

SECOND SEMESTER

R. BACHYA IBN PAKUDAH AND HIS CHOVOT HA-LEVAVOT

(assign in advance Introductory by Rudavsky & Maimonides to guide, pp. xv - xxv and 1-11)

I. Biographical Material

*11th century: marks end Asiatic (Babylon) period Jewish history, beginning

European. Bachya is the first Spanish Jewish thinker.

*Few biographic details. Know only that he was a Spaniard, and a Dayan. *(Even pronunciation?)* *his name is* *murder!*

But from his book, can divine that: lonely person, probably no wife, children.

Pessimistic, as was contemporary Ibn Gabirol *(poverty & y. details - charic 3. mother)* *(he wrote famous - he forgotten)*

*Educational Background: in addition to Bible & Talmud (as Dayan he must have been very well informed on these) we detect knowledge of classical philosophy, science, mathematics.

*Attitudes: With Saadia, accepts 3-fold source of Judaism (Revelation, Tradition, Reason) with great emphasis on the rational. Initiates the ethical movement in Jewish thought, which centers about Love of G-d (to which love of man is secondary and from which it derives). Prior to Love of G-d comes Knowledge of G-d (this i.e. first must have proper idea of G-d, then strive for goal: love; accepted later by Maimonides) and a spiritual aristocracy holding that chosen few were superior to masses; yet love for despised masses - the chosen must raise them. Also: ascetic tendency, despising all material pleasures, even action as such, in favor of "duties of the heart".

II. The "Chovot ha-Levavot."

*Published: about 1040 in Arabic.

*Is a systematic analysis of religious duties devolving upon heart and conscience, as opposed to action-laws (Chovot ha-Evarim). The dichotomy is an original contribution

*The book is both scientific analysis and poetic essay, a vision of man's redemption from sensuality.

*Division of book:

1. *פירוש* *הפירוש* - the existence and glory of G-d.

2. *הפירוש* *הפירוש* - the recognition of G-d's wisdom & grace as reflected in his creation

3. לער ווארע אפמאכען - establishing a proper relationship with G-d.
4. לער דערמאנען - faith and confidence in G-d.
5. לער יאן צו מאלען - directing all thoughts and actions to G-d.
6. לער דערמאנען - appreciating the weakness & inadequacy of man before G-d.
7. לער דערמאנען - the return to G-d after leaving Him.
8. לער אפמאכען - constant introspection on man's duties to G-d.
9. לער דערמאנען - resisting sensual temptations which lead man astray from G-d.
10. לער דערמאנען - the goal of all: the love of G-d.

In class, read from Bachya's Hakdamah, paragraphs 2-4 - 3-5

(Lewin-Epstein edition, Jerusalem 1948, lines 47-120, pp. 11-13)

additionally: where we say that our main task is to acknowledge G-d as a result of contemplation of Nature - mentioned in the introduction that by the contemplation of Nature we will result from the contemplation of Nature