

violence to its clearly held doctrines in any area and offending its spirit and intention, may be emotionally satisfying, but they are intellectually dishonest. Judaism possesses enough variety and heterogeneity of emphases to enable new challenges and changing orientations to find resonance within its wide scope. It can become "modern" and "relevant" -- but within limits that will prevent its spiritual emasculation and intellectual falsification.

There is a long tradition in Judaism -- from the Talmudim to the Midrashim, from Saadia to Karo to Azulai, from Yehudah He-Hasid to Yitzhak Abohav¹ -- that one ought to seek out a specific ~~xxxxxx~~/mitzvah as the commandment or observance he will cherish most and "specialize" in. Every individual, the great Kabbalist Isaac Luria had taught, has a particular letter in the Torah which forms the "root of his soul." Every Jew has a specific spiritual locus within the rich and variegated heritage of Judaism. ^{This} ~~It~~ by no means implies neglect of a Jew's fundamental obligations to the totality of Judaism, and especially his commitment to the Halakhah. But it does imply that emphases must be sought that will respond to inner spiritual ^{movements} or psychological ~~cravings~~ ^{needs}.

The Jew, and the teacher and interpreter of Judaism, must therefore tread a narrow path and avoid the pitfalls of, on the one side, rigidity and the assumption of a frozen structure that remains supremely impervious to the rhythms and gyrations of the human spirit, and, on the other, the cavalier hypothesis that "Judaism" only reacts ^{but} never acts, and that ethnic descent and folk sentiment alone are ^{sufficient} ~~enough~~ to qualify any opinion uttered by a Jew as the "position of Judaism."

I mention these strictures not only because there are ample illustrations of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the various attitudes adumbrated, but because one of the aims of this present work is the attempt, however cursory and limited, to pick out and highlight an emphasis in Jewish life that has suffered from neglect for some time now. Perhaps just such a renewed emphasis at this time will help us maintain a balanced perspective on the nature and contribution of Judaism in these, our "post-modern" times.

Ever since the Emancipation, accult^lurated Jews, anxious to join the stream of Western^lization and modernization, have

identified the universal and ethical elements in Judaism as "essential" Judaism, and denigrated the rest as pre-modern or even primitive cultural phenomena that had outlived their usefulness. One of the early Reformers, to cite just one example, distinguished between the national and religious or universal aspects of Judaism. Samuel Holdheim held that the national content of revelation was only of temporary obligation, and its obligatory character came to an end with the disappearance of the Jewish state and nation, which itself was regarded not as a historic cataclysm but as a divinely ordained means for Israel to teach the truths of monothesis to the nations of the world. The universal elements constitute the permanent ^{heritage of} ~~the~~ Jewish religion. Only ^{are valid} ~~they held true~~ for Jews of the modern period. This distinction was an ^{attempt} ~~effort~~ to improve upon a previous dichotomy devised to justify the new paths Reform was taking. That previous effort, strongly influenced by Kantian moralism, was the division of all Judaism into ceremonial vs. moral laws and observances. Naturally, the latter ^{are} ~~is~~ preferable ~~to~~ and superior to the former. However, such a bifurcation of revelation could not explain why Reform still maintained the obligatory character (albeit in different form ^{from the traditional}) in many instances) of circumcision, the Sabbath, holidays, prayers, and other such institutions. Holdheim's analysis saved these observances by declaring them vehicles of universal truths, while such items as dietary laws, and prayers for the ~~the~~ restoration of the Jews to Palestine and the Messianic kingdom were ~~pronounced~~ pronounced "national" and thus relegated to the realm of the obsolescent. But the old distinction was not really overcome, and it ^{shined} ~~showed~~ through the overlay of the national-universal polarity. If there were indeed religious

ceremonies which were retained, it was because they served universal ends, and this in effect meant that they were merely symbolic vehicles for moral truths valid for all men. The polarities thus merge: moral=universal, and ceremonial=national.

That this is so may be seen from the third and ~~fourth~~ fifth principles as formulated in the Pittsburgh Platform which ~~has~~ laid the groundwork for ~~so~~ much of subsequent Reform thinking:

3. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and to-day we accept as binding only its moral laws, ~~and~~ and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.
5. We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

These passages are not cited for polemical reasons. Reform has changed much in the past decades, and one cannot fault the early American Reformers for failing as prophets. They were overimpressed by the majority culture -- a weakness shared by most cognitive minorities -- and genuinely believed that their contemporaries represented the high point of ~~the~~ history that was evolving along Darwinian lines. Their zeitgeist confirmed for them that the era of "truth, justice, and peace" was just around the corner -- this, before two World Wars, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Vietnam.... and the State of Israel, utterly unimaginable and incredible to these happy ^{and rationalistic} universalists, for whom national restoration was anathema and the sudden lurches of history unthinkable, and for

whom the demonic and the tragic were dimensions of human existence in primitive times, safely banished from the domain of the "modern era of ~~the~~ universal culture of heart and intellect."

If we cannot ^{condemn} criticize them for being false prophets and dupes of the shallow optimism of the late nineteenth century, we most certainly ^{may} ~~can~~ criticize them for being spiritually false to, and intellectually shallow in their conception of, the Jewish heritage. With all the cultural, social, and political forces that ^{history demanded a more sober strength of them, for} operated on them, consciously or unconsciously, they posed as genuine and authentic teachers and interpreters of Judaism. Yet what ^t they taught was no longer Judaism, and the results of their ^{efforts} ~~labors~~ was not interpretation but decimation. Newly aware of the variegation in Judaism, they overshot the mark. Bible criticism, historical criticism, and a cultural Darwinism convinced them that Judaism was what they said it was, and instead of what ^I ~~we~~ have called an "eclecticism of emphasis" they practiced an eclecticism of substance. Having observed that Judaism was not uniform, they concluded that it was omniform, and their labors well nigh succeeded in making it formless for their successors.

What was lacking in their theology, what occasioned ^{their} structurelessness and led them into the chaos of imposing complete subjectivity on Judaism, was the very thing they most despised in the tradition: Halakhah -- Jewish "law" or the Jewish "way." Without this solid backbone, the rest of the organism became ~~totally~~ flabby and incapable of resisting the most outrageous distortions foisted upon it.

So it was that the moral-universal dimension of Judaism was elevated to the ~~pe~~ realm of the permanent, and the national-

ceremonial was relegated to the backwaters of Jewish history.

But this truncated ^{residue} result, considered by the early Reformers the abiding essence of Judaism, could not abide very long as Judaism/. The very identification of the moral as the universal, whether consciously intended or not, led their followers to wonder if Jews and Judaism were at all necessary for the success of this humanistic effort. What, after all, was distinctively Jewish in this ethical corpus that was identified as the Jewish contribution to mankind, that needed Jews and that could not be performed just as well by enlightened Christians? Indeed, the conclusion many came to was fiercely logical: give up your Jewishness and embrace a form of Christianity purged of its irrational myths. One could thus enter the "outside" human community (in itself a desideratum for many reasons), retain his moral integrity, and feel no guilt at deserting his people ^{because} since, after all, morality and universalism was what it was all about!

¶ Yet for all the devastating consequences of this piece of presumption, a contribution of sorts had been made -- a contribution not commensurate with ~~the~~ ^{the} deleterious after-effects, but a contribution none the less. For those who ^{stay} ~~remained~~ within the tradition, and for whom Halakhah remained inviolable and inviolate, universal moral concerns assumed a new and ~~is~~ healthy significance.

More recently, however, these accents have been muted. (My references here are, of course, to those who locate themselves to some extent, at least, within the Jewish tradition or the Jewish folk. Assimilationists, whether past or present, have always used the fund of common concerns that Judaism shares with the whole human community as an excuse to opt out.) Hirschian humanism and universalism could not fare well in the developing world political condition of the 1930's and onwards. His optimism was swamped by the oncoming ^{tides of} ~~xxxx~~ war and the feeling that an apocalyptic cataclysm was upon us. Further, the success of Zionism in rallying a majority of world Jewry to its cause closed the door to any mass acceptance of the Hirschian outlook -- which bore a decidedly antinationalist stamp. And the intensely religious and ingrown Jewish communities of Eastern Europe had at best tolerated Hirschian universal concerns as a kind of necessary evil valid, perhaps, for the benighted Orthodox Jews of Western and Central Europe, but not legitimate for the ^{more intense} Talmudic and Hasidic Jewries of Eastern Europe.

In the past several years, this tendency towards introversion has been accelerated, again motivated by both political and social developments. The various "Radical Zionsist" groups notwithstanding, most ^{Jewishly} conscientious ^{& committed} young Jews have ~~have~~ turned inwards, to Jewish concerns, almost to the exclusion of any other interests. The new assertiveness of the Black liberation movement has induced an ethnic consciousness and pride in young American Jews not often noticed before. The vocal and often violent demonstrations of the half-assimilated Jews for all world causes save the Jewish, and the New Left Jewish

self-haterd and pro-Arab rhetoric has caused many a religious and nationalist Jew to recoil with equal force in the opposite direction. Most important, the Holocaust has tapped the deepest tides running in the ^{subconscious} self-awareness of Jews born after thode dreadful years. They have become aware, as their elders often have not, that if Jews do not protect Jewish interests, no one else will. They are critical of their parents' generation, ^{whom} and they find ~~them~~ ^{criminal} guilty of passivity in the great democracies while the six million went to their deaths. Thus, the cause of Soviet Jewry is so very much the concern of the young, and one into which they have invested their most intense and most idealistic passions. They are, as the psychoanalysts might say, abreacting the guilt of their parents, and they are demonstrating that they have learned ^{well} the lesson of the past. The shocking reaction of the world community -- United Nations, United States, Britain, and France -- in the months ^{and weeks} before the Six Day War in 1967 galvanized the ethnic self-consciousness of Jews throughout the world and reenforced their intuition that Israel is "a people that dwelleth alone." The world had turned its back on Jews once again. Perhaps, the unspoken argument ran, it is time for the world to take care of itself while we tend to our own survival. So committed Jews nowadays often turn their backs on the world, not out of preference as much as out of a sense of ^{ideological} having learned ^{the pragmatic lessons of} history, ~~and~~ The criterion of Jewish self-interest which understandably ought to come first for Jews, sometimes appears to push all other interests out of the ^{scope} ~~focus~~ of their attention and interest. It is an attitude that is difficult to challenge and, considering that so many more young Jews are sliding into ethnic and religious suicide on the back of

internationalism, the willingness to challenge this thesis is ^{considerably} quite attenuated. Somehow, one hopes, the extremes will cancel each other out and eventually a balanced perspective will prevail.

The emphasis on morality and character has similarly suffered some reverses, although the causes and consequences are quite different. Salanter's Musar movement filled a void in Lithuanian and Russian Jewry that, in a measure, paralleled the spiritual contribution of Hasidism to Polish Jewry and the other European ^{Jewish} communities where it quickly prevailed.

^{Musar} It added a new dimension to Jewish living which had been exclusively concentrated on Halakhic observance and Talmudic studies. Its influence was wide-spread and it significantly changed the lives of those who came ~~xxxxxxxx~~ into contact with it.

Nevertheless, from the very beginning Musar encountered ^{determined resistance} strong opposition amongst the very people to whom it directed its appeal. Many of the Yeshivot, the great talmudical academies of Lithuania of the latter half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, accepted the Musar discipline, and devoted time to the study of and meditation in the texts of Musar. ^{A number of} ~~Many~~ a giant personality ^{ies} emerged from their midst who became both teachers and exemplars of the new advocacy of moral excellence and spiritual inwardness. Yet many of these Yeshivot became centers of ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ^{resistance} antagonism to the new movement. A number of renowned Talmudists, who were also men of spiritual eminence, refused to countenance these new ways -- one might also say, in the contemporary

vernacular, ~~xxx~~ the new "life-style." Such luminaries as ~~xxx~~ Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin, the father of the Lithuanian Yeshivot; Rabbi Hayyim Soloveitchik of Brisk, whose new halakhic methodology soon became accepted in most of the great Lithuanian academies; and, in our own days, the renowned sage-saint, Rabbi Abraham Isaiah Karelitz, known by the name of his talmudic works as "The Hazon Ish," -- these and many others barely tolerated the intensity with which the Musar movement undertook to remold both the personality of the Yeshiva student and the curriculum of the schools themselves. ⁽²⁾ They held that the ^{time} spent in Musar was an illegitimate encroachment on the study of Halakhah. The study of Torah, the highest value in the hierarchy of Jewish values, is limited to Halakhic texts and does not include, ^as a general rule, the meditations of Musar and the study of the various didactic texts that constitute its literature. Furthermore, as the Hazon Ish taught, Musar could at best reenforce one's conscience, but conscience by itself was totally inadequate without halakhic direction. Musar can provide the passion, but only Halakhah can give man the capacity and the material for ethical decision-making. ⁽³⁾ But such ethical direction is in no way different from any other branch of the Halakhah, neither in value nor in methodology, and it is far more important to ~~w~~ learn what to do than it is to arouse the will and the passion to do it. One detects almost a Socratic confidence that the knowledge of the good will lead to its performance.

Despite this determined opposition from the most eminent and prestigious Talmudists in the Yeshiva world, Musar continued and, indeed, produced a creative literature of its own. Yet it is questionable whether one can say that it has really succeeded ^{in realizing its goals} in the ranks of traditional Jewry, even amongst the students of the various Yeshivot in Israel, America, and England today.

There are a number of reasons for this ~~questionable~~ ^{judgment} doubt. First, there is always a danger that the very ~~movement's~~ ^{movement's} institutionalization which engenders its initial successes causes its eventual decline. System, organization, and ~~habit~~ routine inculcate good habits, but the ^{spirit} and the enthusiasm that supports them begins to wither and deteriorate when rote and routine set in. Sooner or later, as happens with all such movements, the formal study of the texts, even the ^{mood and the pensive} melancholy ^{and} sing-song with which Musar was studied, and even the tears of contrition and the painful awareness of one's existential and ethical shortcomings -- all this becomes ^{and} turns into habit, convention, and divorced from the wellsprings of ^{being and most powerful motivations} one's deepest consciousness. There is, indeed, no objective way of determining ^{if} whether or not the study of ~~Musar~~ Musar, as it has been practiced in more contemporary times, has had any appreciable effect on the moral quality ^{and practice} of those engaged in it.

Second, in most of the schools where Musar was studied, the accepted attitude towards it was the product of its original encounter with the antiMusar Halakhists. One studied Musar, but one knew in his heart of hearts that it was of secondary significance. A superior person did not need it, and would

instead
spend his time in Talmudic research. The purpose of Musar
was conceived of by the Halakhic masters as, in the first
instance, ^{the} ~~to~~ motivate ^{ion of} the student to study Halakhah; its
formal study was therefore primarily reserved for the layman
and the ignoramus, not the scholar. Only one who is ~~is~~ ^{had} sick,
Rabbi Hayyim Soloveitchik ^{had} said, does he need drastic medication;
for a healthy person, such treatment is dangerous. Similarly,
only when one is spiritually incapacitated and cannot bring
himself to study Torah (i.e., Halakhah) does he need the
strong potions of Musar; otherwise, it is best to continue
with the normal regimen of talmudic studies and leave Musar
for emergency situations. ⁽⁴⁾ Hence, the Yeshiva scholar who,
in later years, bothered with Musar at all, did so with the
knowledge that he was dabbling in ~~non~~ ^{non} essentials, ~~and~~ ^{and}, moreover,
the fact that Musar was so much less ~~intellectually taxing cerebral~~
than Talmudic study made him ^{intellectually} feel inadequate if he dwelled on
it for too long.

Finally, the decline of Musar may be traced to radical
changes in the Jewish community at large. When the Jewish
community as such was fairly observant then, even if it was
talmudically ignorant, the scholar felt safe in relaxing from
his exclusive concentration on Halakhah and engaging in Musar
in order to round out his religious personality. But as

apostasy and assimilation made tremendous inroads into the Jewish environment of the Yeshiva scholars, and the appreciation of ^{talmudic} scholarship was replaced by a secularized passion for "education," usually for vocational and social reasons, the quite natural reaction of the Yeshivot was to restore balance to the overall ~~picture~~ situation by focusing even more ~~fiercely~~ vigorously upon purely halakhic studies. Musar was now considered a luxury, for the danger to Judaism came not from insufficient moral sensitivity but from a frontal attack on the whole Jewish enterprise. The fortress must be held at all costs, and one such cost ^{the abandonment of} ~~of the prices~~ was --/the creative immersion in Musar, and even the ^{high} valuation of the moral-spiritual personality cherished by the Musarites.

The moral emphasis introduced a century ago by R. Israel Salanter (and paralleled by the humanist-universalist teachings of the Hirschian school) have^s thus receded in our times, both axiologically and ~~maxxxx~~ educationally. Activity on behalf of the State of Israel, or Soviet Jewry, or total immersion in Talmudic studies in a Kollel, or an ethnic pride that expresses itself in social and political action on behalf of the Jewish poor and other disadvantaged -- these have become, for various strata of conscientious young Jews, the major values in their Jewish lives. Judaism as a factor that leads primarily to moral sensitivity, to ethical herpism, to character refinement -- these are not doubted, but they no longer seem terribly important. As a matter of historical fact, therefore, the moral moment has lost prestige. And in order to restore the proper balance to full and authentic Jewish existence, the time may be ripe for a reassertion of the role of character in the context of Jewish life.

However, the situation is more troubling than that. Honesty requires the confession that the problem transcends axiology, theology, or education. It is not altogether a question of a new development. More basically, the problem is the whole enterprise of Judaism on an ongoing basis. There seems to be a permanent revolution against moral standards and ethical practice. I am not ~~xxx~~ concerned here with the general deterioration of standards in the world, but quite specifically with the ethical failures within the committed Jewish community. For here the problem turns into an acute embarrassment. If Torah and mitzvot cannot inculcate moral living in a man, what can? And if indeed it cannot and does

not refine and ennoble one's character, what is its worth that it should lay claim to our most steadfast loyalties? Moral laxity ~~xxxxxxx~~ by any human being is reprehensible, but when an observant, believing Jew is morally debased, all of Judaism is brought into question. This is merely a restatement of the issue of kiddush hashem and hillul hashem, the sanctification or the desecration of the divine Name. The tradition teaches that God, as it were, throws in His lot with us, His reputation is either enhanced or or diminished by those who publicly accept Him. And this effect that we have upon His ~~xxxxxxx~~ good name is determined primarily by our moral conduct, for it is on this that the (believing) Jew is judged by his peers. God's destiny rides on the moral deportment of those who presume to speak on His behalf.

Whether lack of honor is greater amongst observant Jews than among others, or just the same as theirs, is not really of major consequence. What matters -- enough to shake ^{our} ~~our own~~ confidence in the value of a Torah life, and to hold ^{it} ~~us~~ up to public ridicule -- is the fact that ^{observant Jews} ~~we~~ are not better than others. Even were we to grant that social ethics is not more important than halakhic performance in the perspective of an integrated Judaism, yet certainly we ought to expect that a Jew committed to Judaism should prove superior to others in the quality of his human relations even as he is superior in the fulfillment of his purely ritual obligations. That this is not so, or even if it is, the fact that it is not obvious to everyone, is the problem of problems: the efficacy of the Jewish life in matters of character.

What are the causes of this ethical failure? I believe ^{in addition to what has been said above about developments in contemporary life,} the following constitutes at least a partial diagnosis:

First ^{is}

The Unnaturalness of a Full Jewish Life in the Contemporary World. Whether the Orthodox Jew retreats into a self-contained ghetto or believes in remaining relevant to contemporary life and culture, there can be little doubt that he suffers from an unavoidable split between himself and his larger environment. Neither the village limits of Squaretown nor the ideological web spun by the exponents of a "synthesis" of Judaism and Western culture can disguise this fissure between a normal, normative Jewish-halakhic existence and the realities of the world in which we live. These realities are so foreign to ^{the indigenous} our life-style ^{of} as Jews, they make demands upon ^{them} us which are so alien to the context of Judaism, that ^{they} we are left, willy nilly, with the profound feeling of ^{them} our differentness, our strangeness, and our inability to survive unless this differentness is preserved. ^{They} We are, in other words, in ^(exile) galut. This is certainly true for Jews in America and, to a lesser extent but at least in some significant measure, for the Orthodox Jew in Israel. Now this need for maintaining ~~our own~~ identity by highlighting ^{his} our differentness results in an imbalance in ^{his} our religious life. Since the non-Jew and the non-Orthodox Jew also advocate integrity, our otherness cannot be achieved in this area as easily as it can in the area of strictly religious actions. Hence, what begins as a sociological necessity soon becomes encrusted as a fact of Jewish experience which ostensibly reflects certain theological infirmities.

^{See also}

2. The Arrogance of Distinctiveness. This point in a way

resembles the first, except that the first speaks of historical circumstances, and here I intend the very nature of distinctiveness as such. There is a quite natural, human tendency to glory in one's area of prominence. As an instructive analogy, we may cite the examples provided for us by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Hasidim and Mitnagdim. The former emphasized the experiential aspects of religious existence: piety, ecstasy, feeling. The latter gave major prominence to the study of the Torah and, consequently, to the virtues of the intellect. Both movements discovered that spiritual accomplishments are accompanied by spiritual dangers, especially that of arrogance. Thus, the early Mitnagdic polemicists were quick to point to the haughtiness of Hasidim who imagined that their achievement of ^(ecstasy or communion) devekut distinguished them as closer to God than others. Hasidic writers -- especially R. Jacob Joseph of Polonne -- were almost vitriolic in their denunciation of Talmudic scholars who so gloried in their intellectual attainments that they treated all the rest of mankind with disdain. But this exposé of the dangers to character indigenous to spiritual or intellectual excellence was more than another weapon in the armory of polemics. The leaders of both movements acknowledged the existence of these problems in their own camps. Thus, the ^{founder of Hasidism} ~~Beal Shem Tov~~ himself, the Besht, (especially in the Tzavaat ha-Rivash) frequently warn^{ed} his followers against turning supercilious because they had succeeded in attaining devekut. And the leader of the Mitnagdim, R. Hayyim of Volozhin (especially in his Ruah Hayyim), repeatedly remind^{ed} his students at

the great academy of Volozhin that they must not submit to the ubiquitous threat of haughtiness which haunts the scholar at every step.

The same problem, mutatis mutandis, affects the Orthodox committed religious Jew today. It is not that ~~we are~~^{he is} self-conscious of extraordinary scholarship or that ~~we~~^{he} possess an unusually rich spiritual life; unfortunately ~~we are~~^{the religious community is} blessed with neither in sufficient measure, ~~and we know it.~~^{it is} But ~~we are~~^{it is} set off from others by ~~our~~^{its} observance of Jewish law, particularly the purely ritual commandments which are the most obviously "different" aspect of ~~our~~^{its} existence. Our Loyalty to the ritual mitzvot often costs ~~us~~^{a practicing religious Jew} much in terms of convenience, time, effort, social acceptance, money. It is not easy to be an observant Jew in the second third of twentieth century America. ~~Our~~ Shabbat, Kashrut, Tefillin, therefore become for ~~us~~^{him} a badge of pride -- and this last word ^{is} taken by ~~us~~^{him} in both its commendable and unattractive senses. In return for ~~our~~^{his} self-sacrifice, ~~we have~~^{he has} become something special. ~~We~~^{He} expects the world to acknowledge this. And if it doesn't, ~~why we~~^{he} in turn shall ignore this heinous and indifferent world which is really undeserving of ~~our~~^{his} attentions. From this sin of arrogance, all else flows. Once ~~we are~~^{he is} superior, it follows that the rest of the world is inferior, and if so there are two standards of conduct, one towards "our kind" and the other towards "the others." Of course, this is only an ephemeral, transitory stage, for soon the circle of "the others" is enlarged to include everyone outside of myself.

The Third cause we may discern can be termed the
A. The Beleaguered Fortress Psychology. The psychological
abyss that ^{religiously observant} ~~we~~ Orthodox Jews introduce to separate ^{from} ~~ourselves~~ from
all others, and which to a large extent is responsible for ~~our~~
ethical shortcomings (even as it has certain happy consequences
in fortifying ~~our~~ separate identity in a society which seeks to
enforce sameness), is a complicated one that is full of ambiv-
alencies. We mentioned, above, the factor of arrogance towards
others as a result of our Jewish distinctiveness. But of much
greater import is an exactly opposite attitude which results in
creating the very same distance between "us" and "them" and, in
turn, in producing undesirable character traits. What I refer
to is not arrogance but apprehension. Orthodox Jews are a min-
ority within a minority. The terrible attrition to which we have
been subjected in modern times has eroded our self-confidence and
aroused within us a hostile defensiveness towards the outer
world. Not only have Jews historically been tormented by non-
Jews, but Orthodox Jews have been, and are occasionally at the
present, shabbily treated by secular and non-conforming Jews. The
Orthodox Jew therefore begins to feel hemmed in, attacked, be-
leaguered. His natural, spontaneous reaction, is to man the ram-
parts and protect his fortress against the interlopers. This fear
of being overwhelmed, this anger at having our credentials as
authentic Jews questioned when we ^{believe} ~~know~~ we represent the legitimate
continuity of the people of Torah, this rage at being dismissed as
obsolete, this apprehensiveness about our future in a world and

- 11 -
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community ~~being~~ split apart by massive centrifugal forces -- all this leaves us with a feeling of loneliness in which our only way to survive is to protect what we have against everyone else. It does not matter that this reasoning contains logical or spiritual flaws; it is psychologically valid. Our heroic posture may look ridiculous from the perspective of history, but it is a fact, and one which is largely responsible for the quality of our conduct towards our fellow men.

Finally, an etiology of the impotence of religion in improving character must include
A. Failures in our Educational System. The typical curriculum of our Yeshivot, ^{on all levels, is remarkable by the absence of or} ~~so wanting in many other respects, is no~~ ^{paucity of efforts at} ~~less a failure in~~ the inculcation of ethical values. The subject matter in ^{these} ~~our~~ schools only tangentially concerns character training. Our Faculties are largely manned by people who carry over the patronizing attitude towards ethical studies by halakhic scholars that was already out of date in nineteenth century Eastern Europe. The emphases of our schools are two: virtuosity in intellectual acrobatics and punctillious observance of the commandments. Ethical issues are considered too simple for the halakhic ^(an attitude that is a carry-over from the anti-Muskovites, previously discussed) intellectual to concern himself with, and too vague for the observant Jew to be finicky about. The curricular victim of these twin emphases is any subject which is neither intellectually demanding nor easily manageable in practice in terms of specific, quantifiable acts. Thus, for instance, the inexcusable neglect of the study of Prophets and Agada in ^{the} ~~our~~ Yeshivot. Any simpleton,

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we have been taught to feel intuitively, can follow Isaiah, and there is not much practical value in it as regards ritual performance anyway. Whatever little is taught of it reduces, generally, to questions of translation. If the teacher is so inclined, the teaching of Prophets becomes largely an exercise in tracing verb roots and grammatical constructions. If a Rosh ^(father of Talmud) Yeshivah ^{Prophets,} ^{condescends to teach Havi}, it frequently becomes a stimulating -- but ethically unrewarding -- pursuit of subtle halakhic elements that no one ever suspected lay hidden beneath an otherwise innocent text.

Of course, there are reasons why this situation obtains in our schools. ^{They} ~~We~~ are still reacting to the noxious attempts ^("the enlightened ones") of the early Maskillim ^{and Reformers} to rend asunder the body of Judaism into the ethical and the ritual and to insert a "versus" in between them. When these groups opted for the Prophets over ^{and for the moral over the ceremonial, traditional Jews} the Talmud, ~~we~~ countered by correcting the imbalance, little suspecting that by so doing ^{they} ~~we~~ were freezing ^{them} ~~ourselves~~ in an opposite imbalance. To the Maskil, everything was Bible; for us, therefore, the Oral Law is supreme, and our major concern with the Written Law is to discover in it the themes of the Halakhah. To the Reformer, ethics is all that counts, except for some public ceremonies; we, therefore, concentrate on the exclusively ritual and, what is more, react with disdain to any decorous public ceremonial. ^{under certain limited conditions perhaps} Now this reaction is an understandable one, and even a ~~correct~~ ^{valuable} one

(thus the Pharisees often legislated le'hotzi mi-libban shel tzedukim, to emphasize their differences with the Saducees) -- provided we later learn to return to the fullness of Jewish life and experience. Thus it happens that the works of the Prophets, - mankind's major examples of the Word of God as applied to concrete historical circumstances, the realization of the sublimest ethical values of the Torah, is ignored in the very schools dedicated to their perpetuation.

Such a diagnosis may well leave one with a feeling of futility about the efficacy of any means to improve the situation. But such pessimism is premature and self-defeating. The task must be undertaken, and renewed in each generation. The potential for hillul hashem is too great to permit the silence and passivity of defeatism. Certain fundamental psychological attitudes which are the result of presently intractable social circumstances, cannot be changed but they can be modified; and even if not, the very attempt is in itself a virtue. But one thing can be done -- to restore the emphasis on the moral, ^{on} the ethical, on human character as grounded in Jewish ^{authentic} thought and values.

This, then, is the apology for ~~xxxx~~ bringing these chapters to the attention of the public. The times demand it -- and perhaps each time does in its own way --- in order to preserve the integrity of the Jewish personality.

This is not a work of Musar, and contains very little of practical ethical guidance. Neither psychology nor sociology will be of major interest to us here, not even moral philosophy for its own sake in the accepted sense. We shall be speaking not of individual moral

traits, but of the moral personality in which they are grounded; not in characteristics but in character. It is the broadly based and interrelated set of responses ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ that will be our ^{primary} ~~major~~ concern.

In the ^{second} ~~first~~ chapter we shall briefly touch upon the one element without which an ideology of character is impossible, and that is: Freedom. Here we shall intend primarily to stake out the area of Judaism's claims in its insights in character, in contrast to the reigning doctrines in contemporary America.

Our ^{third} ~~second~~ chapter will attempt to analyze the concept which, above all others, grants to man value in the eyes of Judaism. This ~~study~~ study of the ~~idea~~ idea of the Image of God will then lead, in Chapter ^{IV} ~~III~~, to the associated concepts of Likeness of God and the Imitation of God.

Then, having explored the theistic bases of Jewish characterology, we shall proceed to an analysis -- better, exegesis -- of Maimonides, and attempt to show how, to a large extent, his typology of character is based on the views ~~xxx~~ adumbrated in the previous chapters. Having presented the characterology of a leading medieval Jewish philosopher of the rationalist school, we shall then outline the major insights of R. Shneur Zalman of Ladi, founder of the HaBaD school in Hasidism, on our theme. ^{seventh and} The final chapter will then present the views of a strict rabbinic R. Abraham Isaiah Karelitz (The Hazon Ish), Halakhist, /opposed both to Hasidism and Musar, and his conception of moral character in the context of Judaism.

I have no illusions about the ability of any book to change great tides. Experience has taught me that books -- at any rate, ~~the ones~~

I have written so far -- create no waves; I shall be thankful if this little volume can initiate at least one ^{tiny} ~~little~~ ripple in the soul of one reader. Then, at least for a fleeting moment, this essay in Jewish character will have had some effect in convincing ^{a solitary} ~~one~~ reader that Judaism is richer than he thought it was.

R. Israel Lipkin Salanter, founder of the Musar school, once said that it is worth preaching Musar -- even if only one person listens, even if that one person is himself, and even if its only consequence is that he prays the evening service ^{that night} with a bit more feeling and sincerity, ^{than usual}.

① *See references in R. Reuven Margoliot's Mekor Hessed, to Sefer Hasidim (Mosad Harav Kook ed:1960), p.349f.

2. *For an account of this controversy on an ideological and theological plane, see my The Study of Torah Lishmah (Torah for its Own Sake) in the Works of Rabbi Hayyim of Valozhin and His Contemporaries (Hebrew, Mosad Harav Kook, Jerusalem:1972) chap. ix. A fictionalized account of the encounter between a man of Musar and the Hazon Ish may be found in Hayyim Grade's Tzemach Atlas, in the original Yiddish or in the Hebrew translation.

3. *See Hazon Ish al Inyanei Emunah Bitahon Ve'od (Jerusalem:1954) chap.iii.

4. *For references, see my book on Torah Lishmah, mentioned ~~of~~ ^{at}, ~~previously~~, p.203, no. 95,96.