaven. The idea, according to Luzzatto, is that every man, according to the level he is on and according to the impression people have of him, must engage in thought in order to keep himself from doing anything not befitting a man such as he. In support, Luzzatto cites Yoma 86a:

> And our Sages of blessed memory have said, "What constitutes desecration of the Name?" Rav said, "If one such as I were to buy meat without paying for it immediately . . ."

This text is used aptly by Luzzatto, in that it illustrates his point that desecration of God's name operates on a number of levels. First, Rav's answer implies that his failure to pay the butcher promptly would lead him (Rav) to follow this course of conduct in the future as well. Second, Rav's answer infers that by his action the butcher would then have an excuse to commit similar acts of dishonesty towards his customers and creditors. Finally, on a third level, Rav's standing in the community is such that any transgression on his part would most certainly lead others towards similar unethical conduct. Rav's sensitivity on such a minor matter and the fact that he considers it a desecration of God's name underscores Luzzatto's point that any failure to follow Torah and the learning which it engenders is a disparagement of the God who bestowed it as a means towards perfection.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAITS AS WELL AS DEEDS

Cleanliness resides in deeds as well as traits, and though both are inter-related, it is possible to achieve complete cleanliness in one without the other. Luzzatto explains this as attributable to one's struggle with his own nature, which is most difficult.

Accordingly, one may be clean in deed but not in trait, and because of this cleanliness in trait becomes

a much more complete form as well as helpful in shaping appropriate conduct.

Luzzatto devotes a considerable portion of the conclusion of this chapter to a discussion of those negative traits which hinder true cleanliness on the part of the individual. Rabbinic sources are used sparingly, and when utilized, they are offered to merely rebuke or exhort the reader to avoid such characteristics as pride,[18] anger, [19] envy, [20] lust, [21] and honor.[22]

The key remains a thorough knowledge of the laws and ethical teachings which enable man to determine how far they go and to what extent he must follow them. Continual study is needed, under the theory that man is both forgetful as well as prone to rationalize what he thinks to be minor deviations from the law.

From here, the cultivation of correct character traits becomes strengthened by study and the discipline of correct conduct. As Luzzatto concludes, quoting Kiddushin 40b,

> great is learning, for it leads to action.

B. Saintliness

The traits, divisions, and means of acquiring חסידות (saintliness) comprise chapters 18 - 21 of Mesillat Yesharim, and represent an important philosophical cornerstone of Luzzatto's ethical writings.

In the opening paragraph of Chapter 18, Luzzatto posits a criticism of what he calls pseudo-Saintliness, practiced by many and yet nothing more than a shell of the real character trait.

This artificial form of Saintliness causes individuals to engage in acts which they consider to be "saintly" without the requisite examination and balancing to determine the true depth and wisdom of such actions. The individuals who engage in such conduct are not just wrong, but they (by their actions) distort the true image which repulses others from a proper attitude towards Saintliness.

It is for this exact reason that Luzzatto feels impelled to offer a detailed examination of this crucial trait. Because of the pseudo-Saints, many have been led to believe that the path to true Saintliness consists of supplications, confessions, immersions, and the like. Though some of these actions may have a limited value in a specific context (such as teshuvah) they do not represent the cornerstone or the essence of Saintliness.

This (irrational) commitment to ritual without a higher understanding of its true meaning is a recurring

characteristic in Luzzatto's writings. His emphasis on ritual and mitzvot as means to a higher end is a very integral aspect of these Chapters.

To Luzzatto, the root of Saintliness lies not only in mitzvot, for most people are aware of which commandments are binding upon them and to what extent they are bound. The true hasid intends to fulfill his obligations to God above and beyond the call of duty, striving for a perfection of divine service which seeks to bring full pleasure to his Creator. In a love relationship such as this, man does not need a more explicit commandment nor does he need to be commanded more than once. He seeks, by internal analysis, to arrive at the true intention of the Commander and to do what he judges will give the Commander true pleasure. It is in this sense that Luzzatto cites Berakhot 17a:

> One of Rabbi Yohanan's favorite sayings was - "Happy is the man whose toil is in Torah and who gives pleasure to his Creator."

Here, Luzzatto uses the text to illustrate the nexus between the commandments and giving pleasure to God. The happy man is not merely the one who follows the commandments, for he is able at any point to say "I only need do what is explicitly commanded of me and no more."

Rather, he who loves his creator seeks to do more, since he realizes that what has been commanded of him represents the true desires of God. Accordingly, he sees

the commandments as a sign and attempts to extend their performance into as many areas as possible. In this context the use of Berakhot 17a is correct.

Luzzatto delineates three principal divisions of Saintliness - deed (מעשה), manner of performance (אופן) (העשיה, and intention (כוונה). We shall examine each in detail.

I. Saintliness in DEED

Saintliness in deed in the relationship between man and God is quite clear, consisting of the performance of all of the mitzvot, both positive and negative.[23] Yet, performance of these commandments includes also their "fine points" as far as physically possible. Luzzatto quotes Sukkah 38a to support his point:

The remnants of a mitzvah ward off calamities.

The text appears in a discussion of the necessity of waving the lulab, which is interpreted by some as being ancillary (and therefore dispensable) to the essence of the commandment. Yet, the Gemara tells us that we do it to enhance the fulfillment of the commandment and because of its value in warding off misfortune (which befalls those who do not).

For Luzzatto, the text is used to illustrate and support a basic thesis of saintliness, the idea that fulfillment to the maximum extent is a prerequisite for those who aspire to Saintliness.

Because the hasid constantly strives to increase in holiness, the "fine points" of the mitzvah are just as important as the body of the mitzvah, since everything leads to further pleasure of God. Those who are able to achieve this perfection rise to a higher level than those who merely perform the minimum, and accordingly, Luzzatto's use of the text is appropriate.

What requires more explanation is the saintliness in deed required in the relationship between man and his fellow human beings. To Luzzatto, this consists of doing good in abundance, never injuring one's fellow man, and extending this benevolence to the body, property, and soul of one's neighbor.

Luzzatto utilizes a number of sources to underscore the importance of gemiluth hasadim (acts of loving-kindness) as the basis of the man to man relationship.[24] He also utilizes a favorite teaching method, citing anecdotes concerning the Rabbis as role models of loving-kindness. Luzzatto quotes extensively from Megillah 27b, which recounts the acts of R. Zakkai (who would never dishonor a friend by using his nickname), R. Eliezer ben Shammuah (who never trampled over the bodies of others in order to hear synagogue lectures), and R. Nechunia, (who never derived honor through embarrassing another).[25]

For Luzzatto, loving-kindness is the quintessential component of saintliness, and just as man has obligations

to God which must be carried out in deed (via the mitzvot) so too must man use loving-kindness as the vehicle by which he fulfills obligations to his fellow man. The relationship between saintliness and loving-kindness is quite strong, and Luzzatto utilizes numerous texts which amplify this connection.[26] One of the texts he cites is Sukkah 49b:

> R. Elezar said, Lovingkindness is greater than charity in three ways: Charity is performed with one's wealth, and lovingkindness with one's body; charity is given to the poor, and lovingkindness to rich and poor alike; charity is given only to the living, and lovingkindness to the living and the dead alike.[27]

Here, Luzzatto's use of an oft-quoted text illustrates perfectly his emphasis on lovingkindness as the most important aspect of saintliness. The text shows that the scope and the impact of lovingkindness is much greater than that of tzedakkah, charity.

Occasionally, Luzzatto will use the same text in two different contexts in order to make a similar point. For example, Rosh Hashanah 17a:

> Whose sins does He forgive? The sins of one who overlooks an injustice committed against him.

In another section of Messilat Yesharim, Luzzatto uses the same text to support the idea that one of the key aspects of humility is one's ability to overlook insults as well as the temptation to seek revenge.[28]

Here, Luzzatto uses the text to illustrate his point that one who engages in lovingkindness will receive lovingkindness from God. The negative act of refusing to seek revenge results in a positive act towards another and is interpreted by God as an act of loving-kindness towards one's fellow human.

II. Saintliness in (Manner of) PERFORMANCE

In the schema of Messilat Yesharim, all character traits consist of a number of interlocking levels which serve to reinforce each other. The saintliness of deeds is interwoven with אופן העשיה, the manner in which these deeds are performed. To Luzzatto, the manner of performance is governed by fear of God as well as love of God, without which there is no foundation for proper action.

Fear of God manifests itself in a number of ways; humility before God, feeling shame in approaching Divine Service, and honoring God through mitzvot and Torah. This fear implies that man can understand that he actually stands in the presence of God and communicates with Him even though he cannot be seen. From here, man must give thought to the exaltation of God as well as man's corresponding lowliness in relation to God.

In support of this, Luzzatto cites two texts:

1. Berakhot 28b:

> Our Rabbis taught: When Rabbi Eliezer became ill, his students came to visit him and they asked him to teach them the principles of life so that they (by following them) would be deserving of life in the world to come. He said to them: Be careful to give honor to your friends, minimize the idle meditations of your children, be sure to seat them among wise scholars, and when you pray - know before whom you are standing.[29]

2. Shabbat 10a:

> (When preparing to pray) Rabbah would remove his cloak, clasp his hands, and pray, saying, "I pray like a slave before his master."

Here, Luzzatto uses both texts to underscore the importance of fear and shame as essential elements in creating the proper attitude towards God. Although the Berakhot 28b text is generally interpreted to be a statement in favor of the need for kawanah (proper devotional intent), Rashi's comment indicates that the text implies that one must pray with fear as well as kawanah. As for the Shabbat text, Rabbah's conduct is a direct outgrowth of the presence of fear towards God. The texts are used in a correct manner.

Fear of God also manifests itself through honor, whether it be honoring Torah or the mitzvot. One can honor God in the manner by which he performs mitzvot, honors Shabbat, and pays homage to Torah as well as Torah scholars.

There are two kinds of honor. One form is expressed in the concept of hiddur mitzvah (Beautifying the performance of the precept) and Luzzatto utilizes a number of texts which focus on the importance of honoring the commandments through a process of aesthetics as well as devotion.[30]

Another form of honor exists in the way in which one honors the Sabbath as if he was showing personal honor to God. In Shabbat 119a, Luzzatto cites a text which recounts in detail the various menial tasks which the Rabbis would perform in order to honor the Sabbath which was approaching.[31] The text tells us, among other things:

> R. Nachman would carry things in and out of the house, saying, "If R. Ami and R. Asi were my guests, would I not perform such labors for them?"

Here, Luzzatto utilizes this text for a number of purposes. First, he shows by personal example that the Rabbis did not find it demeaning to engage in menial tasks to honor the Sabbath. Second, the use of the example of R. Nachman supports Luzzatto's point that one honors the Sabbath in the same way in which they would honor other people. Finally, the examples of the Rabbis reflect Luzzatto's position that true fear comes through honor, which is based on a desire to find a myriad of ways in which to honor God.

This fear of God, which is different than the fear of God based on punishment, is seen by Luzzatto as the fundamental type of fear which gives rise to superior qualities in man.[32]

Occasionally, Luzzatto will stretch sources in order to prove a minor point. A good example appears in his discussion which focuses on honoring Torah, those who study it, and by extension, the sacred writings themselves. As he says:

> It was also forbidden (Moed Qatan 25a) to sit upon a bed on which a Torah scroll lay, and similarly they forbade (Erubin 98a) anyone to throw away sacred writings, even Halachot and Aggadot, and they forbade one (Megillah 27a) to place (copies of) Prophets and Writings on the Five Books of Moses.

While it is generally true that one should accord honor to a Sefer Torah and take great pains to avoid rendering it unclean, the Moed Qatan quote does not say this specifically and appears only indirectly in the context of a discussion of mourning practices.

Similarly, the prohibition which Luzzatto mentions in Erubin 98a is not a prohibition against throwing away these texts but is in actuality a prohibition against throwing (in general) as it appears in the context of discussions on shebuth[33] and how to handle unrolled Torah scrolls.

Connected to fear of God is love of God, which Luzzatto divides into three branches - joy, communion, and jealousy. The connection between the former trait and the latter is that fear produces a strong desire for the closeness of God and a pursuit of his Holiness just as one pursues anything which is strongly desired.

Communion or attachment (דבקות) is a state in which one's heart clings so closely to God that he does not strive for nor concern himself with anything other than God. Luzzatto cites two texts as examples of this:

1. Erubin 54b:

> It was said about R. Elezar ben Pedath that he sat and occupied himself with Torah in the lower market place of Sepphoris while his garment hung in the upper market place.

2. Yerushalmi Berakhoth 5.1:

> Once, R. Hanina ben Dosa, while standing and praying, was bitten by a dangerous lizard, but did not interrupt his prayers. His disciples asked him, "Our Rabbi, did you not feel anything?" He answered, "I take an oath. Because my heart was intent on my prayers, I felt nothing."[34]

The use of these texts by Luzzatto is somewhat problematic. First, the Erubin story is not necessarily the strongest proof text for an illustration of communion, and most commentators, such as Rashi, focus on the negative aspects of R. Elezar's conduct, accusing him of a combination of recklessness and absentmindedness.

The Berakhot text is a much more appropriate text, despite the fact that it has been utilized by others to

support the proposition that gawanah (devotion in prayer) can ward off misfortune.[35] In that sense, the text is more illustrative of gawwanah as a value that debequt, communion.

The last branch of the love of God is jealousy - on behalf of God, against his enemies, and at all times striving to enhance the honor of God. To explain this, Luzzatto cites Shabbat 54b:

> Whoever can forbid his household to commit a sin but does not, is seized for the sin of his household . . . whoever can forbid the people of city . . . is seized for their sin . . . whoever can forbid the entire world . . . is seized for their sin . . .

Luzzatto uses the text correctly, in that it illustrates his point that a key aspect of jealousy consists of constantly protecting the honor of God. It is obvious that one must do this in their own affairs, but Luzzatto's use of this particular text underscores the point that jealousy extends even to the conduct of others which one is able to influence.

III. Saintliness in INTENTION

Luzzatto does not think that it is wrong per se for one who wishes to purify his soul to engage in Saintliness in order to receive the reward which comes in the world to come.

He says of this person:

> It cannot be said that such a person is badly motivated. On the other hand, we cannot say

> that his motivation is very good either. For as long as a person is concerned with his own good, his Divine service is also performed for his own good.[36]

To Luzzatto, there is a higher motivation and a higher level of attainment, which in and of itself acts as a purifying agent. In essence, the saintly attitude removes one's intent and actions from all personal desire for reward and directs it only towards the honor of God.

The one who is saintly with God feels pain over the destruction of Jerusalem and longs for redemption as well as restoration of the honor of God to its former pre-eminence. Here, Luzzatto says:

> If one would say, "Who am I and what am I worth that I should pray for Jerusalem, etc. . . . Will the exiles be gathered in and will salvation sprout because of my prayer?" His answer awaits him. As we learned (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4.5), "Man was created individually so that each man should say, 'The world was created for my sake.'" It is the Blessed One's pleasure that His sons desire and pray for this. And though their desire may not be fulfilled because the proper time has not yet arrived or for some other reason, they will have done their part and the Holy One Blessed be He rejoices in it.[37]

Luzzatto's use of the text seems to confirm the meaning of the quote as supporting the importance of the individual.

Yet, upon closer examination of the context of the quote, we see that this quote is offered for another purpose in the Mishnah. The quote appears in a long section of the Mishnah which stresses the importance of

individual responsibility in connection with saving a life or destroying a life. Accordingly, one who does one or the other has an impact on the world by virtue of the action he has taken.

In this context, "the world was created for my sake" is offered for man to consider how grave his responsibility is towards the world. If he corrupts himself by commiting an act of murder or by offering false testimony which causes others to die innocently, he has brought the moral guilt of the murder on the whole world. Luzzatto offers this text for the exact opposite reason, and appears to have taken it out of its proper context.

Another aspect of intention is that the Saintly one must be concerned with the good of the entire generation. Since God does not desire the destruction of the wicked, it is a mitzvah devolving upon the Saintly one to seek their benefit and atone for them. This intent is part of the Divine Service and includes praying on behalf of the generation to seek atonement for those who are in need, and to speak in defense of the entire generation.

In support of this, Luzzatto cites Makkoth 11a:

> Said an old scholar - I heard an explanation at one of the sessional lectures of Raba that the High Priests were not without blame as they should have implored Divine Grace for averting the sorrows of their generation, which they failed to do. Just as in the case of the man who was devoured by a lion at a distance of three miles from R. Joshua ben Levi, and Elijah would not appear to him on that account for three days.

Here, Luzzatto uses the text correctly to defend and amplify (by example) his point concerning the requisite intent needed to act on behalf of the entire generation. In the case of the High Priests, they were faulted for not averting the sorrows of their generation. As for R. Joshua, the failure of Elijah to appear is illustrative of his displeasure at R. Joshua for failing to avert the tragedy.

Finally, the last Chapter of the four devoted to this subject concerns the weighing of one's deeds in relation to the aforementioned standards of Saintliness. This process is quite important because of its subtlety and the fact that improper judgement is susceptible to influence from the evil inclination, which draws good things from man as if they were evil and visa versa.

In order to weigh actions properly, man must possess the most just of hearts, submit his actions to close scrutiny, and after all this, he must cast his lot with God regardless of what happens. In other words, there must be a wholeness and purity of thought, analysis and trust; otherwise man will fail.

Actions should not be judged for saintliness at first glance, for at times an action may seem worthy of performance but its results are evil and man will be judged for following that course of action. Man must go beyond the surface appearance and should view the proposed action from every

angle until he can best determine the better course - performance or abandonment. In support of this, Luzzatto employs three texts. One of them is Gittin 56a, which recounts the incident of the (informer) Bar Kamtza who brought the Rabbis an unclean animal seeking their determination as to whether it could be sacrificed. The Rabbis wanted to sacrifice the animal, but R. Zachariah ben Avkulos protested that if this were to occur, others might say that the Rabbis allowed animals with imperfections to be offered on the altar. The Rabbis then thought to kill Bar Kamtza (who was going to betray them one way or another) but again R. Zachariah objected that people would infer that one who causes an imperfection in sacrificial animals receives death as a punishment. While all this occurred, Bar Kamtza slandered the Jews to the Emperor, who came and destroyed Jerusalem. It was concerning this that R. Yochanan said - "The (misplaced) humility of R. Zachariah destroyed our Temple, consumed our Sanctuary, and exiled us among the nations."

The second text is from Yebamoth 65b:

> Just as it is a mitzvah to say what will be listened to, so too is it a mitzvah not to say what will not be listened to.

The third text recounts the well-known story of Mishnah Berakhot 1.3, wherein Rabbi Tarphon endangers himself by dismounting from his horse to recite the Shema

(in accordance with the stricter view of the School of Beth Shammai). In doing so, he is almost killed by robbers. Instead of receiving sympathy for his plight (and because he followed the more stringent view) he is told -

> You would have rightly been accounted the cause of your own death, for you violated the words of Beth Hillel.

Luzzatto's utilization of each of these texts underscores his key points concerning the proper weighing of one's actions. R. Zachariah's humility was indeed misplaced, and though it was superficially valid, he was unaware of the total consequences of his actions and accordingly brought on great harm to Israel.

The Yebamoth text underscroes the point that while the mitzvah of rebuke (Leviticus 19.16) is important, one must understand that at times an improper rebuke will cause the sinner to do exactly the opposite of what the rebuke intends as its final consequence. In this context, silence is preferable to rebuke.

Finally, in the matter of throwing in one's lot with God, the Mishnah in Berakhot is offered to illustrate that the endurance of Torah had been the primary reason for the resolution of the Hillel-Shammai controversy in favor of Bet Hillel. Accordingly, R. Tarphon's conduct put this ruling into question and created the possibility of more disharmony. The law had been settled, and his deviance,

no matter how justified, was seen as an act which would have grave consequences if followed by others.

Each of the texts is a good illustration of the importance of balancing good and bad in relation to all of the circumstances surrounding performance of an act.

C. Humility

Within the structural context of Mesillat Yesharim, discussions concerning a specific character trait also include treatment of the trait which stands in direct opposition to it. Accordingly, Chapters 22 and 23, concerning humility, also focus on גאוה, translated here as arrogance.

To Luzzatto, the essence of humility is the exact opposite of arrogance. The humble person does not attach importance to himself for any reason whatsoever. In order to achieve this trait, there must be complete harmony between humility in thought as well as humility in deed. One who attempts the latter without the former is nothing more than a hypocrite.

The humble thought which precedes the humble deed assumes man's recognition that he does not deserve praise and honor both because of his natural limitations and because of his accumulated defects. Man's natural limitations are such that regardless of the level of perfection which he has reached, his faults more than outweigh his virtues.

Of all of the factors which are responsible for man's coming to feel self-important and arrogant, wisdom is the worst enemy, inasmuch as it is a function of man's most honored faculty, his intelligence. As Luzzatto says:

> One is wise only because his nature has led him to be so. And one who is not so wise now, were he in the possession of the sage's natural

> intelligence, would become just as wise as he. There is no place, then, for self-importance and arrogance with respect to wisdom.[38]

To prove this assertion, Luzzatto cites Aboth 2.9:

> If you have learned much Torah, do not take credit for it, for you were created to do so.

This is an accurate use of the text, which explicitly criticizes the arrogance which may come from wisdom while implying that the primary goal of wisdom is to teach others who are not as learned. To Luzzatto, the use of this ethical maxim underscores an important idea which appears throughout the treatise - the idea that all of our traits are but means which are to be utilized towards a higher end. Accordingly, wisdom, which can be used for good or evil, is not an end in and of itself, for this is what leads to arrogance.

Virtues such as wisdom are given to man as an example of God's lovingkindness to him; God's desire to be gracious to man, despite the fact that man is lowly and shameful. Knowing this, man's reaction should be to constantly grow in humility, not merely because of the value of this trait, but because it is something which God desires in man.

Despite the fact that man's humility should grow in relation to the kindness which he receives from God, especially those who have been gifted with wisdom, Luzzatto states that there are instances of great saints who were

punished because they took credit for themselves. In support of this, he cites two texts:

1. Sanhedrin 93b:

> The whole subject matter of Ezra was narrated by Nehemia ben Chachaliah, and why was this book not called by his name? R. Jeremiah b. Abba said, because he took credit for himself.

2. Berakhot 10b:

> If a man makes his petition depend on his own merit, heaven makes it depend on the merit of others; and if he makes it depend on the merit of others, heaven makes it depend on his own merit.

The Sanhedrin text is used by Luzzatto to demonstrate that wisdom alone will not help a man to attain humility, and in fact serves as an obstacle to humility since it leads to arrogance.

This arrogance assumes the form of taking credit (even for something you have done) which, as the second text illustrates, will be taken away from you because of your arrogance.

Yet, Luzzatto's use of the Berakhot text is problematic, in that he uses the text to imply that a petition which one makes on his own merit will be attributed to others because of their merit, and that this is done because of the individual's arrogance. However, the full text appears to illustrate the point that the petition will be granted on the basis of who has the greater merit, not on the question of whether or not

it was wrong for an individual to take credit for his own deeds.[39]

In reference to humility in deed, Luzzatto is not hesitant to use many texts where one will suffice to illustrate a simple point. For example, to stress the importance of conducting oneself with lowliness, he uses three texts:

1. Yoma 86a:

   A man should always speak gently with his fellow man.

2. Sanhedrin 88b:

   They sent word from the Holy Land - Who is destined for the World to Come? A humble man, whose knee is low, who is bent coming in and bent going out, and a constant student of the Torah without claiming merit thereof.

3. Berakhot 43b:

   If one walks erect it is as if he pushes the feet of the Divine Presence.

Note that while each of the texts alone is sufficient, Luzzatto uses them to build on each other so that the cumulative effect (on the reader) becomes the texts as opposed to Luzzatto's words which surround them. It is characteristic of Luzzatto that (at times) he is more comfortable having the texts speak for themselves instead of using them for some other purpose.

Another aspect of humility which Luzzatto emphasizes is one's capacity to bear insults without retaliating. Here, he repeats the technique as stated above but adds

the aspect of utilizing three texts which focus on three Rabbis as role models who practiced humility as an integral part of their lives. In quick succession, we read of the great humility of Baba Ben Buta (Nedarim 66b), who was mistakenly assaulted, but who responded with a compliment to his misguided assailant. There is the story of the humility of Hillel (Shabbat 30b) who exercised extraordinary patience in the face of continuous insults from a pagan. Finally, the incident concerning R. Abahu (Sotah 40a), who thought he was humble, until he saw a colleague (R. Abba of Akko) remain serene as his personal translator publicly contradicted him in a humiliating manner. It was at that point, comments R. Abahu, that he realized he was not truly humble.

These are examples of texts which are utilized to teach by example, and while the individual impact of the texts is minimal, taken together they constitute a simple but effective illustration of why humility is important and how it can be carried out in one's daily life.

Luzzatto also shows that texts can be used in a cumulative manner to rebuke as well as to illustrate. We find this in the section of Chapter 22 which lists (hating) authority and (fleeing) honor as examples of humility in deed. In Luzzatto's framework, humility consists of a number of different levels of conduct, each building on the other as well as constituting an

independently important act in its own right. Accordingly, physical humility, which manifests itself in the way in which one walks and talks leads toward a higher level of humility which allows one to bear insults without retaliating. Since both of these characteristics increase humility and decrease arrogance, it follows naturally that the humble man should avoid authority and the pursuit of honor. Since it is clear that authority and honor in this context are negative, the texts are used to rebuke rather than illustrate or defend a point made. The texts cited are:

Aboth 1.9:

> Love labor, hate authority, and make not yourself known to the government.

Aboth 4.9:

> He who shuns the office of judge escapes enmity, theft, and perjury; one whose heart swells in judgement is foolish, wicked and haughty.

Eruvin 13b:

> If one pursues honor, honor flees from him.

Pesahim 87b:

> Woe to authority, which buries its possessors, for there is no single prophet who did not outlive 4 Kings.

Berakhot 55a:

> And how do we know this? (Referring to Pesahim 87b) Through (the account of the death of) Joseph, who died before his brothers because he conducted himself authoritatively.

The connection between all of these texts (which gives them value) is that they all point to the relationship between authority/honor and arrogance. Obviously, the text from Pesahim 87b requires the amplification of the Berakhot 55a text, but the cumulative impression from Luzzatto's utilization of these texts is one of strong rebuke.

The last aspect of Luzzatto's examples of humility in conduct is the apportioning of honor to all men. Here, he uses five texts which, taken together, weave a mosaic which is needed to illustrate his point. The texts are:

Aboth 4.1:

> Who is honored? One who honors his fellow men . . .

Pesahim 113b:

> How do we know that one must accord honor to his neighbor if he knows him to be greater than himself in even one respect? Because it is said, "Because a superior spirit was in him and the King thought to set him over the whole realm." (Daniel 6.4)

Aboth 4.15:

> Hasten to greet every man, and be a tail to lions and not a head to foxes.

Berakhot 17a:

> It was said of Yochanan Ben Zakkai that no man ever preceded him in the pronunciation of a greeting, not even a gentile in the market place.

Yebamoth 62b:

> It was said that R. Akiba had twelve thousand pairs of disciples . . . and all of them died at the same time because they did not accord honor to each other.

Here we see the pattern of a number of texts which are designed to illustrate one point in a number of different ways. To Luzzatto, the humble man accords honor to others, even if the other is greater in but one respect.

Honor is accorded in many ways, and one of them is by greeting one's fellow man. To support this, we are told of the humility of Yohanan Ben Zakkai, carried to its logical outcome with the demise of Akiba's disciples because of their failure to treat each other with respect and honor.

To Luzzatto, the two factors which bring one to humility are habit and thought, which correspond to the two types of humility - humility of thought and deed. With the accumulation of proper habits, man causes humility to enter into his heart and inhabit it until it is securely in place. It is only through these outward actions, which are under man's control, that he can affect the inner self, which is not subject to his direction in a similar vein. In support of this, Luzzatto cites Berakhot 17a:

> A man should always be ערום in his fear of God.

Here, the translation of ערום as cunning implies that man needs to utilize a number of devices by which to counteract

his evil inclination and fear God. In this context, Luzzatto uses the text correctly, since it supports his thesis that humility requires a number of subtle but important acts which have the ability to habitualize man towards humble action.

As for humility in thought, Luzzatto offers as his proof text Aboth 3.1:

> Know from where you came - from a putrid drop; and where you are going - to a place of dust, worms and maggots; and before whom you are destined to give an accounting - before the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He.

Here, the text offers more than a commentary on the meaning of life and death. In fact, the text is a clear reminder of man's requirement to have a clear understanding of his origin, his destination, and his true judge. To understand all of this is to render one truly humble, and Luzzatto uses the text to support the importance of the idea of humility of thought. The man who has such humility, who couples it with appropriate deeds, this is the man who is truly humble and able to resist arrogance.

Luzzatto concludes the chapter with a series of texts which are utilized as simple ethical maxims.[40] The cumulative effect of Luzzatto's use of Rabbinic texts can be seen as an eclectic but effective display of material which is designed to teach the reader in a simple manner while at the same time offering a measure of reproof.

CHAPTER III

Israel Salanter

Rabbi Israel ben Ze'ev Lipkin was born in Zagory, Lithuania in 1810. His father was a well-known scholar and Rabbi, author of commentaries on Talmud and Maimonides' Mishneh Torah. Israel exhibited such keen abilities that when he was nine, he was sent to Salant, Lithuania to study with the renowned scholar, Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Broide. Israel later came to be known by the surname identified with the town, Salant, in which he studied.[1]

It was in Salant that Israel Lipkin fell under the influence of his two most important teachers. One, Broide, was primarily responsible for Israel's development as a Talmud scholar. The other, Rabbi Joseph Zundel Salanter, was a second generation disciple of the legendary Vilna Gaon. According to legend, it was Rabbi Zundel's hidden piety which had a profound impact on the young student from Zagory.

For the next fifteen years, the young Israel Salanter began to supplement his study of Talmud with intensive study of musar literature, a wide-ranging corpus of ethical and pietistic literature, which included, among other works, Duties of the Heart and Mesillath Yesharim.

In 1838, Rabbi Joseph Zundel Salanter died, and Israel moved on to a number of small towns in Lithuania.

In 1840, at the age of 30, he was invited to head one of the famed academies in Vilna, but he turned down the offer for a number of reasons.

In 1849, Rabbi Israel left Vilna and moved to Kovno, where he founded the institutions which would later become the foundation of the Musar movement.

In 1857, he abruptly left Lithuania for good. Initially he visited Germany to seek a cure for his various ills, (which included severe migraine headaches and fits of melancholia, which may have been hereditary). He eventually took up permanent residence in Germany, and travelled back and forth among a number of German cities between 1858 and 1883. For a year, 1881, he lived in Paris, but returned to Germany and died in Koenigsberg in 1883.

Since the subject of this chapter is Salanter, rather than the Musar movement which he founded, the reader will have to look elsewhere in order to examine the fascinating but complex history of this movement and its impact on Jewish history and thought.[2]

Salanter himself wrote very little publishable material, and even less pure halakhic work. With the exception of The Musar Letter (1858, Kovno), his most popular and halakhic work, most of his writings consist of letters, discourses, and a few articles which focus on ethics and psychology.[3] An additional problem is that

Salanter's style is esoteric, eclectic and at times completely unintelligible to the ordinary reader.[4]

Despite the above limitations, the importance of Salanter and his thought is such that his most important piece of halakhic writing is deserving of analysis. Fortunately, Salanter's Musar Letter is considered to be his most representative piece of writing in terms of his ethical philosophy, and it is for that reason that this chapter focuses on that singularly crucial work.

Israel Salanter's preface to the Musar Letter summarizes the basic motifs of his previous writings, as well as the content to be seen in the Musar Letter itself - the pessimistic view of man, the conceptual framework of Musar study, and a new technique for changing the present human condition.

To Salanter, man is a creature of desire, whose imagination has subjugated his intellect. Accordingly, his intellect has become a channel of raw instinct, incapable of governing human behavior. Man becomes self-deceived and blind, subject to familiar lusts as well as another form of evil, which Salanter calls "impure spirituality."

Within this context, Salanter warns that man is subject to Divine Judgement,

> the time when God will bring visitation on all his actions, when he will be chastised by severe judgements . . .[5]

In order to save himself, man must turn to a number of Musar techniques, designed to empower the intellect to repel desire and to impel normative action.

The Divine Judgement which Salanter alludes to will be dispensed to man in accordance with his deeds. Yet, man does not realize to how great an extent the punishment will be meted out both as regards quality and quantity. If his deeds are pure, he will be rewarded in this world as well as in the world to come.

Here, Salanter cites two texts:

1. Makkoth 24a:

> Amos came and raised up the commandments to one (principle) as it is said: FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD UNTO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL - SEEK YOU ME AND LIVE (Amos 5.4). To this, R. Nahman demurred, saying: (Might it not be taken as) "Seek me by observing the whole Torah and live?" But it is Habakkuk who came and based them all on one principle, as it is said, BUT THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH (Habakkuk, 2.4).

2. Babah Bathra 78b:

> R. Samuel ben Nahman said in the name of R. Johanan: "What is the meaning of the verse: (Num. 21.27) Wherefore Hamoshelim say . . . Hamoshelim means those who rule their evil inclinations." "Come Heshbon means, come, let us consider the account of the world; the loss incurred by the fulfillment of a precept against the reward secured by its observance, and the gain gotten by a transgression against the loss it involves."

Note that in the Makkoth text Salanter offers Habakkuk's adage with the purpose of showing that the burden on the righteous man is great. In fact, this is God's answer to the prophet in the Biblical passage, and it implies that one must remain loyal to ethical principles even at the risk of suffering. Even though the wicked one may seem to prosper, he will eventually receive his due while the righteous man will receive his just award.

The Babah Bathra text makes use of an exegesis of the words Moshelim ("they that speak in parables") and Heshbon (the ancient city of the Amorites) as seen in Numbers 21:25-28.

For Salanter, the text offers the idea that those who are able to control their evil inclinations are those who are engaged in a constant examination of their own spiritual life. Inherent in the text is the idea that one needs more than the ability to avoid the dominion of the evil inclination, and should seek control of it completely. One does this by constantly engaging in Heshbon, moral stock-taking.

Within this context, Salanter uses the texts to illustrate general philosophical points rather than focus on proving the veracity of minor didactic points. His fundamental framework, which emphasizes duty to God, control of the yetzer, and stock-taking, is well supported by the texts.

The preceding framework comprises Salanter's general principle, the overriding importance of man's duties to God. Unfortunately, this principle lies dormant within man, hidden in the secret recesses of his heart. Since the principle has no influence on man, he is helpless to fight off all of the iniquities to which he is exposed. Accordingly, man stumbles over immense cardinal sins which he is incapable of perceiving as such, due to his blindness. In support of this, Salanter cites Yoma 9b:

> Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because of three (evil) things which prevailed there: idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed . . . But why was the Second Temple destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves

> with Torah, mitzvot, and the practice of deeds of lovingkindness. Because therein prevailed groundless hatred. This teaches you that groundless hatred is considered as of even gravity with the three sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed together . . . R. Johanan and R. Elezar both say: "the former ones whose iniquity was revealed had their end revealed, the latter ones whose iniquity was not revealed have their end still unrevealed . . ." The question was put to R. Elezar - "Were the earlier generations better, or the later ones?" He answered: "Look upon the sanctuary!"

Note here that Salanter uses this text for three different purposes. First, he wants to show us that those of the generation of the Second Temple were as guilty as their predecessors, despite the fact that they occupied themselves with Torah, etc. The nature of their sin (groundless hatred) is not as important as their status in committing such a sin.

Secondly, Salanter uses the text to illustrate the point that many of our sins are performed secretly, as if this were some type of mitigating factor. In fact, the unrevealed sins of those of the Second Temple are used by Salanter to show that the people were blind to the fact that they were transgressing at all, a key point in his argument.

Finally, as we shall see later, Salanter draws no distinction between genus of transgressions, and considers any violation of a commandment to be as severe as the next. In that sense, he uses the text to show us that the apparently harmless sin of groundless hatred is as

heinous as the three cardinal sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed. The latter generation, because they were ignorant as to what they had done and refused to repent, suffered the punishment of not having the Temple restored in their time.

It is at this point that Salanter quotes again from Sukkah 52a,

> the greater the man, the greater his evil inclination.

The quote appears in the Gemara in the context of a discussion about the strength of the evil inclination. Abaye recounts a story of a certain man who overhears a plan of a man and woman to travel together. The man decides to follow them to keep them from sinning, but finds that at a certain point on the journey, they separate since they must go different routes. Abaye relates that if he had been the man, he certainly would not have been able to restrain himself, and is given some relief by a colleague who tells him "the greater the man, the greater his evil inclination."

Although this text is quoted earlier in the Musar Letter,[6] its purpose is not clear until Salanter repeats the citation after his discussion of the Babah Bathra text. At first glance, the text is used to illustrate the awesome power of the evil inclination and the influence it has, even on those who study Torah.

However, the purpose of the text is to show that despite Torah study, man is still subject to the temptation of sin, which underscores Salanter's idea that Torah study alone is not sufficient to counteract the power of the evil inclination. (This point will be elaborated later in the thesis.)

Before we enter into the Salanterian idea of the dual nature of evil, it is important to understand that he is concerned with both the quantity as well as the quality of transgressions. Inherent in his philosophy is the idea that our multiplicity of sins (without regard to their specific nature) dulls our hearts and turns them into stone. He cites three texts:

1. Yoma 39a (interpreting Lev. 11.43):

   The school of R. Ishmael taught: Sin dulls the heart of man, as it is said - read not ונטמתם (that you should be defiled) but ונטמחם (that you should become dull-hearted).

2. Qiddushin 60a:

   When a man commits a sin and repeats it, it becomes to him as though permitted.

3. Abodah Zarah 18a:

   Sins which one treads under (their) heel will surround (them) on the Day of Judgement.

Each of these texts underscore the idea that there is a cumulative negative effect which results from sin. In the Yoma text, the exegesis is utilized to show that

sin dulls the heart, which corresponds to the Salanter idea that sins have become concealed by virtue of behavior.

The Qiddushin text is an amplification of the above, and even though the text has been utilized to show how man rationalizes his sins (by making them commonplace), Salanter uses the text to indicate that the man who commits a sin and repeats it is blind to the fact that he is indeed transgressing.

Finally, the Abodah Zarah text (which is based on a quote from Psalms 49.6,

the iniquity of my heel compasseth me about)

illustrates Salanter's point above as well as his prefatory statements concerning ultimate Divine Judgement.

As mentioned earlier, Salanter sees two distinct types of evil.

The first type of evil springs from unrestrained lust and desire, resulting in actions which are pleasant for the present but disastrous for the future. This is the more familiar type of evil, found in mundane and secular affairs. To Salanter, this force is not necessarily the יצר הרע (the evil inclination), for that specific appellation is designated by him in connection with the second type of evil. Rather, Salanter sees this evil as something akin to corrupted intellect, whose opposite is the good inclination, which represents uncorrupted intellect.

Within this context, the intellect is corrupted by the cumulative effects of sin, which dulls perception and atrophies the good inside of man. Hence, intellect becomes a channel of raw instinct, incapable of governing human behavior. Its opposite, uncorrupted intellect, is able to perceive and act upon the doctrine of requital and to act in conformity with the (halakhic) norm.

Here, Salanter cites Sotah 3a:

> Resh Lakish said: "A person does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of folly (shetuth) enters into him"; as it is said, if any man's wife go aside (Num. 5.12).[8]

This text conforms with Salanter's first notion of evil, based on man's desire and lust, which causes him to engage in acts of shetuth, defined here as folly or madness, (depending on the seriousness of the transgression).

The countering and negation of these native lusts can be found in nurturing the uncorrupted intellect by contemplating the fear of God, utilizing selected Musar techniques, directed halakhic study, and constant self-examination. These factors are very much intertwined, and Salanter attempts to bring them all together by citing Sanhedrin 7b:

> R. Samuel b. Naḥmani further said, reporting R. Jonathan - "A Judge should always see himself as if he had a sword resting between his flanks and hell gaping beneath him."

Here, Salanter uses this text for its analagous value. The Judge, who bears great responsibility and is subject to temptation, is analagous to man. Just as the Judge must be sensitive to his obligations, so too must man. And just as a Judge must constantly weigh the impact of his actions, so too must man. The text is used correctly.

As for the second category of evil, Salanter himself finds it to be rather mysterious (he calls it טמאה) since lust is not the cause. Rather, this type of evil flows from the spirit of uncleanliness which clings to man, which Salanter calls "impure spirituality." This spirit causes man to sin, especially in those matters which pertain to speech. Here, Salanter quotes from 'Arakhin 15b the question "what is the benefit of slander?", which appears after a long Gemara discussion on the nature of slander. Salanter quotes the question (to which no answer is given) to underscore his point that there is no benefit which derives from slander.

In this sense, slander is totally irrational and a classic example of the second type of evil which has as its root cause something other than lust or desire.

Salanter mentions that there are two schools of thought which explain the difference (as well as the relationship) between the good and the evil inclination. One school holds that the evil inclination is due to

the force of impure spirituality which entices man to sin, and that the good inclination is due to the holy spirit (or holy power) in man which leads him to all that is good.

The second school of thought holds that the evil inclination is due to the force of man's lust which pursues after momentary pleasure. The good inclination is the result of common sense which looks into the future.

Salanter is bothered by the absolutist position taken by both schools of thought.

To his view, people vary in the degree of their sinfulness; some cling to one sin and others to another. If the evil inclination were due to the force of impure spirituality which forces man to sin, then why does it not seduce all men equally to commit the same sins? But, he says, if we assert that the evil inclination is attributable to the forces of lust, how do we explain the fact that people commit heinous sins not caused by lust?

The answer is that both systems are right. The evil inclination is caused by lust and impure spirituality, whose opposites are uncorrupted intellect and the holy spirit or ("the holy power").

As Salanter says:

> The essence (of the worship of God) is to strengthen the two Good Inclinations - due to the Holy Spirit and Uncorrupted Intellect and to thrust aside the two Evil Inclinations, due to the force of impure spirituality and lust. This depends on a physical

> aspect, (namely), to feed it (the evil inclination) with wholesome nutriments, which are meditation, fear, and Musar which springs from the Pure Torah.[9]

In support, he cites Babah Bathra 16a:

> Raba said: "Job sought to exculpate the whole world." He said: "Master of the Universe, you have created the ox with cloven hoofs and you have created the ass with whole hoofs, you have created Paradise and you have created Gehinnom: you have created righteous men and you have created wicked men, and who can prevent you"? His companions answered him: "Yea, you do away with fear and restrain devotion before God (Job 15.4). If God created the evil inclination, he also created Torah as its antidote."

For Salanter, this text illustrates more than the importance of Torah as a counter force to the evil inclination, for Salanter does not believe that Torah study alone is sufficient. Rather, he uses the text to show that the greatness of the Torah is the fear which emanates from its teachings as expressed in the quote from Job 15.4. From this fear flows Salanter's concept of meditation (a type of reckoning) which leads to directed halakhic study as well as general Torah study.

Without going into great detail about the various musar techniques and methods, all of which are important in nurturing and strengthening the good inclination, it is important to have a cursory understanding of these techniques since they form the philosophical framework of Salanter's work.

One of these techniques is Salanter's concept of "directed halakhic study," which consists of a vigorous and meticulous study of all of the laws which pertain to a particular transgression. With this type of study, coupled with habit, man is able to transmute the urge to sin, thereby transforming evil instincts into benevolent drives which result in normative behavior.

The classic example of this occurs in the situation of eating non-Kosher meat, which, to Salanter, is so rooted in the Jewish soul that one need not force oneself or curb one's desire to keep away from it. It is a natural instinct for the Jew to obey these laws.

However, Salanter tells us that in matters of business it is quite the contrary, and that many who would never eat un-Kosher meat have no hesitancy to flaunt the laws of theft with respect to business. Yet, since all sins have equal status in the Salenterian framework, one must train his character so that he can learn to obey all of the laws naturally and without second thought.

Under Salanter's system, one gains enough spiritual strength (at least) to prevent one from committing a transgression defiantly. Accordingly, through directed halakhic study, coupled with habit, one's character can undergo a radical transformation.

In all of this, Salanter does not discount the importance of general Torah study as part of his overall system. Not only does the Torah have a general function as an antidote to the evil inclination, it also fulfills a spiritual function, the nature of which man's intellect and senses are unable to understand. In support of this, he cites Sotah 21a:

> Said R. Joseph: "A commandment protects and rescues while one is engaged in it, but when one is no longer engaged in it, it protects but no longer rescues. As for (study of) Torah, whether while one is engaged upon it or not, it protects and rescues!" Raban demurred to this: "According to this reasoning, did not Doeg and Ahitophel engage upon Torah; so why did it not protect them?" "But," said Rabah, "while one is engaged in Torah, it protects and rescues, and while one is not engaged in it, it protects but does not rescue."

Here, Salanter has used the text in a most interesting way. To him, the text indicates that when one is engaged in Torah study, the study in and of itself protects one (from evil misfortune) as well as rescues one from the urges of the evil inclination. The verb used, מצלי, implies an act of saving or rescueing, and to Salanter the very process of Torah study is more important than what one is actually studying.

As he says:

> It makes no difference in what section of the Torah one is engaged; it delivers him from sin. Whether one studied the law of "an ox that gores a cow" or the like, one will be saved from engaging in slander, although there is absolutely no connection

> whatsoever between these two matters. The spirituality of the Torah, in itself, protects one.[10]

While it is true that the text which Salanter uses focuses on the merit of performing a commandment vis-a-vis Torah study, it is arguable that the greater value which is ascribed to Torah study is done so on the basis of the two-fold value which such study offers.

Finally, it should be noted that Torah study for Salanter is a spiritual cure, as opposed to physical. All of the methods which Salanter advocates for transmuting the evil inclination are physical, whether they be meditation, directed halakhic study, fear, or other musar techniques.

The spiritual cure, or remedy, brings man to the holy spirit, which is the mysterious force which counters impure spirituality. If man fails to use the physical cures as outlined, then the spiritual cure will be of no value.

Finally, the Musar Letter advocates personal involvement in musar study as the primary tool for "turning the many to righteousness." One is beckoned to arouse others to the very tasks which one's own (hardened) heart is unable to perform. The individual reaches outward to the community, but in the process reaches inward to musar study. And in this reaching out, the individual can begin the process of revitalizing his own heart.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

It is important at the outset of this conclusion to offer a few caveats for the reader concerning my summary and analysis of the use of Rabbinic sources as utilized by Bahya, Luzzatto, and Salanter.

In general, the whole area of source analysis is fraught with complexity and remains at best a difficult art. We are not always sure who writers are writing for, and at times it is difficult to arrive at a precise understanding of their literary agenda because of our inability to share their historical or personal perspective. This difficulty in and of itself is the subject matter for another thesis. Despite the fact that we cannot always discern the paramount influences on their writing, it is possible, and still valid, that the attempt be made to shed new light on important works such as these.

If the above problem was not enough of an obstacle, the additional difficulty of internal source analysis remains. By this I refer to the attempt at arriving at an understanding of the use of sources while utilizing an admittedly subjective basis of analysis.

The subjective basis is not only on my part, but it is clear on the part of the authors as well. In one sense, use of any source (for whatever reason) is subjective and involves some sort of selection process.

As we have seen, even the most traditionally-minded Jewish authority must select among conflicting traditions which exist within Judaism.

Further, once our authority selects his sources, his utilization of said source becomes (intentionally or not) a key part in helping us to determine his own interpretation as to its meaning.

The fact that these built-in limitations are present does not necessarily mean that analysis is useless. What still remains are a number of crucial issues in source analysis which demand to be examined.

For example, it is important to see if these writers select and utilize sources in such a manner as to distort their original meaning.

And, given this distortion, is it possible to argue that one can offer a re-interpretation to a text which sheds a radical new light on its meaning?

In a similar vein, is it possible to use a text faithfully but then draw an erroneous implication as to its original meaning?

Finally, aren't there a number of ways in which a text can be utilized? Is it necessarily wrong or invalid to use the same text for a number of different purposes, as long as there is some harmony in the diverse interpretations? The above are all important questions, and they deserve to be given their due within the context of this whole thesis.

Before I offer an individual analysis of each of the three ethical thinkers, I want to offer a few general comments on utilization of Rabbinic sources which is common and apparent in the works of all three.

Admittedly, there are some fundamental differences in the philosophies of all three thinkers which leads one to believe that there is hardly a meaningful basis for comparison of their thought. Each of these thinkers lived in different times, in contrasting environments, and was subject to dissimilar influences and historical realities.

Despite this, they share a common agenda with respect to the role and influence of Jewith ethics as a key factor of Jewish thought and existence. This common agenda, after close scrutiny, does provide us with some fundamental similarities which must be understood as a prelude to discerning their individual utilization of sources.

First, it should be noted that none of the three thinkers feels the need to utilize Rabbinic sources as a <u>shield</u> by which he can defend an idea or concept which makes a radical departure from traditional (Orthodox) thought. These three never felt the need to break with Rabbinic tradition or to find some middle ground between the tradition and the secular climate of their respective times.

Within this context, we find that even in those situations where one of the three sought to re-interpret sources for his own use, it always appeared as a re-interpretation which still utilized the source in support of a traditional Rabbinic idea. The battles over proof texts which occurred among early Reform writers (in the areas such as election of Israel, the nature of revelation, etc.) were not the battles of these three thinkers.

Second, we do not see an abundance of examples wherein these writers feel the need to justify or prove their contentions by utilizing proof texts. Since their writings for the most part remain within the mainstream of Jewish tradition (in their respective times) there rarely appears a situation where they feel the need to justify using a source which might ordinarily be construed as meaning something different.

Finally, because these three are writing in the mainstream and do not feel the need to use Rabbinic texts defensively, there is a tendency on the part of all three to utilize sources on two levels (at the same time) for two different purposes.

For example, since we know that utilizing any text by nature involves some process of selectivity on the part of the author, I have found that on many occasions, each of the three exercised selectivity to utilize sources

which allowed him to use the source for illustrative purposes as well as a higher philosophical objective.

Ironically, while it is not clear on the surface, a careful examination of the use of Rabbinic texts by all three leaves the reader with the understanding of a striking parallel which exists in their writings. Admittedly, the parallel is quite subtle, and at times obtuse, but it is there.

The parallel is that the substance of all three writers is quite similar and that their use of texts to convey the substance is also similar.

By substance, I refer to the fact that each of the three focuses on the same central issue. For Bahya Ibn Paqudah, the issue is the relationship between the duties of the heart and the duties of the limbs. For Luzzatto, the message is the relationship between means and ends. Israel Salanter speaks about a character transformation which allows one's intent to influence his deeds. All three are similar.

While their terms may differ, the message remains the same, and the reader is able to view a parallel which focuses on the importance of complete harmony and congruency which must be apparent in thought as well as deed. And if this were not enough, all three are similar in that they utilize Rabbinic sources which indirectly support and

reinforce the attainment of this harmony of thought, manner of performance, and deed.

Inherent in this similarity among all three is the essence of the man-God relationship and the importance of man's awareness of his obligations to God.

This similarity becomes crucial, not only because of its implicit message of substance, but because we see that each of the three utilizes his sources to underscore the importance of this relationship.

What we are left with is an interesting message which stresses the need for a complete congruity on the part of man, seen not only through the substance of their writings, but in their literary style as well.

Bahya Ibn Paqudah uses his Rabbinic texts sparingly. While there has been much scholarly debate about the nature and the extent of his sources,[1] there is no doubt that he utilizes Rabbinic texts in such a manner as to indicate their importance in his writings.

Bahya does not use sources in an extreme manner. In other words, he does not seek to find proof texts which have the simple didactic function of demonstrating that the source is correct and therefore supports his ideas.

On the other hand, he does not utilize sources for purely polemical purposes wherein the message of the source takes precedence over its use.

Rather, one infers from Bahya's use of Rabbinic sources a most careful attempt to find texts which are understandable to the masses and which seek to underscore his ethical philosophy.

This careful attempt is evident in Bahya's emphasis on Aboth for reasons of both substance and literary structure. The substance of Aboth, ethical teachings, is in harmony with Bahya's agenda and for that reason he is content to utilize it on a number of occasions. Structurally, Aboth is also of value to Bahya, because its plethora of maxims and metaphors allows him to utilize its contents to amplify and embellish his main philosophical points.

Bahya interprets faithfully and accurately, rarely interpreting a text out of context.

At times, he will use the same text for two different interpretations, and yet neither of the contrasting interpretations do violence to the text itself. For example, consider Aboth 1.4,

> Let your house be a place of meeting for the Wise, and dust yourself with the dust of their feet, and drink their words thirstily.

Bahya goes beyond the peshat (literal meaning) of the text, which deals with the importance of the teacher-student relationship, to elucidate two different interpretations of the text. Although these have been covered

previously in an earlier part of the thesis,[2] there is value in briefly summarizing the way in which Bahya uses this text.

First, he uses the text to illustrate an early point about humility, the idea that the humble man is more open to wisdom because of character. The one who is willing to sit at the foot of a teacher (as indicated in the text) is such a person.

However, Bahya also finds a use for this text in his chapter on Moral Stock-taking. Here, he sees the same text as a subtle reminder that one should avoid the company of evil people and seek the company of those who do good.

Bahya also uses Rabbinic texts to exhort in a positive sense, as opposed to mere (negative) rebuke. While part of this is done to offset the complex philosophical nature of the early chapters of Duties of the Heart, (chapters not treated in this thesis) one cannot ascribe this mode of utilization to a simple assertion that Bahya was writing to the masses and that this is what the masses wanted and needed at that time. Yet, we can see that Bahya laments the absence of any systematic post-Talmudic ethical work[3] and perhaps his use of exhortation in connection with texts is an outgrowth of the desire to produce a work which will inspire as well as educate the masses.

There may be another reason. Arguably, Bahya uses Rabbinic sources as a means towards exhortation because he wants his readers to understand that ethical obligations are not just an integral part of Judaism - indeed, they are the quintessential aspect of Judaism.

Within that context, Bahya has no need to utilize Rabbinic sources merely to prove his contentions, for proof is not needed for those who are already familiar with Talmud, nor is it of much value for those who have no knowledge of Talmud at all.

However, for those Jews who are not sensitized to the ethical strains in the Talmud, or who regard them as unimportant, there is a need to present the sources in a new light and perhaps this is what Bahya has attempted to do. If one accepts this idea, it becomes clear why Bahya utilizes his sources to amplify as well as to exhort.

Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto encases the substance of Mesillath Yesharim within a meticulous literary structure which enumerates nine (9) analyzed traits with respect to their divisions, particulars, and the manner by which they are acquired.

In contradistinction to Bahya, Luzzatto employs almost five (5) times as many sources in his chapters, and averages close to forty-five (45) citations of

Rabbinic material alone in each of the three chapters which I have reviewed.

As in the case of Bahya, there exists much scholarly speculation concerning Luzzatto's mysticism, the sources of his philosophy, and the various controversies concerning his life and work.[4] Despite this, it is still possible to survey Luzzatto's utilization of Rabbinic texts and draw some tentative conclusions.

First, Luzzatto uses his sources for cumulative effect. Writing in a tight and cogent style, Luzzatto constructs strong arguments through the utilization of texts which seem to dominate his writings. Unlike Bahya, who prefers to make a general statement and subsequently cites texts, Luzzatto often eschews polemics and lets the texts speak for themselves.

In a sense, Luzzatto bombards the reader with Rabbinic texts, ranging far and wide throughout the Talmud to find statements of both quality and quantity.

Luzzatto is quite selective in his use of texts, in the sense that he picks and chooses within a specific text and isolates the idea he wants without using the rest of the quote. One might argue that there is no need for Luzzatto to quote the entire text, inasmuch as his audience was already quite familiar with Rabbinic source material. Admittedly, this is correct, but one cannot

discount Luzzatto's keen ability to lift particular sections from a long piece of text and use them to amplify key ethical points.

This penchant for quantity and selectivity also manifests itself in another fashion. On at least a few occasions, it is not uncommon for Luzzatto to cite a number of seemingly unrelated texts in support of an idea.

However, after a close examination of the texts, one sees that while the individual texts are of minimal value, their aggregate sum ends up illustrating clearly the exact point which Luzzatto wishes to emphasize. This process of amplification and illustration creates an almost ripple-like effect and accounts for at least some of the wide-spread popularity which Messilath Yesharim has achieved in Jewish circles.

It is also a hallmark of Luzzatto's style to utilize texts to exhort, rebuke, and reprove. Despite the fact that Luzzatto lacks Israel Salanter's fiery chastisements and severe style, he uses texts to exhort the reader. He moves him in the direction of emulating positive character traits and avoiding the numerous transgressions which are apparently prevalent among Jews.

In sum, Luzzatto lets the texts speak for themselves and reinforce one another. Just as the substance of his work lies in the reinforcement of positive character traits

which lead towards a higher end, his use of text material is but an illuminating technique designed to reinforce the cumulative value of the other texts. The result is in some ways masterful, for Luzzatto rarely misuses Rabbinic texts and often gleans sensitive ethical implications from seemingly inappropriate Talmudic material.

Like his predecessors, Bahya and Luzzatto, Salanter is seen as a somewhat mysterious figure.[5] He too brings an unusual element to his philosophy, even though it is not the Islamic culture of Bahya or the mysticism of Luzzatto. For Salanter, it is the relationship between psychology and ethics, exemplified by the role played by unconscious forces which seek to broaden the behavior gap between knowledge of the ideal good and failure to live by this knowledge.

An analysis of Salanter is somewhat hindered by the fact that his entire corpus of published materials is quite small, and of these, halakhic material is but a miniscule fraction of the total.[6]

However, despite this limitation, Salanter's Musar Letter of 1858 still remains one of the most representative Salanterian texts for understanding the essence of Musar thought.

Initially, it should be noted that Salanter utilizes Rabbinic material as proof-texts for his larger philosophical points, many of which revolve around ethics and psychology.

If there is a Salanterian innovation with respect to utilization of Rabbinic texts, it is that his use of source material places him exactly in the middle between traditional and un-traditional scholars. For example, the former utilize sources to demonstrate or to illustrate a point, yet never really depart from a classically traditional Jewish perspective. On the other hand, later scholars utilize Rabbinic sources to illustrate points which tend to support a new interpretation of age-old ideas. At times, these scholars have used texts to support the abrogation of certain traditional Jewish ideas.

Salanter utilizes texts to place himself "between the rock and the hard place" so to speak, in that he seeks to introduce innovations within the structure of traditional Jewish thought. His view of man is so fundamentally different from that shared by any of his predecessors (including Bahya and Luzzatto) that it requires a radical prescription in order to ameliorate man's basic malevolent human condition.

In order to effectively articulate this message, he is sensitive to the reality that he is writing for an audience which is composed of scholars as well as ordinary Jews. He also faces the difficult burden of using traditional texts in a traditional style to establish a somewhat un-traditional philosophy.

He does this by using Rabbinic texts as a type of springboard for his ethical philosophy. For example, Salanter opens his Musar Letter with some traditional ideas concerning man's duty to God, man's need to control the evil inclination, and the general requirement of heshbon ha-nefesh (moral stock-taking) as incumbent upon all. Failure to fulfill these duties will bring about Divine Judgement by God.

There is nothing revolutionary about these ideas and concepts. They are well-rooted in Jewish tradition and history, and have been the subject of much analysis and discussion by Jewish scholars for hundreds of years. In fact, much of Duties of the Heart and Mesillath Yesharim focus on these types of questions.

Using this traditional framework, Salanter then utilizes traditional sources to illustrate how his radical prescription is needed as a cure for age-old problems. Whereas others can write about the importance of Torah study, cultivation of fear, and conquering the evil inclination, Salanter takes the opposite approach.

For him, the texts show us that Torah study in and of itself is not enough, and there can be no cultivation of fear by man since man is inherently under the influence of a mysterious force which impels him to violate certain commandments without understanding what he is doing.

Despite these innovations, Salanter stays squarely within a traditional context, and never departs from the classical Rabbinic perspective. He does not misquote texts, nor does he cite sources out of context. Rather, he selects sources with an eye for their short term as well as long term value, as if to say: "Yes, this is what the text says, but it is also saying something deeper as well." Unlike his predecessors, who used texts to support a transformation of one's thought, or deeds, Salanter uses his texts to support the idea that what is needed is a complete transformation of man himself.

To each of these three ethical thinkers, the man-God relationship was paramount. Man must understand that everything is but a means to a higher end, and that the means he employs are as important as the end, and at times influence the end as well. The character of man is crucial, for his ability to harmonize thought, manner of performance and deed is essential to the ultimate relationship with God. It is through Rabbinic texts which these thinkers utilized that we are able to fully understand the import of what they sought to convey.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I: Bahya Ibn Paqudah

[1]cf. Menahem Mansoor, The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 1-2 (hereinafter referred to as Mansoor) and Georges Vajda "Bahya ben Joseph Ibn Paquda," in Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 4, p. 106-107.

[2]cf. Mansoor, at page 1 and P. Kokowzoff "The Date of Life of Bahya Ibn Paqoda," in Medieval Jewish Philosophy (Steven D. Katz, ed., New York: Arno Press, 1980).

[3]In the translator's introduction to Mansoor, as well as his footnotes, the reader can find the definitive list of all translations and editions.

[4]Throughout this thesis, reference will be made to R. Travers Herford's The Ethics of the Talmud: Sayings of the Fathers, considered to be a classic commentary on Pirke Aboth. Since Herford generally focuses on the peshat (the literal meaning) of the text, his comments are a good source of contrast for those made by Bahya.

[5]Mansoor, p. 276. Addendum: It should be noted here that all references to the text of Duties of the Heart refer to Mansoor's translation, which is based on the original Arabic as well as the authoritative Ibn Tibbon-A. Ziffroni Hebrew text. Since I have found Mansoor's translation to be superior to that of Moses Hyamson (see Bibliography, Primary Sources), I am relying on his translation. However, in those instances where there is a discrepancy between the Hebrew and Mansoor, I have not relied on Mansoor and do not quote him.

[6]Ibid., p. 287.

[7]Herford, p. 21.

[8]Mansoor, p. 288.

[9]Mansoor, p. 304.

[10]For the full list, cf. Mansoor, p. 304-305.

[11]Mansoor, p. 312.

[12]Ibid., p. 315.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., p. 317.

[15]Ibid., p. 325.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 333.

[18]Ibid., p. 340.

[19]Ibid., p. 342.

[20]This last line appears in the Ibn Tibbon manuscript, but is missing in others.

[21]Mansoor, p. 348.

[22]Ibid., p. 363.

[23]Ibid., p. 365.

[24]Ibid., p. 367.

[25]Ibid., p. 379.

[26]Herford, p. 79.

[27]Ibid., p. 24.

[28]Mansoor, p. 382.

[29]According to the Jerusalem Talmud, a spring of water miraculously opened at his foot, thus sealing the fate of the lizard and causing its death.

[30]Mansoor, p. 384.

[31]cf. Abodah Zarah 20b for a similar version.

[32]cf. Adolph Büchler, Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety, (New York: KTAV, 1968) Chapter 1. This baraitha is attributed to R. Phinehas ben Yair, a fourth generation Tanna and son-in-law of Simon B. Jochai, supposed author of the Zohar, the Bible of Jewish mysticism. Yair was known for his piety and honesty and is always pictured as a model of saintliness. As Büchler indicates, he may have been an Essene.

[33]Herford, p. 106.

[34]Mansoor, p. 391.

Chapter II: Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto

[1]Mordechai Kaplan, Mesillat Yesharim - The Path of the Upright, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1948), Introduction.

[2]For similar versions of the text, cf. Mishnah Sotah. 9.15, and Jerushalmi Shekalim 47c.

[3]cf. Babah Mezia 60a.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Babah Qamma 119a.

[6]Babah Mezia 71a.

[7]Berakhot 16b.

[8]Ta'anith 23b.

[9]Babah Mezia 56b.

[10]Leviticus 5.15 talks about one who commits a trespass initially and then commits an additional sin. Leviticus 5.21 reverses the order, with the sin occurring initially, followed by the trespass.

[11]The same passage is found in Sanhedrin 6b.

[12]Kaplan, p. 161. Note that all references to the text of Mesillath Yesharim are from the Kaplan translation, which is considered to be the most scientific. In those instances where Kaplan paraphrases instead of translates, I will not cite to his translation but to the Hebrew text only.

[13]cf. Berakhot 61a and 24a, Abodah Zarah 20a.

[14]Luzzatto utilizes a number of quotes from the last section of Babah Mezia 58b as well as the opening sections of Babah Mezia 59a.

[15]There is a parallel text in Sanhedrin 99a.

[16]cf. Sotah 42a.

[17]As a result, the liar loses all credibility, even when he tells the truth. See Sanhedrin 89b, as well as the story of Peter and the Wolf!

[18]This is discussed extensively in Chapter II, Part "C," which deals with Humility.

[19]ANGER: cf. Shabbat 105b, Aboth 5.11, Hullin 89a.

[20]ENVY: cf. Aboth 4.20 and 4.21, Yoma 38b, Erubin 65b.

[21]LUST: cf. Aboth 2.5, 4.21, 6.4, Erubin 55a, Sanhedrin 102a.

[22]HONOR: cf. Aboth 1.9 and 6.3, Pesahim 113a, Babah Bathra 110a.

[23]To Luzzatto, Saintliness is positive and Separation is negative. This distinction is covered fully in Chapters 13-15 of Mesillath Yesharim.

[24]cf. Aboth 2.12 and 6.6.

[25]A number of these examples can be found in Megillah 27b.

[26]cf. Aboth 1.2, Peah 1.1, Sotah 14a, Yebamoth 79a, and Shabbat 151b.

[27]In referring to the "dead," the text refers to honoring the dead by attending the funeral, the house of mourning, etc. One also shows respect to the dead by comforting the mourners.

[28]cf. Chapter II, Part "C," which deals with Humility.

[29]See infra, p.34 , where Bahya uses the same text to illustrate kawanah.

[30]cf. Shabbat 133b, Babah Qammah 9b, Sukkah 50a, Shabbat 10a, and Shekalim 14a.

[31]R. Abahu would prepare the fire, R. Safra would roast the meat, Ravah would split wood, etc.

[32]cf. Berakhot 17a, Shabbat 119a, Aboth 4.6, Sanhedrin 102b.

[33]Coming from the verb "to cease," shebuth refers to one of the many classes of acts forbidden by the Rabbis on the Sabbath.

[34]This is also found in Berakhot 33a.

[35]This text is also used by Bahya. See infra, p. 42

[36]Kaplan, p. 353.

[37]Ibid., p. 357.

[38]Ibid., p. 389.

[39]cf. Berakhot 10b for a further explanation.

[40]cf. Kaplan, p. 407.

Chapter III: Israel Salanter

[1]Hillel Goldberg, Israel Salanter - Text, Structure, Idea, (NY: KTAV, 1982), p. 4-5.

[2]cf. Eckman, Lester S., The History of the Musar Movement, (NY: Shengold, 1975).

[3]Goldberg, p. 313-314.

[4]Ibid., p. 3-13.

[5]Menahem Glenn, Israel Salanter: Religious-Ethical Thinker, (New York: Bloch, 1953), p. 129.

[6]Ibid., p. 132.

[7]cf. Yoma 86b, Moed Qatan 27b.

[8]There is an exegetical play on words here, contrasting shetuth, which means folly or madness, and tisteh, which means "to go astray."

[9]Glenn, p. 142.

[10]Ibid., p. 151.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

[1]See translator's introduction to Duties of the Heart (Mansoor) which focuses on these questions.

[2]cf. pages 19 and 39.

[3]cf. Footnote 1, Chapter IV.

[4]cf. Joseph Dan, "Moses Hayyim Luzzatto," in Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 11, p. 599-604.

[5]cf. Goldberg, pp. 3-13.

[6]cf. Goldberg, p. 314.

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