

ing miracle and revelation, God and immortality were scarcely shared by the majority of Jews, who, no doubt, sided rather with the mystics, and found their mouthpiece in Abraham ben David of Posquieres, the fierce opponent of Maimonides. An impartial Jewish theology must therefore take cognizance of both sides; it must include the mysticism of Isaac Luria and Sabbathai Horwitz as well as the rationalism of Albo and Leo da Modena. Wherever is voiced a new doctrine or a new view of life and life's duty, which yet bears the imprint of the Jewish consciousness, there the well-spring of divine inspiration is seen pouring forth its living waters.

7. Even the latest interpretation of the Law, offered by a disciple who is recognized for true conscientiousness in religion, was revealed to Moses on Sinai, according to a Rabbinical dictum.¹ Thus is exquisitely expressed the idea of a continuous development of Israel's religious truth. As a safeguard against arbitrary individualism, there was the principle of loyalty and proper regard for tradition, which is aptly termed by Professor Lazarus a "historical continuity."² The Midrashic statement is quite significant that other creeds founded on our Bible can only adhere to the letter, but the Jewish religion possesses the key to the deeper meaning hidden and presented in the *traditional* interpretation of the Scriptures.³ That is, for Judaism Holy Scripture in its literal sense is not the final word of God; the Bible is rather a living spring of divine revelation, to be kept ever fresh and flowing by the active force of the spirit. To sum up: Judaism, far from offering a system of beliefs and ceremonies fixed for all time, is as multifarious and manifold in its aspects as is life itself. It comprises all phases and characteristics of both a national and a world religion.

¹ See Yer. Hag., I, 76, and elsewhere.

² *Ethics of Judaism*, I, 8-10; Geiger: *J. Z.*, IX, 263.

³ See *Pesik. R.*, V, p. 146; *Midr. Tanhuma*, ed. Buber, Wayera 6 and Ki Thissa. 17. Comp. the legend of Moses and Akiba, Men. 29 b.

CHAPTER III

THE ESSENCE OF THE RELIGION OF JUDAISM

1. We have seen how difficult it is to define Judaism clearly and adequately, including its manifold tendencies and institutions. Still it is necessary that we reach a full understanding of the essence of Judaism as it manifested itself in all periods of its history,¹ and that we single out the fundamental idea which underlies its various forms of existence and its different movements, both intellectual and spiritual. There can be no disputing the fact that the central idea of Judaism and its life purpose is the doctrine of the One Only and Holy God, whose kingdom of truth, justice and peace is to be universally established at the end of time. This is the main teaching of Scripture and the hope voiced in the liturgy; while Israel's mission to defend, to unfold and to propagate this truth is a corollary of the doctrine itself and cannot be separated from it. Whether we regard it as Law or a system of doctrine, as religious truth or world-mission, this belief pledged the little tribe of Judah to a warfare of many thousands of years against the hordes of heathendom with all their idolatry and brutality, their deification of man and their degradation of deity to human rank. It betokened a battle for the pure idea of God and man, which is not to end until the principle of divine holiness has done away with every form of life that tends to degrade and to disunite mankind, and until Israel's Only One has become the unifying power and the highest ideal of all humanity.

¹ Comp. Geiger: *Nachgel. Schr.*, II, 37-41; also his *Jud. u. s. Gesch.*, I, 20-35; Beck: *D. Wesen d. Judenthums*; Eschelbacher: *D. Judenthum u. d. Wesen d. Christenthums*; Schreiner, l. c., 26-34.

2. Of this great world-duty of Israel only the few will ever become fully conscious. As in the days of the prophets, so in later periods, only a "small remnant" was fully imbued with the lofty ideal. In times of oppression the great multitude of the people persisted in a conscientious observance of the Law and underwent suffering without a murmur. Yet in times of liberty and enlightenment this same majority often neglects to assimilate the new culture to its own superior spirit, but instead eagerly assimilates itself to the surrounding world, and thereby loses much of its intrinsic strength and self-respect. The pendulum of thought and sentiment swings to and fro between the national and the universal ideals, while only a few maturer minds have a clear vision of the goal as it is to be reached along both lines of development. Nevertheless, Judaism is in a true sense a religion of the people. It is free from all priestly tutelage and hierarchical interference. It has no ecclesiastical system of belief, guarded and supervised by men invested with superior powers. Its teachers and leaders have always been men from among the people, like the prophets of yore, with no sacerdotal privilege or title; in fact, in his own household each father is the God-appointed teacher of his children.¹

3. Neither is Judaism the creation of a single person, either prophet or a man with divine claims. It points back to the patriarchs as its first source of revelation. It speaks not of the God of Moses, of Amos and Isaiah, but of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thereby declaring the Jewish genius to be the creator of its own religious ideas. It is therefore incorrect to speak of a "Mosaic," "Hebrew," or "Israelitish," religion. The name *Judaism* alone expresses the preservation of the religious heritage of Israel by the tribe of Judah, with a loyalty which was first displayed by Judah himself in the patriarchal household, and which became its char-

¹ Deut. VI, 7; XI, 19.

acteristic virtue in the history of the various tribes. Likewise the rigid measures of Ezra in expelling all foreign elements from the new commonwealth proved instrumental in impressing loyalty and piety upon Jewish family life.

4. As it was bound up with the life of the Jewish people, Judaism remained forever in close touch with the world. Therefore it appreciated adequately the boons of life, and escaped being reduced to the shadowy form of "otherworldliness."¹ It is a religion of *life*, which it wishes to sanctify by duty rather than by laying stress on the hereafter. It looks to the *deed* and the purity of the *motive*, not to the empty creed and the blind belief. Nor is it a religion of *redemption*, contemning this earthly life; for Judaism repudiates the assumption of a radical power of evil in man or in the world. Faith in the ultimate triumph of the good is essential to it. In fact, this perfect confidence in the final victory of truth and justice over all the powers of falsehood and wrong lent it both its wondrous intellectual force and its high idealism, and adorned its adherents with the martyr's crown of thorns, such as no other human brow has ever borne.

5. *Christianity* and *Islam*, notwithstanding their alienation from Judaism and frequent hostility, are still daughter-religions. In so far as they have sown the seeds of Jewish truth over all the globe and have done their share in upbuilding the Kingdom of God on earth, they must be recognized as divinely appointed emissaries and agencies. Still Judaism sets forth its doctrine of God's unity and of life's holiness in a far superior form than does Christianity. It neither permits the deity to be degraded into the sphere of the sensual and human, nor does it base its morality upon a love bereft of the vital principle of justice. Against the rigid monotheism of Islam, which demands blind submission to the stern decrees of inexorable fate, Judaism on the other hand urges its belief

¹ See Geiger: *Nachgel. Schr.*, II, 37 f.

in God's paternal love and mercy, which educates all the children of men, through trial and suffering, for their high destiny.

6. Judaism denies most emphatically the right of Christianity or any other religion to arrogate to itself the title of "the absolute religion" or to claim to be "the finest blossom and the ripest fruit of religious development." As if any mortal man at any time or under any condition could say without presumption: "I am the Truth" or "No one cometh unto the Father but by me."¹ "When man was to proceed from the hands of his Maker," says the Midrash, "the Holy One, Blessed be His name, cast truth down to the earth, saying, 'Let truth spring forth from the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven.'"² The full unfolding of the religious and moral life of mankind is the work of countless generations yet to come, and many divine heralds of truth and righteousness have yet to contribute their share. In this work of untold ages, Judaism claims that it has achieved and is still achieving its full part as the prophetic world-religion. Its law of righteousness, which takes for its scope the whole of human life, in its political and social relations as well as its personal aspects, forms the foundation of its ethics for all time; while its hope for a future realization of the Kingdom of God has actually become the aim of human history. As a matter of fact, when the true object of religion is the hallowing of life rather than the salvation of the soul, there is little room left for sectarian exclusiveness, or for a heaven for believers and a hell for unbelievers. With this broad outlook upon life, Judaism lays claim, not to perfection, but to perfectibility; it has supreme capacity for growing toward the highest ideals of mankind, as beheld by the prophets in their Messianic visions.

¹ John XIV, 6. Comp. Dorner, l. c., 173; and his *Grundprobleme d. Religionsphilosophie*; Orelli: *Religionsgeschichte*, 276 f.

² Gen. R. VIII, 5.

CHAPTER IV

THE JEWISH ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. In order to reach a clear opinion, whether or not Judaism has articles of faith in the sense of Church dogmas, a question so much discussed since the days of Moses Mendelssohn, it seems necessary first to ascertain what faith in general means to the Jew.¹ Now the word used in Jewish literature for faith is *Emunah*, from the root *Aman*, to be firm; this denotes firm reliance upon God, and likewise firm adherence to him, hence both *faith* and *faithfulness*. Both Scripture and the Rabbis demanded confiding trust in God, His messengers, and His words, not the formal acceptance of a prescribed belief.² Only when contact with the non-Jewish world emphasized the need for a clear expression of the belief in the unity of God, such as was found in the Shema,³ and when the proselyte was expected to declare in some definite form the fundamentals of the faith he espoused, was the importance of a concrete *confession* felt.⁴ Accordingly we find the beginnings of a formulated belief in the synagogal liturgy, in the *Emeth we*

¹ See Schechter: *Studies*, 147-181 and notes 351 f.; Mendelssohn: *Ges. Schr.*, III, 321. Comp. Schlesinger: *Buch Ikkarim*, 630-632; Bousset: *Religion d. Judenthums*, 170 f., 175, and thereto Perles: *Bousset*, 112 f.; Martin Schreiner: l. c., 35 f.; J. E., art. Faith and Articles of Faith (E. G. Hirsch); Felsenthal, Margolis, and Kohler, in Y. B. C. C. A. R., 1897, p. 54; 1903, p. 188-193; 1905, p. 83; Neumark: art. *Ikkarim* in *Ozar ha Yahduth*; D. Fr. Strauss: *D. christl. Glaubenslehre*, I, 25.

² See Gen. XV, 6; Mek. to Ex. XIV; J. E., art. Faith.

³ Deut. VI, 1-6; XI, 13-21; Num. XV, 37-41.

⁴ See Bousset, II, 224 f. The term *Pistis* = faith, assumes a new meaning in Hellenistic literature.