THE RACE QUESTION AND MODERN THOUGHT

Jewish Thought as a Factor in Civilization

by Leon ROTH

UNESCO

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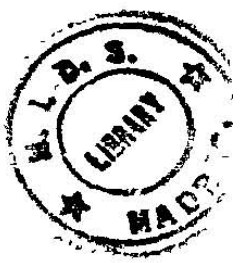

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The series to which this booklet belongs has, as its subject, the race question as seen from the standpoint of the main currents of contemporary thought. It will, in particular, comprise studies defining the attitude of the great world religions towards the physical differences by which humanity is characterized.

In such a survey, the attitude of Judaism cannot be overlooked. It would have been logical to include in this series a booklet entitled Judaism and the Race Question. *This, following the example set in the other publications, would have contained an analysis of the religious and philosophical texts that have guided Israel in its relations with other ethnic groups. Such a subject seemed indicated, if only because of the attacks levelled by many anti-Semites against so-called "Jewish racism".*

But it was felt that the thesis of "Jewish racism" should not be combated in the setting of anti-Semitic dialectics. Professor Léon Roth's booklet, therefore, does not deal with race. It is none the less a valuable contribution at a time when men's minds are troubled by modern manifestations of "racism". In asking the author to give a short description of Judaism's specific contribution to world civilization, we had a double aim in view: firstly, to refute the accusation of "racism" so often levelled against the Jews, by underlining what, in Judaism, is the very negation of racial exclusivism; and secondly, to record the extent of the debt humanity owes to Judaism.

It is not the least of the injustices committed by the West towards the Jews that it has forgotten their contribution to that intellectual and moral heritage of mankind which we regard as the very essence of our civilization. We cannot of course expect from peoples the feelings of gratitude that are, in certain circumstances, due from individuals; but the idea of "debt" has, all the same, played its part in history. Yet the same

Christian West has all too often displayed indifference and cruelty when the Jews were going through times of grievous trial. Even today, those whose indifference or silence enabled massacres of the Jews to take place set their conscience at rest by accusing them of having been the instrument of their own misfortune, through their own exclusivism and their own "racism".

Conscious or unconscious racists—and there are millions in the latter category—often speak of the "destructive spirit" of the Jews, as if every Jew carried within himself germs that threatened the stability of our society. The discriminatory measures adopted by Nazi Germany and its satellite governments were justified, in the view of chauvinists, by what they claimed to be the impossibility of assimilating the Jews, who in their opinion constituted, within each nation, a foreign body that was a perpetual menace. The anti-Semites consider that the Jew is disposed to destroy the fundamental values of our civilization because of his actual biological background. This prejudice has by no means disappeared with Nazism. Its currency today has inspired the inclusion of the present booklet in this series.

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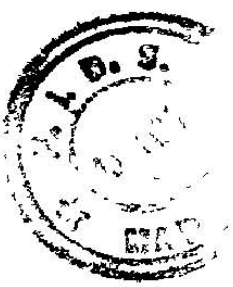

I. INTRODUCTORY

1. The great bodies of constructive ideas on which modern Western civilization is built are conventionally traced back to Israel, Greece and Rome: morals and religion to Israel, the sciences and the plastic and literary arts to Greece, law and public administration to Rome. If this is true, it is true only roughly. No civilization can exist without possessing in some measure every one of these activities. Greece and Rome had religion and much of it survives today, just as Israel and Greece had, and bequeathed, law. Indeed, religion and art and science and law appear everywhere (howbeit in varying degrees) together. Further, there is much in modern Western civilization which is unique and original to it, and where the "legacy" from the past is most apparent, it has been most modified in use.

This essay will make therefore no exclusive or pre-eminent claims. It will try to present Jewish thought as a coherent system of ideas; but it will be mindful of the fact that the truer the ideas, the more they may be expected to have appeared elsewhere. Nor will it insist on the connexion between Jewish thought and the individuals known as Jews. In a sense, Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Handel's *Messiah* or Blake's *Illustrations to the Book of Job* are Jewish, although their authors were not. One may compare the connexion of mathematical thought with its first inspiration in Greece, or of the Roman road with its original Roman builders. Roman roads were also built by other than Roman citizens; and mathematical thinking, although brought into the world with and by the Greeks and remaining (possibly) true to its Greek type, has produced results far beyond any Greek achievement. An old Talmudic saying is helpful here. Why was the Law given in the wilderness, the Rabbis ask; and answer: In order that no one country could claim proprietary rights to it.

2. This is true of ideas of any kind. They are by nature universal. They arise presumably in individuals, and they develop their power through communities. But to speak of them in sole association with one person or community is to belie their character. Indeed, the more general they are, the more their character as ideas is manifested.

Further, they can be described only up to a point. They can never be described finally. They are only what they can be, and that cannot be known until they are. They may conceal within themselves at any one time what will reveal itself only at another.

For ideas are not dead things. They are alive and their life is their own. They may at times seem dead or asleep. But suspended life returns; sleepers awake. Like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision they may breathe again and stand up.

3. Like everything living, ideas are active. They are not mere words to be manipulated at our convenience. Rather they manipulate us. They are charged with energy of their own. They possess, or are possessed by, their own power. Their action is therefore unpredictable. However casually they may be cast into the sea of events, they may cause a maelstrom not to be foreseen.

And we may add a last preliminary consideration. Like any other organic growth, ideas manifest themselves at different stages of development; but we can only appreciate the different stages of development in the light of the full and complete. It is only the perfected product which gives us the key to the understanding and interpretation of the imperfect.

4. When speaking then of the ideas behind Jewish thought we shall treat of their highest development. It is obvious that it is the lot of very few, men as well as ideas, to reach, or maintain, self-completion. But however we judge men, ideas should be taken and judged only at their best. The Jewish prophets dreamed of universal peace and clothed the dream in imperishable language. That idea remains, however much the prophets themselves may seem in other passages to forget it. We shall then ignore much which is, possibly, imperfect, and fasten our eyes on the high peaks.

II. THE BACKGROUND

1. Each of the three great peoples on which Western civilization is generally held to rest conceived a distinct idea of itself as contrasted with others. The Greeks thought of themselves as masters of articulate speech as opposed to the uncultivated barbarians who could only mutter incoherent sounds. The Romans, leaving the arts and sciences to others, recognized their destiny in empire: *regere imperio populos*. The Jews, intensely conscious of God and his working in man, saw themselves as repudiators of idolatry.

This conception is enshrined, according to the traditional etymology, in the very word Hebrew which is the alternative name for Jew; and in order to appreciate its paramount importance it is worth while referring to the Jews' account of themselves as it is recorded for us in the Bible. The account may not be an exact recital of what actually occurred, but it is none the worse for that. Indeed, it is in such "myths" that a people's character and aims are most intimately and profoundly reflected. But we must be careful to follow the story in its traditional form, not in the form which it has assumed as the result of critical examination. The traditional story will help us to understand the subject of our enquiry, the special character of Jewish thinking about the world. The revised critical version will only help us to understand the critics.

2. According to the traditional story the Jews (Judaei) are the men of Judah; and Judah was one of the children of Israel or Jacob, himself a son of Isaac who in his turn was a son of Abraham. Abraham came from a family which lived "beyond the river". "Beyond the river" is in Hebrew "*Eber* la-Nahar"; and from the word "Eber" is derived, according to the tradition, the other name of the Jews, the Hebrews.

The Jews or Hebrews then are those who came from

beyond the river; and they came for a reason which bit deep into the national consciousness and became to themselves the symbol of their being. Terah, Abraham's father, was an idolater. He worshipped "other gods". And Abraham, by divine command, left his family and homeland beyond the river in order to be able to worship the one true God. Thus Abraham in the consciousness of the Jewish people represents a fresh start in the history of humanity. He is "chosen", and chosen for a purpose. He is appointed the "father of a multitude of nations". He is the "friend of God", plucked from his old environment and set down in a new land in order to found a new family and a new people with a new way of life for the regeneration of mankind.

The universal significance of this act is emphasized from the first. Abraham is to be a name of blessing to all the families of the earth. Yet the difficulties were great and were not to be overcome by the mechanical application of any principle of heredity. Abraham's first-born was rejected in favour of Isaac, Isaac's first-born in favour of Jacob (afterwards called Israel); while of Jacob's own 12 sons the oldest were condemned either as weak, or as violent and treacherous, men. The leadership passed to Judah (whence finally the word "Jew"); and the children of Israel went down into Egypt.

But again there was need of a fresh start. Egypt became a house of bondage and the children of Israel slaves. But they were brought out of it to a "new domicile of freedom", and the covenant with their ancestors was reaffirmed. This time, however, it is not one individual with whom the pact was made, nor is the maker of the pact a local or family deity. The "whole earth" is declared to be God's; and within it the children of Israel are to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation".

3. The secular history of the Jews began to take shape with King David and his son Solomon, and after many vicissitudes ceased with the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in A.D. 70. From that time they have lived not as a political nation with a territory of their own but as a separate community, or rather as a number of separate communities, more or less autonomous, scattered over the world and distinguished from the peoples among which they dwelt by various, and

often varying, marks. Of these, religion, internal organization, social habit and (sometimes) language were the more prominent. Time and again members of these communities have come to the notice of the world: Philo, Avicebrol, Maimonides, Spinoza, or in the modern period, Mendelssohn, Heine, Ricardo, Disraeli, Karl Marx. Of the leaders of thought in our own century one recalls readily the names of Bergson, Husserl, Durkheim and Freud; among the still living, of Einstein. Yet it would be difficult to determine in what degree, or whether at all, these thinkers owe their inspiration to the ancient covenant between God and Jewry, and it is to this that we must return.

4. The ancient covenant, reaffirmed many times—we are *following*, it will be remembered, the Biblical account—is always of one tenor. It is the assertion, and acceptance, of the sovereignty of God and with it the obligation to abandon one way of life and to assume another. The phraseology is almost stereotyped: "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye *not* do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye *not* do. . . . *My* judgments shall ye do, and *My* statutes shall ye keep." The repudiation of idolatry has thus a definite and forcible positive intention. It is no theoretical doctrine of the constitution of the universe or of the powers controlling the universe. It is a practical rejection of habits of living which are declared to be disgusting and abominable.

5. The new way of life is no secret. It is neither a priestly cult nor a Pythagorean rule for initiates alone. Nor is it a doctrine with varying shades of meaning adapted to different degrees of intelligence by means of esoteric formulæ. In essence it is simple: "to do justice and judgment"; to have "clean hands and a pure heart"; to "do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God". But as it is passionate in its insistence on what it knows as good, so it is uncompromising in its condemnation of what it knows as evil:sexual mal-practice; human sacrifice; the breaking of troth; the grinding of the face of the poor. It is given through various channels but its message does not vary whether coming from legislator or prophet, psalmist or chronicler or priest. It is always

plain spoken, without mystery or metaphor. Not is it given as advice or counsel of prudence. It is command: "Thus saith the Lord".

Its simplicity is elemental. The first murderer is seen as driven off the earth by the earth itself; the inhabitants of Canaan are "vomited out" by their country for their abominable practices. There are actions which are unnatural; and the penalty for unnatural acts is expulsion from nature by nature itself.

The right way of life is thus not arbitrary or conventional. It is involved in the very make-up of the physical universe. It has its roots deep down in the nature of things and claims obedience from all the children of earth.

6. The Jewish Bible does not begin with the Jews. It begins with the Creation and the story of Adam. In Hebrew Adam means simply *man*, and the Rabbis quote the verse in Genesis v, 1 as: "This is the book of the generations of *man*", remarking that it does not say "of Priest", "of Levite", or "of Jew", but "of *man*". The children of earth are envisaged as one family. They have one ancestor who is father of all. There is by nature no such thing as caste or class, no differentiation by blood or descent. Human equality is thus a primary fact: the pedigree of all men is the same. Again we may quote the Rabbis. "Why was man created one?", they ask—and answer: "In order that no man should say to another, My father was greater than thine."

What is true of human beings as individuals holds good also of the families, and the family of families, to which they belong. The races and nations and peoples are all seen as clusters on one genealogical tree. They are "families of the earth", interconnected and of one origin.

The family structure is thus all-pervasive. Human life is inherently social. It is lived in community and disdains the anarchy of "each man doing what is right in his own eyes".

7. The right way of life is conceived of as the detail of the general principle of the love of God, and by it the love of God is preserved from becoming an empty formula or an abstract desiderium. The love of God is, as it were,

translated from an article of belief to a method of living or a mode of behaviour. As such it can be taught. It was to be expounded, therefore, on set occasions in public, and it was to be the constant subject of home study and private meditation: "taught to your children with all care, talked of when you are at rest in your house or walking by the way, when you go to sleep and when you get up . . . fixed as a sign on your hand and a mark on your brow . . . lettered on the pillars of your house and over the doors of your towns".[1]

Thus education—the acquisition of knowledge and its diffusion—takes its place as a vital element in the life of religion. Religion is realized as proceeding from thinking as well as feeling in a unity of theory and practice. It is an amalgam of knowledge and action and love, the knowledge preceding the love and issuing in action.

8. It is a characteristic of the sacred books of the Jews that in them the Jews are not portrayed as perfect. On the contrary, both as a people and as individuals they are shown to stand in especial need of the education in which they saw the essential preparation for religion. Hence the retention in the Hebrew Bible of many survivals of crude and undeveloped ideas. The instances have been industriously collected and are well known. When Jacob deceived his blind father he showed himself (to all appearance) a sneak; when David measured out two-thirds of the Moabites and slaughtered them, he acted as a barbarian. The so-called imprecatory psalms might well have been produced by propagandist hymn-writers of our own day.

All this is obvious and needs no remark. Such were the accepted ways of the time. What is remarkable is that, as against all this, we are offered specific teaching on a different and higher level, and that this higher level is noted and registered as such. If we have got beyond many Biblical positions it is at the instance of the Bible itself. For example, Abraham is depicted as teaching a higher morality to God: the innocent should

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[1] In this, as in some other passages (pp. 18, 19, 41, 42, 43, 48, 53, 54, 59). I have taken, with the permission of the publishers, the Basic English version (Cambridge University Press and Evans Bros. Ltd., 1949). Being simple and unfamiliar, it brings the meaning home to the reader more vividly.

not be punished with the guilty. Again, it is the Bible itself which condemns David as a man of blood; and it is significant that it quietly ascribes to him a psalm of repentance which has become a classic of religion. Nor is it to the point that, in his last charge to his son Solomon, David seems to have reverted to his earlier courses. For the tradition he remains the accredited author of a different outlook on life altogether: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

I stress the phrase "for the tradition" because it is the tradition that matters. The painful accuracies of historical criticism are valuable in their own sphere, but they have little significance outside it. The psalm is inscribed "of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba". We are deliberately sent back to a great crime; and although the story is well known it is worth considering it here briefly since its point is closely relevant to our subject.

In order to gain possession of Bathsheba, David had her husband killed. The method, which would presumably not be considered unusual, is recounted in graphic detail. But at the end we are removed to another sphere. Another kind of note is struck. As if casually there are introduced the words: "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." With this there begins another story altogether. The prophet appears, and through him God takes a hand.

The point to be remarked on is this. Story No. 1 is conventional. It is the ordinary run of life, whether in the so-called fierce Orient in the distant past or anywhere else in our own day. Its analogue can be found in any history book and in countless poems and novels. Story No. 2 is Hebrew Bible, that is, Jewish thought in its quintessence. To the question what in Jewish thought is significant for humanity it would be a brief and not inadequate answer to say: the story of Nathan and David, and Psalm 51.

We may take another example, not less known. Ahab, the king, prompted by his queen, dispossesses Naboth: again the conventional story of greed backed by power. And again God intervenes, this time through Elijah the

Tishbite. But in this case there is no softening of the blow by parable or argument. "Hast thou killed and also taken possession?" The indictment is direct and sears like fire.

9. These two examples suffice to illumine a fundamental problem. It is often asked whether the way of life ordained in the Hebrew Bible is tribal custom or universal law, that is, whether we have in it, in the full sense of the term, morality. The occasions are of course local, indeed, tribal. Any human occasion is bounded by space and time and is therefore of necessity limited. But in the cases quoted, however local the occasion, the significance is universal; and it is not only universal but it is offered and recognized as such. Not to kill and seize your neighbour's vineyard or your neighbour's wife is not offered as a temporary piece of advice under special circumstances which may never recur. Nathan's parable, like Elijah's sentence, is completely general. Generality, indeed, is the very essence of both. The parable is of any rich man and any poor man, that is, of man as man; while King Ahab is condemned by Elijah on entirely general grounds as a common murderer and thief. When Nathan says to the king: "Thou art the man", he is giving concrete expression to the idea that there are rules of life with authority over all men, rich and poor, king and subject, without exception. And the case is rated at its full importance. However petty the kinglet in our view, he is yet, to the narrator, king; and the point of the story is that even kings are subject to law.

Nor is this an isolated case, a judgment casually conceived and as casually forgotten. It is of a piece with the whole trend of the Biblical narrative in which the idea of one law for all is an ultimate presumption. The very first act of the chosen king, according to the Deuteronomist, is to be the making of a copy of the Law with his own hand "*so that his heart should not be lifted up over his countrymen*".

10. Thus the religious message of Jewry as seen by Jewry itself comprised, as an essential part, the idea of law as universal and omnipresent. The new life is to be guided by regulation. Men and their passions need direction and control. Even revenge must be regulated: "an eye for an eye", and no more. [The condemners of the (Roman) *lex*

talionis supposed to be exemplified in this phrase would do well to consider the progress involved in turning *talio* into a *lex*. But in its literal sense it was never a *lex* in Hebrew law, since the system of compounding by ransom or punishment by fine was fully recognized and employed. Indeed monetary compensation is specifically mentioned in the very sections in which the phrase is used.] But regulation does not exclude personal feeling. The "great *commandment*" is to "love thy neighbour as thyself". We may consider this injunction in its context (Lev. xix) since we shall find in it a further and significant illustration of the preceding:

"Do not be cruel to your neighbour or take what is his; do not keep back a servant's payment from him all night till the morning. Do not put a curse on those who have no hearing, or put a cause of falling in the way of the blind, but keep the fear of your God before you: I am the Lord. Do no wrong in your judging: do not give thought to the position of the poor, or honour to the position of the great; but be a judge to your neighbour in righteousness. Do not go about saying untrue things among people, or take away the life of your neighbour by false witness: I am the Lord. Let there be no hate in your heart for your brother; but you may make a protest to your neighbour, so that he may be stopped from doing evil. Do not make attempts to get equal with one who has done you wrong, or keep hard feelings against the children of your people, but have love for your neighbour as for yourself: I am the Lord."

Now in the last three verses there is, or seems to be, a limitation, as if the rule holds only in connexion with one's neighbour or brother or member of one's own people, but whoever is not one's neighbour or brother or member of one's own people may be lied to, hated and made the object of false witness, with impunity and without reproach. On the face of it this seems unlikely, and the fact is probably the simple one that the rules were laid down in such a way that the plain man could understand them; and it is natural in a small society to say: treat your neighbour and kinsman decently, because your neighbour and kinsman are the only people you meet. But let us read on: "And if a man from another country is living in your land with you, do not make life hard for him; let him be to you as one of your country-

men and have love for him as for yourself; for you were living in a strange land, in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God".

The notable point about this further passage is both the giving of a reason and the reason given. Through the giving of a reason the action laid down is seen as rational; and the reason given, although historical and personal, is typical and exemplary. *Because* you were foreigners yourselves in Egypt, you can understand a foreigner's feelings, and for that reason you must treat him as one of your own ("love him as yourself"). All men's feelings are much the same, and what holds in one place and for one person holds in another place and for another. Thus both the reason adduced and the action ordained relate to whoever can come to live in your community, i.e. everybody.

As one reads further, this becomes even clearer: "Do not make false decisions in questions of yardsticks and weights and measures. Have true scales, true weights and measures for all things". We have here a prosaic, but sound, definition of justice: not only all men, but all yardsticks, should be equal; and they should be equal under all circumstances and everywhere—again, a completely general, and hence moral, requirement.

11. The universality of the way of life under which the Jews believed themselves to have been elected to serve is most fitly illustrated by the majestic passage known popularly as the Ten Commandments. I say "known popularly" for two reasons. First, the Hebrew does not call them the Ten Commandments but the "ten words"; second, a great German Biblical scholar found another set of commandments which by careful pruning can be made to look like 10, and which he says are the original set. And so indeed, for all I know, they may be; but they are not the Ten which have impressed themselves upon the imagination, and helped train the conscience, of mankind. Since it is this which interests us we may be forgiven if we turn to them as they are offered in the plain text and as they have been taught throughout the centuries, engraving themselves on the minds of countless millions. Taking them as they are and without attempting a detailed analysis we may note:

(a) In their two "tables" (traditionally related, the first

to duty towards God, the second to duty towards man) they comprise both religious and social ethics;
(b) They are general, giving universal rules, and uncompromising, allowing no exceptions;
(c) They are simple, open to the understanding of all men, and while not demonstrated propositions they are reasonable;
(d) They begin with the self-affirmation of the God who intervenes in the concrete events of history and who, although imageless, cares for the conduct of individual men; and end with a condemnation of human enviousness and greed which lead to social disorder and crime.

The Ten Words are thus the very type of absolute law harnessed to the service of humanity, taking account of the "desire of the eyes" and the "inclination of the heart" of man, while yet insisting on man's full and final dependence on the immaterial and the unseen.

12. The inclusion of "thou shalt not covet" among the Ten Words, like the inclusion of "thou shalt not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in the way of the blind" in the "law of holiness", suggest a wider interpretation of the word "law" than is current today. The "law" (Torah) of the Jews was rather "teaching" than the written words of a legal code; and if it comes from God—and to the Jewish scriptures there is no doubt on this point—there are many possible media for its communication. It may be brought down from Heaven by a voice or on tablets; it may be set up on monuments by the banks of Jordan; it may be transmuted by prophets or transcribed by kings; it may be sought from the lips of priests or wise men. Yet the end is one and the same, that it be engraved on the heart. It is not in heaven or across the sea but "very nigh unto thee in thy heart", writes the legislator; "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it", proclaims the prophet of the destruction; "A new heart will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you . . . and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them", says the priest-prophet of the exile. The ideal, be it noted, is not that commonly known as "autonomy", the activity of the will laying down laws for itself. When men see their wills as the sole source and substance of law, the result

is chaos and destruction. Law comes from without; but in man's highest development he need not be taught it because it is written within.

Thus the "way" of which we are now arrived at the culminating expression is as far removed from the orgiastic as it is from the utilitarian; it is neither an intermittent excitement nor a *do ut des*, a giving in order to receive. It is an "enlargement" of the heart, a "uniting" of the personality; a refreshing, and a refashioning, of the soul. It is life lived, here and now, in the secret place of the most high. It is the irradiation of everyday existence by the eternal. At times it is impatient—"How long, O Lord, how long?"—but its vision is clear, its confidence unshaken. It serves God for naught. It walks in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. It sees light in his light, in his presence fulness of joy. The way is a "blessing", the blessing a "glory".

13. We see that the account given by the Jews of themselves involves ideas which have become, in one shape or another, part of the heritage of Western man: election and vocation; freedom and equality; the duty of education; the all-importance of the moral element in life; morality as rational and universal; life as community; the coupling of the love of God and of neighbour; the reality and power of the unseen. The survey has been hurried and necessarily incomplete, but it suffices to justify the remark of the translator of Ecclesiasticus (second century B.C.) that "many and great things have been delivered unto us by the law and the prophets and by the others that have followed in their steps, for the which things Israel ought to be commended for learning and wisdom".

In what follows we shall try and examine some of these "great things"; although we must regretfully remind ourselves, in the words of the same translator, that "things originally spoken in Hebrew have not the same force in them when they are translated into another tongue".

III. BASIC IDEAS

1. It has taken many cultures to make our world, and it is tempting to seek one central principle for each. If the contribution of Greece is primarily science and the arts and that of Jewry ethical religion, it may be remarked that both art and science are products of the contemplative spirit while ethical religion is action and creative change.

The Greeks set out from the universe and saw its origin in the generation of world from world or in the imposition of order on pre-existing chaos. For them matter was eternal and the world-process a shaping of matter by form; there never was a fresh beginning, rather an endless recurrence. Their deity was not a producer or innovator, but—in their highest vision—"thought thinking itself"; and it initiated movement not as an active subject but as the passive object of thought and desire. Their typical achievements, the arts and sciences, represent similarly an acceptance of the existent. As achievements they are free in so far as they proceed from an untrammeled spiritual activity; but the activity, in Aristotle's phrase about God, is an "activity of immobility". The pattern of Greek attainment is the autonomy of mathematics discovering abstract relations or of philosophy enquiring into the structure of the real. Its intellectual ideal is the freedom to judge; its moral aim not the doing of what one wills but the willing of what one can.

The Jews set out from God and saw him as essentially creative. He creates the world, creates a way of life for man, and creates a people to bring this way of life into actuality; indeed he is prepared to try again and to create a new man, and a new heaven and a new earth, if those already created prove inadequate to their task and his purpose. The Jewish God is no philosopher and his path is tangled with logical contradictions. So far from being pure thought concentrated on itself he wills a world outside himself and cares for it; and he cares

for it all, animate and inanimate alike, and, among the animate, for animals as well as men. He bans all images of himself since nothing physical can express his nature; and although he is a "devouring fire"—the ideal of the absorption of man in the divine is not Jewish—man is to walk in his ways and cleave to him. Some of the most impressive sections of the Hebrew Bible portray his intense productivity: the first chapter of Genesis with its serene and comprehensive "in the beginning God created heaven and earth"; the last chapters of Job with their detailed and imposing pictures of the huge beasts which seem to have been created simply from the joy of creation. (Even the staid psalmist realizes that God could have created such a monster as Leviathan only in order to play with it.) The morning stars sing together —doubtless because they have no other purpose or occupation. No wonder the mediæval world found such difficulty in reconciling Aristotle and the Bible!

2. But there were "contemplatives" among the Jews as there were "activists" among the Greeks and we may well suspect such generalizations and deductions from a supposed ethos of Greek and Jew. Yet it remains true that historically it was the idea of creation which formed the great wall of division between Greek and Jewish thought. We may see this at its most conscious in the decisive criticisms on this score of the Aristotelian world-view which are to be found in the mediæval schoolmen both Jewish and Christian; but it appears already in the typical accounts of the first clashes between Greek culture and Jewish. "Fear not this butcher", the mother of the seven sons is made to say to the youngest (II Macc. vii), but "lift thine eyes unto the heaven and the earth and see all things that are therein, and recognize that God made them not of things that were".

But the point was not conceived abstractly in its philosophical interest, and again we may quote the mother: "The Creator of the world, who fashioned the first origin of man and devised the first origin of all things, in mercy giveth back to you again both your spirit and your life, as ye now condemn your own selves for his laws' sake". The doctrine of creation served to comfort these protomartyrs by giving them a reasoned ground for the hope of immortality.

3. By an illuminating paradox the Jews were greeted in the classical world with the epithet "atheist". Neither they nor their God were ever understood. The difficulty felt was put clearly by the Roman historian Tacitus (Hist. V, 5): "The Egyptians worship animals of many kinds and images made by men's hands". (Their gods are thus understandable.) "The Jews acknowledge one God only, and they conceive of him by the mind alone (*mente sola unumque numen intelligunt*)." He then goes on to specify further: "The Jews condemn as impious all who, with perishable materials wrought into the human shape, form representations of the deity. That Being, they say, is above all and eternal, given neither to change or decay".

Tacitus' cold reference to the object and nature of Jewish worship ("one God only and conceived by the mind alone") had a political as well as a religious aspect, "for it was in consequence of this [conception of God's nature]", he continues, "that they allow no effigies of him in their cities, much less in their temples: their kings are not given this flattery, nor the Cæsars this honour".

As is well known, the refusal of the Jews to accord divine honours to Cæsar played a large part in the events which lead to their destruction as a political entity. "They had been taught from their very swaddling clothes", writes the Jewish thinker Philo of Alexandria, in connexion with the Roman Emperor Caligula's order to set up a statue of himself in the Temple at Jerusalem [*On the Virtues and Office of Ambassadors* (Legatio ad Caium), xvi sq, trans. Yonge], "by their parents and teachers and instructors, and even before that by their holy laws, and also by their unwritten maxims and customs, to believe that there was but one God, their father and the creator of the world.

"For all others, all men, all women, all cities, all nations, every country and region of the earth, I had almost said the whole of the inhabited world, although groaning over what was taking place, did nevertheless flatter him (Caligula) . . . and some of them even introduced the barbaric custom into Italy of falling down in adoration before him, adulterating their native feelings of Roman liberty.

"But this single nation of the Jews, alone refusing to

perform these actions, was suspected by him of wishing to counteract his desires, since it was accustomed to embrace voluntary death as an entrance to immortality, for the sake of not permitting any of their national or hereditary customs to be destroyed, even if it were of the most trivial character. . . . But in this case what was put in motion was not a trifle but a thing of the very greatest importance, namely, erecting the created and perishable nature of man, as far at least as appearance went, into the uncreated and imperishable nature of God, which the nation correctly judged to be the most terrible of all impieties. . . ."

(One may add that in this particular case the significanee of the general refusal to give a man the status of God was heightened by the man in question being the head of the state, Cæsar himself.)

4. A temple whose holy place dared not be occupied by a physical image was a novelty in the Greco-Roman world, and it aroused the astonishment of the Romans from the time when Pompey first penetrated into the Temple. Philo gives the text of an interesting letter, written to Caligula by King Agrippa of Judaea, in which this point is given re-iterated emphasis:

"O my lord and master, Caius, this temple has never, from the time of its original foundation till now, admitted any form made by hands, because it has been the abode of God. Now pictures and images are only imitations of those gods who are perceptible to the outward senses; but it was not considered by our ancestors to be consistent with the reverence due to God to make any image or representation of the invisible God. . . .

"On which account no one, whether Greek or barbarian, satrap or king, or implacable enemy; no sedition, no war, no capture, no destruction, no occurrence that has ever taken place, has ever threatened this temple with such innovation as to place in it any image, or statue, or any work of any kind made with hands. For though enemies have displayed their hostility to the inhabitants of the country, still either reverence or fear has possessed them sufficiently to prevent them from abrogating any of the laws which were established at the beginning as tending to the honour of the creator and father of the universe. . . ."

And he continues:

"How many deaths then do you not suppose that the people, who have been taught to regard this place with such holy reverence, would willingly endure rather than see a statue introduced into it? I verily believe that they would rather slay all their whole families, with their wives and children, and finally themselves, in the ruins of their houses and families: and Tiberius knew this well. And what did your great-grandfather, the most excellent of all emperors that ever lived upon the earth, he who was the first to have the appellation of Augustus given to him, on account of his virtue and good fortune; he who diffused peace in every direction over earth and sea, to the very furthest extremities of the world? Did not he, when he heard a report of the peculiar characteristics of our temple, and that there is in it no image or representation made by hands, no visible likeness of Him who is invisible, did not he, I say, marvel at and honour it? . . ."

This letter, like many another cited in antiquity, may never have been written or sent, but it reflects admirably the spirit of the situation on either side. God for the Jews was not a human being or an animal or stocks and stones or an idol made with hands, and it was this that made him (and them) a wonder to mankind.

5. The Jewish God was not only not made with hands. He was not a natural object at all. He was spirit, not flesh, God, not man. He was not created. He was the creator. The world which we know and in which we have our being is completely dependent on a Being of another kind altogether.

Thus ultimately only God is real. The heavens can be rolled up like a scroll. The mountains flow down like water. Graven images have eyes that see not, ears that hear not. Men's desires and ambitions are vanity. We are strangers on the earth; our days are like a tale that is told. All flesh is grass, and all its goodliness is like the flower of the field. God alone endures for ever.

The phrases are magnificent but are not offered as rhetoric. They are for the Biblical outlook sober truth. The creator God is the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

6. If this were all, however, we should be in the grip of a bare deism. The divine clock-maker would be now a retired workman. He would be resting from his labours in inter-stellar space unmindful of the fate of his creation. But God for Jewish thought is not only creator. He is father. Indeed, he is much more even than mere father. He is a father who understands children and knows how to deal with them. On this point the Biblical story of Jonah is peculiarly instructive. When Jonah is peeved at God's forgiving Nineveh, God teaches him a lesson by a practical illustration. He destroys a plant which shaded Jonah from the sun, and then makes the sun come up even hotter; and when Jonah begins to rage at the loss of the shade, enquires amicably whether Jonah thinks he is right in being angry. Jonah is sure he is right, and the moral is pointed at once. Jonah had not worked for the tree and it was of little value anyway; yet he was rightly sorry for its loss. Is not God to have pity on the 120,000 helpless inhabitants of Nineveh and their cattle, all of them the work of his hands? We may be surprised—or delighted—at the homeliness of the dialogue; but could the point be made more plain? God is not just energy working itself out blindly. He is goodness, and his care extends over all things.

Thus the significant thing for humanity was not the affirmation of the existence of God by the Jews but the kind of God whose existence they affirmed. He is "living"; he is "righteous"; he makes demands. He has told man what is good and expects him to live up to it. And he is exigent. He rules with a strong hand. He remembers mercy but is not afraid to be angry. And he is angered when men break faith and kill and are cruel to one another and cast off pity, when they take bribes and turn aside the needy in the gate.

7. Scholars disagree about the origin of Jewish monotheism. Some see in it a gradual growth from more primitive conceptions, some a primary and irresistible intuition. It will be conceded however that, once achieved, it was, in idea, complete. Indeed it could not have been otherwise. The God who created all things by the word of his mouth could not be other than universal; and being the creator of all things he could not be, nor could he be imaged by, any one of them. Thus creation

becomes a moral idea as much as a physical process. It involves a qualitative difference between God and his world. God is one and there is none like him. "Thus shall ye say unto them", says Jeremiah, presumably giving a summary creed to the exiles who were being taken to Babylon (the sentence is in Aramaic): "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens."

This repudiation of all other "principalities and powers" involved, as a practical consequence, the banishment from the Jewish world-view of all magical content and practices, traces of which in the classical Hebrew tradition can only be found by the ingenuity of scholars. True, there has been uncovered a considerable body of pseudepigraphical literature which includes much intimate information about angels and other spirits (both good and evil) and the approved methods of conciliating or outwitting them. But it is clear that this literature was not representative or accepted. If it had been, it would not have remained in obscurity all these years. There is no novelty, and certainly nothing specifically Jewish, about a magical conjuration or invocation. The Jewish novelty is the clear and expressed conviction that God's pleasure is not to be bought by incantations or manipulations of divine names but by clean hands and a pure heart. Only upright conduct and truth and kindness give men the right to dwell in God's holy hill.

It is this which, in spite of all the striking similarities of address, of phraseology, of general rhythm and content, differentiates e.g., the Babylonian "psalms" from those which make up the Biblical book. The Hebrew Bible will have nothing to do with idolatry and its concomitants. It made a clean sweep: "thou shalt have no other gods but me". It cleansed the religious world.

8. If there are indeed "no gods but me" the heavens become depopulated and mythology an empty story. Now the Jews were not alone in destroying the basis of mythology, and it will be instructive to compare them in this respect with the thinking portion of the great myth-making people so often considered their rivals.

When the historian is asked what is the new thing which Greek philosophy brought into the world, his answer is, reasoning as opposed to myth-making. Reason-

ing means "giving an account", supporting a particular statement by more general considerations and so turning it from "opinion" to "truth". A myth is a presentation of experience in terms of the senses and the imagination. At its best it is a dramatic expression of primary fact; at its worst, a substitution of fact by fiction. Whatever its function may have been (and may still be) in primitive thinking, its consequences for civilization are clear. It beguiles the mind until it becomes immersed in make-believe and loses all touch with reality. Reasoning is the attempt to face up to reality and to dispense with make-believe.

The highest product of the reasoning faculty is science, and Greek science is closely connected with Greek philosophy. Science is the giving of reasons for everything that occurs. And since reasons are always general, science is always becoming more and more comprehensive; it grasps together ever larger groups of occurrences in ever wider generalizations. It is thus a unifying activity, and its ideal end is the displaying of nature as one. Its striving, and in ever increasing measure its achievement, is monistic.

So far then it would appear that the Greek philosophers and the fathers of Jewish thought were moving in the same direction, and indeed it would be an error to think that the one set of ideas excludes the other. Yet there are great differences between them, the root of them being a difference in the primary field of interest. For the Greeks this would seem to have been nature; for the Jews, man. For the Jews nature was the theatre in which man plays his part. The first five days of the creation story in Genesis set the scene for the creation of man on the sixth.

Now nature as a field of scientific enquiry is, at least proximately, determined. Without regularity and generality there is no nature to watch and report upon. It is by observation of the repeated that science offers its account of the repeatable. Its interest is in prediction; and although all prediction is of particulars, the predictions of science are framed in the light of general laws. The emphasis is thus on the generality, not on the particularity; on what is common to all, not what is particular to each.

In the moral sphere it is the opposite which holds

good. Here it is just the individual action which matters. There may be little difference between man and man, but that little is for morals all-important. Variety, both in the person and in the circumstance, is the very stuff of its existence. For morality implies responsibility and responsibility choice, and choice is possible only between alternatives. If the human being is to be moral, he must be responsible for his actions; and for the actions to be his, he must have chosen them.

That there are alternatives is taught in all sections of the Hebrew Bible. Both good and evil are open to man. The adjuration of the legislator, the exhortation of the prophet, the prayer of the psalmist, is that man should choose the good; to choose evil spells disaster and death. But man can, if he will, choose evil. The freedom is there.

In numerous passages God is represented as pleading with man; in others as threatening him. But the threats, like the pleading, only serve to emphasize the point that the virtuous act is not mechanical. There are difficult cases—the "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart, for example —which have exercised the ingenuity of theologians for centuries; but the main current of thought is clear. Man has a true self to which appeal can be made, and the appeal has some chance of success. From the side of God there is no delay. He has no pleasure in the death of the evil-doer. He his portrayed indeed as being over-eager to cancel the sentence of doom, much to the disgust of a Jonah who sees in such divine weakness the ruin of his profession as prophet. But in this, and this alone, God is obdurate. He will not destroy if he can re-form. Yet he has not left the re-forming in his own hands. It lies with man who can, if he will, re-form—re-create—himself.

Thus the world of moral action is the meeting-place between the human and divine. Just as repentance makes a new man, so, in every doing of the right, man (in the Rabbinic phrase) is partnering with God in the work of creation.

9. Jewish thought, as we saw, set out from and rested on the idea of creation. But the creation was not mere engineering, the carrying out of a project and the leaving it. God's creation is continuous. It was not exhausted with the six days. The world of the six days may be

"very good" but, as the Biblical account of the first men testifies, it is not perfect. In order that it should be perfect, creation must perforce continue. And indeed it is still at work in any case; for the creative activity of God differs from the engineering faculty of man in that the objects he creates are themselves creative. In its simplest form (though here there is no power of initiation) an analogue of this may be seen in the physical world with its "plants producing seed" and its "fruit trees giving fruit in which is their seed", and its fertile animal population and pulsating life of all kinds. But in its full and true sense it is only seen in the world of human action.

For human action is not a natural process. It is not inevitable, determined either physically from without or biologically from within. It is what we *do*, not what happens to us. And what we do is the fruit of moral choice and proceeds from character as it issues in motive and intention. At a moment of decision man creates the way in which he is to go. Through chosen action he is creative continuously; and this creativity, at its best and most complete, is one with the divine creative act itself: it is a choosing of "life".

This is the meaning of the constant prayer for a "new heart" or a "new spirit", of the "stretching of the hands" and the "turning of the soul". Man prays to be granted the strength to become himself and assume his destiny. When the covenant of God is written in the heart of man the transcendent will become completely immanent. The soul of man is seen as the "lamp of God, searching out all the recesses of the inward parts"; and the lawgiver's great saying to which reference has already been made thus finds its literal fulfilment: "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it".

10. This last phrase "that thou mayest do it" is worthy

of note. It is the essential completion of what precedes. Goodness is not theory or pious aspiration. It is action, and action prescribed. Thus we are told in the prophets that to "know God" *means* to judge the cause of the poor and needy; and even the pedestrian book of Proverbs sees blasphemy in oppression and the honouring of God in doing a kindness to one's fellow men. Religion is not a science of theology removed from the everyday grind and an excrescence, or commentary, on it. God enters into human life in its most ordinary relations and religion is a way of living, all-comprehensive and complete.

For the "forms" of religion are not dissociable from their "matter" but in it form and matter are an indistinguishable unity. In idea there is no mere ceremony. All outward appearance manifests inward truth. And if outward appearance becomes valued for itself and substituted for inward rightness, the prophetic voice is raised forthwith in crushing denunciation. But "outward" and "inward" are corporeal metaphors which represent the spiritual only faultily. A holy life is defined in actions and dispositions to action which, laid down in the Law and the Prophets and the Writings, make up the concrete fulness of living.

It is thus one of the more striking characteristics of Jewish thought that it never remains in the sphere of the abstract but becomes substantial in specific acts and definite institutions. In the same way as justice is no subject for analytical disquisition but the instruction not to use false weights or to take bribes or to have respect of persons, so the idea of freedom becomes the eating of unleavened bread on Passover, the idea of dependence, the dwelling in booths on Tabernacles. (These may have been nature festivals once but like the Sabbath itself they have been transformed.) Doctrine is expressed in action, action embodies doctrine; or rather action and doctrine are one. It is significant action which counts. This is the fast that I have chosen, cries one prophet: to free the oppressed and to give bread to the hungry; Tear your hearts and not your garments, urges another; a third: Let us lift up our heart with our hands. As we are told of the Hebrew language by philologists, it is the verb, expressing an action, rather than the noun, expressing a thing or state, which is central. The abstract idea of the new creation of the individual, expressed in

the Abrahamic covenant and the later baptism, is given an abiding and recurring mould in the weekly Sabbath and the yearly Day of Atonement; the abstract idea of the new creation of society becomes actual in the physical figure of the restored Davidic ruler and the specific descriptions of the age he is to inaugurate. Before we come to the consideration of these, however, we must revert to the problem of science and the attitude towards it of Jewish thought.

11. It was a late Greek critic who saw the archetype of the sublime in the sentences "'let there be light!' and there was light; 'let the world be', and the world was": the lawgiver of the Jews ("no ordinary man"!), he says, had a proper conception of the power of God and found in these words an adequate vehicle for its expression. Jewish thought started from God as creative power.

Greek interest was in created nature, and Greek reasoning tended to the deductive. Its ideal and highest achievement was geometrical demonstration. The Ionian temperament seems to have had some inclination towards experiment, and Greek medicine rested on observation. But the mathematical trend prevailed; and the aim of science was conceived of as the reduction of the many observed phenomena to the one intellectual principle from which they could be in turn deduced.

It has been pointed out that it was this severe intellectualism which lead to the final sterility of Greek scientific inspiration. Its world was not large enough, its range too restricted. What was required for the revival of science in modern times was the wider vision of ever-fresh possibility. This was given by the Jewish doctrine of creation. For divine creativity is unpredictable and, so far at least as man's knowledge is concerned, it involves contingency in the created. The fountain of being is productive will which creates "infinite things in infinite ways". The universe thus becomes "open", not "closed"; and an open universe requires, and nourishes, an open mind.

The science of our day begins with humility. It recognizes the universe as mysterious. It has got beyond the arrogance of the nineteenth century and is not ashamed to falter in the presence of the unknown. It sees no final access to the secrets of nature. It may thus

be understood as the attempt of the Greek mind to reach out to the world of limitless possibility suggested by Jewish thought.

12. All this is as may be. The point of relevance for our argument is that Jewish thought, although centred around morals, does not deny science. At its worst, it is just not interested. At its best, it offers science that ever-replenished fulness of being without which science is condemned to a treadmill of theory, and it stimulates enquiry by suggesting that our horizons are not final and our explanations not the whole truth. Many shall run to and fro before knowledge be increased.

And we may add a further thought which has been brought into prominence by recent students of the history of scientific ideas. The very conception of Laws of Nature, so important for science, derives in large measure from theology and the "word" and "commandments" of God. Jewish thought gave science rational encouragement by suggesting, in the will and wisdom of God, a ground for the existence of discoverable laws.

This holds good not only of later speculation but of the Biblical texts themselves. God is not capricious. We may not understand why he does things but he does them in wisdom and measure and order. His word created the world in various departments and appointed for each its plan. His covenant with Noah included the promise of continuity in the physical universe, so that "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease". So Genesis, the book of the Beginning. Similarly the prophets took as their exemplar of perpetuity the processes of physical nature. God has, they say, a "covenant" with day and night that they should always come in their season, a covenant which will not be broken. The most cursory glance at Biblical similes will show how closely knit life was with the conception of the orderly course of nature. "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool!"

True, we have here no curiosity in the particularities of the workings of nature which in the Ionian Greeks produced the beginnings of the biological sciences; but if curiosity is not there, wonder is, and the psalms, less

spectacularly than the prophetical writings but perhaps more profoundly, breathe a deep sense of the unity behind the variety of nature. The heavens declare the glory of the one God; the light is his robe, the clouds his chariot. The author of the 139th psalm may show little acquaintance with embryological detail; but he knows, no less than the Greek poet, that man is "curiously and wonderfully made".

Still, the moral interest is the stronger. If the heavens declare the glory of God, his will for man is declared in rules of living; and it is these, and not the facts of astronomy, which "give light to the eyes" and are "sweeter than honey". But enquiry into nature was not forbidden. The writer of Job would presumably have rejoiced in an addition to his catalogue of natural wonders; and God himself is singled out by the prophet for especial mention because he has knowledge of the names of all the stars.

13. This point will become important since in the mediæval period it produced, or at least allowed, among philosophically-minded Jews what was practically a worship of scientific knowledge as a propædeutic to religion. This attitude towards science had, through Spinoza, important results in the development of the European mind; and it is worth remembering this on the credit side since we must animadvert parenthetically to a *mis*-use of Biblical texts which gave rise to an unfortunate chapter in the history of religion, a chapter which would seem to be not yet closed. I refer to the so-called conflict between science and religion.

We may take the classical instance.

The psalmist says that the foundations of the earth were fixed and could not be moved. By that he meant presumably that the physical world is in reliable hands. He is repeating in his own way the promise of God after the flood and offering the student of nature just that assurance of which he stands in need, the assurance, namely, that the world is a stable affair not subject to sudden and unreasonable change. He is making a general statement that the universe is orderly; and it is interesting to observe that the same phrase about the earth being fixed is used in connexion with the final judgment as if to suggest that there is one source for both moral and physical orderliness. But the psalmist

is not advancing a theory of physics; and if this saying of his was considered as such and used in order to confute Galileo, that was not the fault of the psalmist. In the same way the first chapter of Genesis has been used to condemn the results of the study of geology and the theory of evolution; and if it was indeed offered as the literal and final truth of the physical and biological constitution of the world, the position of the religionist would be difficult. The question is, was it so offered, and was it meant to bind posterity any more than the nature mysticism of the 104th psalm or the sceptical queries of Agur the son of Jakeh in the book of Proverbs.

We may leave this problem to the theologians, returning to our main issue, the content of the Jewish outlook. We have seen that it is pre-eminently moral. We have now to ask what group of ideas cluster round this primary orientation. A first answer will be, History, and all that history implies both for the individual and for the community.

14. We saw that the Greeks, setting out from the world of nature, produced science, and pre-eminently mathematical science. Now science, and especially mathematical science, has always found difficulty with time. Scientific truth is timeless or above time. Time is the measure of change; but scientific truth (ideally speaking) is changeless. The aim of science has been conceived until quite recently as the discovery of eternal truth.

The Jews set out from the world of man. For them time was all-important. The world of man, like the world of God, is a world of will, and will involves process, i.e. time. Again, the world of man, like the world of God, is one of action. Acts have consequences; and the whole point of a consequence is that it is consequent on something that happened before: again, time! Time is required for the working out of plans. It means the chance of improvement, the possibility of failure. Without time there is no purpose or choice.

When one opens one's Bible, one finds a narrative which passes rapidly from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham. Adam, the man created in the likeness of God, is both the physical and moral progenitor of humanity. Noah is its second physical founder. From him and his sons came "all the nations of the earth";

and the tale of the generations after the flood is peculiarly instructive: it presents a detailed genealogical tree of the whole of mankind.

But this was only a physical re-birth. There was need of a fresh start morally too. For mankind, like its first ancestor, is by original character akin to the divine; and its task is to win back, and to maintain, this first nature. The way was shown by Abraham, and he therefore bore the burden and privilege of vocation. He was called to teach, through his own family, mankind. He was to train his "children and those of his line after him to keep the ways of the Lord, that is, to do what is good and right"; and the Bible is the following out of this conception and its consequences both for the Jews and for mankind at large.

Thus for Jewish thought history was education. What happened in the world was never, for it, a circular process as in some Greek thinking, an aimless admixture of opposites combining and dissolving and re-combining. There was a goal to be striven for and attained, a goal which could be understood and which was set before the conscious mind.

This is history. History is not merely the record of a string of occurrences. It is an attempt to seize occurrences in their pattern. The Biblical account offers a pattern from the very beginning and groups occurrences in accordance with their relevance to it. Some are more, some less, relevant; some important, some not. An obvious instance is the narrative of the book of Kings where powerful monarchs are summarily dismissed with the disdainful comment that they caused Israel to sin; or one may recall the prayer of Nehemiah for whom the creation of the world, the choice of Abraham and the deliverance from Egypt, would seem to form a sufficient key to the interpretation of human life. The point is not whether these "philosophies of history" are sound but that there was a "philosophy of history".

The pattern is not limited to any one people. It comprises "all the families of the earth". Not only are they castigated in their own right for moral shortcomings, notably, breaking faith and inhuman conduct in war. They also partake of the blessing—"Egypt my people and Assyria the work of my hands". All are, with Israel, vassals of the one God, instruments for his activities

("Ho, Assyrian, the rod of mine anger!") in the one world. In a famous passage the Persian Cyrus is called God's "shepherd" and, even more surprisingly, God's "anointed", i.e., in the Hebrew, his *Messiah*, that is to say, his chosen servant appointed to carry out his purpose in the plan of time which is history. The great prophetic dooms embrace the world powers of Babylon and Egypt and Tyre as well as the local neighbours Moab and Ammon and Ashdod, and they fill the Biblical stage with a universal chorus in which all nature joins. The very firs and cedars of Lebanon, even stones and timber from the wall, exult at the downfall of tyrants. The whole earth, animate and inanimate, together with sun, moon and stars, suffer and rejoice as one; and when God comes to "judge the earth" (the *whole* earth, be it noted), they "clap their hands" and "sing for joy together".

Thus occurrences become events, each with its part in and significance for the whole. They are no aimless flux but a movement with a mover and a moved. The movement, like the choice of the individual, is not mechanical. Much depends upon man who is both moved and, to a certain degree, mover too. The movement is forward only if men choose to make it so. The scenes with Joshuah at Shechem, Samuel at Ramah, Elijah on Carmel, all present vivid pictures of crucial acts of free choice determining the future of the whole nation. We have here a *drama*, a "doing", not a mere happening; and man is an actor who within limits creates his own part.

In this drama God is ready to help. His hand is always waiting to support the stumbler, to receive the returning penitent. He appoints prophets to attempt to guide the nation; he sends his angels to watch over individuals. True, there are conditions. There must be a desire to walk in the right path, or, in Biblical phrase, a "right spirit"; but given a right spirit, whether in an individual or in a community, the helping hand is there.

15. It is a remark of the English philosopher F. H. Bradley that the object of historical record is the "world of human individuality". The Hebrew Bible is certainly a world of individuals, and what a gallery it presents: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Amos and Jeremiah; Jezebel and Jehu and Zimri. Its stories—Joseph and his brethren; Jonah and the whale; Daniel in the lions' den

—have become common property; even its fleeting mentions—Melchizedek; Lot's wife; Jephthah's daughter —stick in the mind. It is not only that linguistically Biblical style has given a basic idiom to European languages. Its attitude to life in general has impressed a particular type of character upon the European mind. We think in terms of the human family described in the early chapters of Genesis; we judge ourselves and our fellows in terms of the moral personality required by the prophets and psalmists. We are at home with the non-conformist Amos and the protesting Job because it is they who taught us the nature of non-conformity and protest. They talk to us in our own language, and that because we have made their language ours. If the Hebrew Bible has given the world a doctrine of God, it has given it no less a doctrine of man.

16. The special place claimed for the Jews in the wider drama of world history has given rise to many misunderstandings, and much has been made of the arbitrary character of the "choice" of the Jews as if it had been dictated by mere wilfulness on the part of the chooser or tribal vanity on the part of the chosen (and narrators). As a modern epigrammatist put it:

How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews!

But this is to miss the point of the Biblical narrative, and the counter-epigram goes to the heart of the matter:

It's not
So odd.
The Jews
Chose God.

There is here something reciprocal, a mutual selection, a choice exchanged. There is a "covenant", and a covenant is two-sided; a "marriage"—and how often from the time of Hosea is this simile used. The whole trend of the story is not that of an arbitrary choosing and of an irresponsible chosen. It is told as if God were anxiously watching the footsteps of humanity and begging it to

show itself worthy of itself and its origin. The eventual choice of one people is almost a counsel of despair; for the people itself it is almost an imposed duty.

A kindred view sees God not as husband yearning for an erring wife's return but as master refusing to let his messenger withdraw from his service. His dealings with men had been so void of success that he could not allow his Jews to default and become "like all the nations". A Rabbinical story is here again much in point. It tells that God offered the Law to all the other peoples before he came to the Jews, but only the Jews were willing to accept the moral obligations it imposed. Even so (the story continues) he had to hold Mount Sinai over them and threaten them with extinction before they finally agreed! The right way of living entails restrictions on the natural man which the natural man was, and is, unwilling to submit to.

And indeed the record of disappointments is striking: first, Adam himself, then his children, then the generation of the flood; even the "righteous" Noah and his family would seem to be only the best of a bad generation. Abraham was indeed chosen, and later tradition delighted in adducing reasons why; but his own first-born was rejected and then the first-born of his chosen son Isaac and then the first-born of Isaac's chosen son. There is at work a continuous winnowing right through the history of the "chosen" people from the beginning till the very last when, at the end of days, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt". It is a moral selection which is working throughout. The "chosen people" is held up to mankind more often as a warning to avoid than as an example to follow; and even when the chosen of the chosen are commended, suffering is the badge, martyrdom the crown. The chosen people is not good because it is chosen; it is chosen because it is good. And its continuance of being chosen depends on the continuance of its being good.

17. The fact is that the idea of choice has yielded to the idea of service: service to God for the benefit of humanity, service to humanity in the name of God. The way is hard, and both prophets and psalmist are full of the bitterness of suffering. But the ideal of the servant in-

cludes suffering, and it triumphs over suffering. Indeed, it is through (though not in) suffering that it is brought to realize the nature of its own destiny, just as it is brought to realize God in his full majesty as God of the whole earth not in the hour of victory but in the hour of defeat. The remnant, the "tenth part", is destroyed again and again. Its call and vocation is to teach, its reward abuse and shame. Yet its duty is beyond the limits of Israel, and is clearly laid down and inescapable: "It is not enough for one who is my servant to put the tribes of Jacob again in their place, and to set back those of Israel who have been sent away: My purpose is to give you as a light to the nations, so that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth". The moral life, and the education to the moral life, starting from a particular people (or section of a people) and environment, embraces of necessity all peoples and all environments. The God of the spirits of all flesh requires the obedience of all flesh, just as, in his own good time, he will wipe away tears from off all faces.

18. The logical connexion between monotheism and ethics is not difficult to trace. It means the setting up of one standard for all. Many gods mean many standards. What one god disapproves of, another can always be found to approve.

As a logical argument against polytheism this is sound and can be found repeatedly in Plato; but logical arguments have little effect on the emotions. The Jewish contribution is not a theory of morals but its practice, and practice depends on feeling.

Many examples could be given; for instance, the "disgusting things" spurned by the law of holiness. The things are spurned as disgusting, and with such vigour that no doubt is left on the point. We have only to open our Bibles to see the source of this vigour. God says to Cain: Where is your brother? And Cain says: Am I my brother's keeper? In this stark dialogue we have the strength of the Jewish genius; and the source is clearly the confrontation of man with his maker.

This confrontation is only possible under a monotheism. Only under a monotheism is there no opening for evasion, no dodging the issue, no appeal from one divine power to another. Deity is one. *Vis-à-vis* the one

God, the individual human being takes his proper place and assumes his proper proportions. He is responsible and must give an account.

This confrontation of man with God comes out most clearly in the prophets when they receive their call: Moses on Horeb ("Who hath made man's mouth . . . ? Now, therefore, go"); the boy Samuel in the temple ("Speak; for thy servant heareth"); Elijah and the voice ("What doest thou here, Elijah?"); Isaiah ("Whom shall I send?" . . . Then I said: "Here am I; send me"); Jeremiah ("To whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak"). A peculiarly impressive account is that of Ezekiel: "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. . . . And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel . . . and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God".

The prophet is not to care what the crowd says. He is responsible to God alone. He may beg for release or cry for mercy; pray to be blotted out of the book of life. But the doom is upon him no less than on the peoples to whom he is sent. He can do no other. He must speak; and he can speak only what God puts into his mouth.

19. This is spectacular and needs no further illustration. More striking is the quieter appeal, not the great wind or the earthquake or the fire, but the "still small voice". One meets it strikingly in the Levitical law of holiness where with impressive and almost monotonous regularity we are given the refrain: "and thou shalt fear thy God". It is a Rabbinic comment that the sentence is added in cases when either public knowledge is absent or no public punishment is attachable. "Do not put a curse on those who have no hearing, or put a cause of falling in the way of the blind, but keep the fear of your God before you: I am the Lord. . . . Get up from your seats before the white-haired, and give honour to the old, and let the fear of your God be before you: I am the Lord. . . . Do no wrong one to another but let the fear of your God be before you; for I am the Lord your God. . . . Take no interest from him, in money or in goods, but have the fear of your God before you, and let your brother make a living among you. Do not take interest on the money which you let him have or on the food which you give

him: I am the Lord your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, that I might be your God." All these cases are matters "given over to the heart" (I use the Rabbinic phrase). They appertain not to the *forum externum*, the court of law and outward appearance, but to the *forum internum*, the court of conscience.

In that court too there is a judge, but a judge who looks to the heart. Conscience means responsibility, and responsibility is to a person. To be responsible is to be answerable, that is, liable to be questioned about one's actions and, if questioned, bound to answer. Questions can only be put by persons; and it is because the God of Jewish thought is at least personal (though he is clearly much more than that too) that conscience acquires its profound significance for human life. "What will I do when *God* comes as my judge", asks Job, "and what answer may I give to *his* questions?"

20. We may conclude this brief account with the remark that most of the ideas which we have mentioned have become in our day trite. We are used to the ideas of God and history and conscience. But the God and history and conscience to which we have become used are the God, history and conscience of the Jewish tradition, and the fact that we are used to them does not derogate from their importance or their decisive influence on men's minds. Like water and air they are the primary and indispensable basis of living, remembered only when they run short.

It has appeared to many observers that in this age it is moral ideas which are running short. It behoves us therefore to turn our attention to them again.

IV. SOME ILLUSTRATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

1. In the light of what was remarked previously on the nature of ideas, it would be difficult to affirm in their history an exclusive influence from Jewish, or from any other, sources. Yet there are connexions; and if there is little derivation, there is much affiliation. I offer an example of some intrinsic interest and then proceed to wider issues.

The philosopher John Locke, among the many pioneer ideas which he embodied in his *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (1690), was anxious to emphasize the value for human beings of fresh air and cold water. He suggested, for example, the training of children to accustom themselves to what we should now call open sandals, remarking sagely that if men are not afraid to expose their face and hands to the weather, there seems no reason why they should be afraid of exposing their feet. He also advocated the use of cold baths; but against these there seems to have been so strong a prejudice that he was constrained to seek precedents in experience. After citing from classical literature the somewhat shadowy cases of Seneca and Horace, both of whom mention that they took cold baths in winter, he says (para. 7): "But perhaps Italy will be thought much warmer than England, and the chillness of their waters not to come near ours in winter. But if the rivers of Italy are warmer, those of Germany and Poland are much colder than any in this country; and yet *in these the Jews, both men and women, bathe all over, at all seasons of the year,* without any prejudice to their health."

The reference is clearly to the ablutions required in Jewish religious observance, which indeed rests in part on considerations of personal and communal hygiene. On various occasions the washing of the whole body, or of the hands, is obligatory; and the provision of facilities for bathing in running water is a part of the

routine of Jewish community organization. The idea is already full-fledged in the Pentateuch for which cleanliness is not only next to Godliness but the very condition for the presence of God. As is remarked in connexion with the enactment of an elementary hygienic precaution: "The Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp; therefore shall thy camp be holy". (The modern reader, prone to sniff at such lofty considerations, should perhaps be reminded that "ritual" cleanliness is still cleanliness!)

Now it is not suggested that if it had not been for the ritual washings of the book of Leviticus the modern bathroom would not have come into being, any more than that latrines would not be put up by a modern army if it had not been for the precedent of Deut. xxiii, 12-4. The point is that the religious ideas of the Hebrew Bible entailed ways of living which we now understand to be required by the human situation. (In fact they gave them a force and a driving power which experience has shown regrettably to be wanting to mere medical advice.)

With this in mind we may turn to the wider problem, and I suggest two lines of approach which may prove fruitful. First we should ask ourselves what the world would have been lacking if Jewish thought had never existed; second, we may try to estimate the significance of those ideas from Jewish thought which were so Hebraic as to be untranslatable and which have been preserved therefore in modern languages in their original Hebrew: for example Sabbath, Jubilee, Messiah.

2. To our first question the obvious answer is that if Jewish thought had never existed the world would have been without Christianity and Islam. By this is not meant that Christianity and Islam are solely Jewish in nature and origin. Far from it. They are surely themselves. To be oneself is to be distinct from others; and so far as they are products at all, they are the products of other factors besides the Jewish. And yet Jewish thought is all important both for them in particular and in the general history of religion.

We may take the latter point first, illustrating it by a conventional analogy which we have used before.

According to the tradition, explicitly phrased in Proclus, the Greek Pythagoras was the first to treat number

by and in itself, i.e., he was the creator of mathematics as a *science*. Mathematics as a craft, or as a business device, or as a pre-requisite to religious rites, was known to the Egyptians and Babylonians. But mathematics in the "pure" sense is Greek; and it is the vision of Pythagoras which was taken up long after by Kepler and Descartes and the mathematical physicists of our own day. Mathematics may therefore be fairly called Greek, although the thought may have changed in its content and detail and although no one can say whether, if Pythagoras and the Greeks had never existed, there might not have arisen other individuals, or another people, to think the same or similar thoughts.

It is somewhat in the same way that we may call religion Jewish. It is in Jewish thought that what is recognized as religion received basic expression. If we are asked what religion is, we can point to certain ideas, or figures, in Jewish thought, much as, when asked what mathematics is, we point to the Greek tradition and the Greeks.

But we may go further than this. It is not only a matter of "type" or "inspiration" or "vision". The positive content of Greek mathematics is an integral part of modern mathematics, and whole sections of it are given in modern textbooks as its essential ground-work. It is not a mere survival taught for historical reasons like the theory of phlogiston in chemistry. Its value for humanity lies in itself, in its own demonstrated propositions.

Similarly, Jewish thought as such is embedded in Christianity and Islam. It fills their sacred books; and if it were removed, their essential content would be different. Christianity, indeed, on the lips of its founder, proclaimed itself the fulfilment of Judaism; and the prophet of Islam declared that he was the true successor of Moses and, like Moses, a "prophet with a book". Thus we may fairly reaffirm the accepted judgment that Judaism is the "mother" religion, Christianity and Islam its "daughters". Without Abraham, Moses and the Prophets, both Christianity and Islam, if they could have come into being at all, would have been strangely other than they are.

But again this is not all. Children often break with their parents and, whether in sorrow or in anger, go their own independent ways; and yet retain for all that,

in the very fibres of their being, their parents' characteristics. Whatever be finally accepted as the detailed connexion between the three great monotheistic religions, it is clear that they have, and still preserve, a strong family resemblance. They are all vitally interested in conduct; they all conceive the material universe as dependent on spiritual reality; they all see this one and unique spiritual reality as the source of good and of right conduct. There is between them much more in common than this; but it will be agreed that there is at least this, and that this is all-important.

3. If we accept this minimum and turn to our second line of approach, we shall see that it supports the results of our first. The untranslatable words we have mentioned enshrine ideas similar to those just indicated.

The Sabbath is the visible sign of the insufficiency of the material and the need for its re-integration with the spiritual. It is a standing protest against the doctrine of wage-slavery. It is the weekly demonstration that although work is good ("six days shalt thou labour" is also part of the command), work is not an end in itself; that although the satisfaction of the body is good, the body is little without the soul. Even the most severe and gloomy of Sabbaths only underlines, in however unpleasing (and possibly mistaken) a fashion, this fundamental lesson; and the Jewish tradition, with its love of home life and its devotion to study, has shown how the Sabbath can be made not only a day of respite from work but a positive factor in human development and well-being.

The Sabbath offers a recurring opportunity for self-discovery. It invites living at a higher and truer level. It presents freedom as an active principle, the felt need to realize potentialities which on a work-day are submerged and forgotten. It is constant reminder that, although men live by bread, they do not live for bread. The Sabbath is thus more than a rest, more even than a recuperation of energy for return to the familiar task. It is rather a fresh direction of energy based on a fuller comprehension of the nature and needs of man.

With the weekly Sabbath there should be joined the yearly Sabbath, the seventh year of every "week" of years. On this year the land rests: again freedom, this

time for the soil. After seven Sabbaths of years there comes the Jubilee, the fiftieth year; "and let this fiftieth year be kept holy, and say publicly that every one in the land is free from debt: it is the Jubilee, and every man may go back to his heritage and to his family".

The poor man is thus released from the burden of his poverty. He is given a new chance; he is made free. His shackles are struck off from him. He makes a fresh start. He becomes again, in the full sense, a man.

It is important to observe the root idea of this (to us) startling provision. It is given with engaging simplicity: "No exchange of land may be for ever, for the land is *mine;* and *you are as my guests, living with me for a time.* Wherever there is property in land, the owner is to have the right of getting it back". The phraseology is exactly parallel with that of the rejection of the very idea of Jewish slavery: "For they are *my* servants whom I took out from the land of Egypt; they may not become the property of another". The Jubilee, like the Sabbath, is a return to what should be the norm. It makes the idea of freedom a part of practical human life; it embodies it in the organization of society; and the idea of freedom for man, whether in life or property, is a direct derivative from the dependence of all things, man included, on God.

Our third untranslatable word, Messiah, is in itself a whole history and a whole theology. It has been the unexhausted subject of whole libraries both of research and of popular teaching. It has been the comfort and the hope of centuries. For that reason it need not detain us here. It is too well known for comment. For our purpose it is enough to quote its dictionary definition as the "promised deliverer of the Jews; Christ as this; liberator of oppressed people or country (French, Latin and Greek from Hebrew *Mashiah anointed)" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary).* The Messiah is no abstract figure set up for aesthetic contemplation; he is first and foremost a deliverer. And he is a king, the ideal ruler, the embodiment of truth and justice, restoring the divine order in a disrupted world.

He thus represents the re-entry of the spiritual into human affairs. His coming may involve the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. But the new heaven and earth are not ends in themselves. They are the ideal

setting of a normal, although reconstructed, life. To the new heart and the new spirit granted to man there will be added a new language, a "clean language, so that they may all make prayer to the Lord and be his servants with one mind": and the earth will be full of the knowledge of God as the sea is covered by the waters.

4. We may now turn to the later history of the monotheistic religions and observe that after the first few generations Islam attained its full development and maximum variety of interpretation. The longer history of Christianity is more variegated; and, as often happens, the desire for change took the shape of a return to fundamentals. These fundamentals were often found by the seekers in the Hebrew scriptures, with the result that time and again reform movements in the Church were of a hebraizing character.

In this connexion one thinks readily of the more extreme Protestants in England, Scotland and Switzerland, all so profoundly affected, not always perhaps (in modern eyes) for the best, by the Old Testament model. Yet sweeter influences should not be forgotten. The Psalter became the hymn-book of all branches of the Church, and who can tell how widely and deeply it has moved the minds of men. True, it has sometimes encouraged to violence, although not in an evil cause; but for one who appealed to its inspiration to "avenge thy slaughtered saints" there are countless others who found in its often placid piety both a stimulus in well-being and a comfort in adversity and loss. Few books in any literature give in such simple language so close a feeling of the divine presence, fewer still so dignified a practical morality in such easily intelligible words.

5. Yet there is room still for the thunder of Sinai. Man needs more than ever to be reminded of the wrath of God. Sin, judgment, punishment—these must be. and are, alive in any Church. The cry of the angels: sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, rings out on all solemn occasions, and with it the warnings of the day "which is dark and not light". *Dies iræ dies illa,* as the mediæval hymn-writer quotes from the prophets, and a glance at the hymn itself will show vividly one part of the Hebraic legacy in the Church. The scene is all Biblical. First the signal,

the vast assembling, the subjection of nature, the opened book, the judge who sits, the sinner who trembles; and then the appeal to the most high king, the trustful abasement, the confidence that salvation will come. We have in this hymn the hard side of religion, a side which seems to be lost to view in the modern period: the fact and sense of wrong-doing; conscience and remorse; the final accounting which none can escape.

6. Conscience is bound up with consciousness and conscientiousness, and these are all connected, both etymologically and in fact, with knowledge (Latin: *scientia*). We spoke before about the public character of the Jewish revelation and the consequence that teaching became a central element in the practice of religion. This fact affected the very forms of worship both in the synagogue and, through the synagogue, the Church. The priest was necessarily a teacher: as a late prophet reminds us, his "lips kept knowledge, and men waited for the law from his mouth". The priesthood as such, with its elaborate ceremonial centralized in Jerusalem, became otiose with the destruction of the temple, and indeed centuries before that destruction the dispersion of the Jews was an accomplished and permanent fact. Thus the synagogue was organized as a "place of meeting" and a centre of public instruction. Scholars have pointed out the survivals of synagogal practice in the ceremonies both of Christianity and of Islam; but more important than ceremony is the age-long prophetic message, embodied in the very fact of the existence of the synagogue, that God requires mercy and knowledge, not sacrifice and burnt-offering. The indignation of the prophets found its prosaic translation in the simple prayers and sermons of the "place of meeting". Here study became recognized as an integral part of the service and worship of God. Classes were established for the young; regular readings and expositions of scripture arranged; homily and parable pressed into the service of popular education. This too was taken over by the Church, around which was centred for hundreds of years the only education available; and one remembers also with gratitude the humble priests of the remote monasteries where the tradition of humane letters, despite the obscurantism of the times, was preserved in Europe.

7. One of the least expected by-products of Jewish thought is in the field of political theory. Yet on reflection it is not really a matter for wonder. A religion which salutes God as "father of the fatherless and judge of the widowed" has laid the spiritual foundation for the welfare state, and Biblical legislation, whether ever put into practice or not, contains the essence of all sound social order. That there is one law for all, both citizen and stranger; that before the law all men are equal; that care should be taken, both by individuals and by the community, for the unfortunate and the incapable and the helpless; that birth is an accident and wealth a trust, and neither of them a ground for privilege; that power should not be exercised arbitrarily; that no prince or leader is as such sacrosanct—these and similar lessons stand out from the Biblical page for all to see.

It is thus understandable that whole communities should have organized themselves on Biblical lines, calling themselves, in Pauline fashion, the true Israel. In particular, the position that all government rests on the consent of the governed was made to depend on the doctrine of the "covenant". It was pointed out that covenants and pacts are not imposed but agreed; and that the "holy people", from Abraham downwards, were willing partners in the covenant with their God. He was in truth their king, but a king who sought for his people and who was freely accepted by them. Further, the secular monarchy among the Jews was also the result of agreement on both sides—witness, e.g., the selection of Saul or the invitation extended to Jephthah.

Of course arguments could be found on the other side; and indeed they were. One recalls the typical plea for absolute monarchy, based on a somewhat bizarre use of the Old Testament, given in the political treatise of Dante. In the great crisis of the monarchy in the modern world this plea was revived. The Aristotelian Robert Filmer, for example, summed up centuries of discussion by the affirmation that just as Adam was lord over all creatures by divine command, so the king was a natural father to his subjects by divine right; the king's responsibility is not therefore to his subjects but to God alone, and God alone can remove him. Which statement (and many others of similar character) gave rise to the laborious and devastating criticism of John Locke in the

first of his Two Treatises on Government (1690). The second he devoted to the thesis that kings hold their posts with the consent of, and at the pleasure of, the citizens, and that in extreme cases, when appeal to the temporal power is of no avail, the citizens have the right to "appeal to Heaven". The appeal to Heaven is of course rebellion, a turning from the justice of man to the justice of God; and the idea is a Biblical one (cf. Exodus xxii, 23 and 27) for which Locke, at the conclusion of his treatise (para. 241) quotes the precedent of the Biblical Jephthah (Judges xi, 27). This appeal to the "supreme Judge" is the last prerogative of the outraged individual conscience. Locke is here voicing the very essence of Protestantism.

It is one of the commonplaces of the history of political theory that this book of Locke's was the direct inspiration of the American Declaration of Independence; and it is fitting that a story which begins with Abraham who left his country and people to set up a home where he could worship God in his own way should have among its later chapters these sturdy and far-reaching documents. And indeed, literary connexions apart, there is an inherent link between the Fathers of these different nations and epochs. There is a unity of conviction which binds them together, a unity fostered by the study of the old texts. Like the Psalmist they "know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the poor", and they are ready to lend a hand themselves:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbour that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost, to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

(*The New Colossus*, a sonnet of Emma Lazarus engraved on the Statue of Liberty.)

8. It is thus in the field of human relations that Jewish thought has been especially significant. Its interest is in communities and their organization; and yet it has always realized that communities are made up of individual persons and that life is lived by individual persons. The basis of community life is the person just as the education of the person is its end.

We may refer yet again to a passage cited already:

"And if a man from another country is living in your land with you, do not make life hard for him; let him be to you as one of your countrymen and have love for him as for yourself; for you were living in a strange land, in the land of Egypt." Here we are exhorted to be kind to others because we know by experience what it means when others are not kind to us; and this ground for decent conduct is enforced by the historical reference: you were foreigners in Egypt and therefore know what it is to be made to feel foreigners yourselves. The appeal is to the person for the person on grounds of the experience of personality.

We might think that we have here a "law of holiness" for the guidance of a select class of priests; but the same injunction, with the same ground, is repeated continually elsewhere. Indeed, according to the Rabbis the command to be kind to strangers is given in the Pentateuch no less than 36 times! The experience of Egyptian slavery, like the idolatry of "beyond the river", seems to have bitten so hard into the consciousness of the whole people that the very memory became an invocation and stimulus to kindness. Even a hired servant, after six years' service, is to be set free, and he is to be "furnished liberally" and not sent away empty-handed. And again we have the same reason given; you were slaves in Egypt and so know what service means. The whole stress is on our common humanity: "For ye know the *heart* of the stranger".

9. It has been worth returning to this point because in it we have the clear and decisive turn in the attitude of man to man which was summed up long after in the Kantian formula that "persons" are not "things" and that human beings are never to be treated as instruments only. For Jewish thought the proper attitude of man to man is personal, and that because man, that is, each

individual human being, bears in himself the likeness of God. External considerations are thus ultimately of no account. There shall be "no respecting the position of the poor" just as there shall be "no honouring the position of the great". Power, position, riches or poverty, are irrelevant. It is man as man who matters; character; inner worth; what a man is in himself. Men are thus essentially equal, however diverse their circumstances and gifts. Wise and foolish, high and low, rich and poor, meet together in that the one God made them all.

This primary fact of the equality of men as persons is well expressed in the conventional Biblical equivalent for a human being, viz., "son of man"; a phrase which might be translated as accurately "son of Adam". A Rabbinic synonym is "he who is created in the Likeness", a term which emphasizes not only the dignity of manhood but also its responsibility. Like "son of man" (or, "son of Adam") it also serves to remind us of the oneness of humanity through its common origin and the consequent duty of mutual help. "Did not God make him as well as me?", asks Job, and the reference is not to friend or neighbour or relative but to man (and woman) servant, i.e., to the depressed class of antiquity: "Did not God make him as well as me? Did he not give us life in our mothers' bodies? . . . For I was cared for by God as by a father from my earliest days. . . ." It is because we have a common father who looked after us all that we should look after one another. The biological unity of mankind laid down in the narrative of Genesis finds here its full ethical significance.

10. Where all are equally sons of man and creatures of God the only aristocracy possible is that of the spirit. Better a scholar of unknown parentage, runs a Talmudic proverb, than a high priest who is an ignoramus. Knowledge is an inalienable possession. "If you have knowledge, what do you lack?", asks an old Hebrew saw; "if you lack knowledge, what do you have?" Thus for the worship of power, whether in the form of riches or of birth or of high place, Jewish thought substituted the worship of wisdom; and wisdom, which we are told repeatedly is better than jewels and gold and silver, is not only open to all men but is also the "master-workman" of God.

Here is not the place to trace out the connexion be-

tween the well-known praises of Wisdom in the book of Proverbs, for example, and Greek doctrine, early or late, with its tremendous implications for later theology, though it is often forgotten that knowledge is a key-word not only in the so-called Wisdom Literature but throughout the whole Hebrew Bible, Pentateuch and Prophets and Psalms alike. For us the important point is again that we have in it a meeting place between divine and human, transcendent and immanent, similar to that which we noted before in the sphere of morals. Indeed wisdom here is a moral conception. It is not only the architectural plan of the physical universe, the "word" by which "the heavens were created". It is the hating of evil, of pride, of a high opinion of oneself, of a false tongue. It is the ground for the authority of kings.

Thus ethics and politics are inextricably interwoven, but the primacy is to ethics. A king's will, as we saw in the case of David and Ahab, does not make an action right. One of the most indignant judgments in the whole of the prophets is that of Ezekiel (xvii) on the king of Judah of his time for breaking his plighted word to his conqueror. Oaths are oaths, agreements are agreements, even when made for reasons of state or in one's own despite. To break them is a "wrong done against Me".

11. The climax of political theory lies in the relationship between state and state. Here again the principle is the use of wisdom in the service of morals; its motto: "not by might nor by power but by My spirit". The nations will go up to the house of God which will be high above all mountains, there to be taught knowledge of his ways; and "he shall judge between the nations . . . and they shall beat their swords to plow-shares . . . neither shall they learn war any more". The recognition of one spiritual authority; the submission to its decisions; the consequent turning of the weapons of war to the service of peace—the root of the matter is here. In principle war is no method of settling disputes; and the recognition of that fact is not the least of the achievements of Jewish thought which are of living moment today. Isaiah's well-known description of the "ensign of the peoples" who is to come from "the stock of Jesse" voices one of the deepest aspirations of humanity in that it substitutes

wisdom for force. One notes again the vision of unbroken unity. The nations form one family and are inter-responsible; and in the final consummation it is not one people or territorial unit but the whole earth which shall be "full of the knowledge of God.".

12. We have been treating of Jewish thought as if it were confined to the Hebrew Bible. The Bible is not a book but a literature, a literature covering many hundreds of years; and it was continued in the literature called summarily by the name Rabbinic of which the abiding monument and epitome is the Talmud. It is yet an unsolved problem how far Talmudic law in the technical sense influenced the course of European law; but there is no doubt that as a literature it has a living importance for the student of religion. It is to it that one must turn in order fully to understand the religious atmosphere from which both Christianity and Islam proceeded, and it is in it that we find the deepening of such central ideas as that of the majesty, and the nearness, of God; of study as an act of worship; of the all-importance of conduct and the need for its detailed regulation; of the supreme virtues of piety and modesty and regard for others; of the supreme values of truth and holiness and peace. But even so the creative effort was not exhausted; and literature of a distinctive order has been produced by the Jewish people from that time till today. It comprises all branches, from philosophy and ethics, through law and chronicle and history, to poetry, essay and romance; and it has been produced both in Hebrew and in the vernaculars of the various diasporas—Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Persian and mediæval Latin—as well as in modern languages. It would be useless to attempt the briefest of catalogues of a varied literature covering 2,000 years. It must suffice to mention the two principal epochs in which it impinged in some measufe on later European culture and took some part in shaping it.

These two epochs are those of the scholastic renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the scientific renaissance of the seventeenth.

The scholastic renaissance, crowned by the great name of Thomas Aquinas, formed a lasting synthesis between religion and science, the two great forces struggling, then as now, for the possession of men's minds. The scientific

renaissance, bursting through the scholastic synthesis, demanded a new world-view of its own. In each of these decisive intellectual efforts Jewish thought played a part. As in each instance the channel was largely that provided by the work of Moses Maimonides, a few sentences may be devoted to him.

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was the great mediæval systematizer of Jewish thought in all its aspects. He expounded the vast collections of Rabbinic teaching; he produced a "digest" of his own; he sought for the whole a philosophical foundation. In this last task he faced squarely the problem of the conflict between religion and the science of his day, and it was through this that he achieved his importance in the two epochs we have distinguished. The synthesis he effected between the Bible and Aristotle blazed the trail for the Christian schoolmen; while the attitude he adopted to the Arab theologians of his own day led to results which profoundly affected Spinoza, and, through Spinoza, the intellectual pattern of the modern world. All this must be looked for in specialist treatises. The surprising thing to observe is how familiar Jewish thinkers seem to have been to the educated public of Europe from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

13. But here a distinction must be made. In a sense the most important contribution made by Jews in this period was not Jewish at all.

When Maimonides, to be followed by Aquinas, argued powerfully against the prevailing school of thinkers in his day and showed that the accepted arguments against the world's having had an absolute beginning were not logically necessary, he gave a lead to the cause of religion which could fairly be called Jewish. It was because of the "perplexity" caused by the basic Jewish belief in creation when brought into contact with the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world that Maimonides was brought to consider the philosophical problem and to propound his solution. Here then is a "Jewish" contribution in the full sense of the word. It is an attempt by a Jew, steeped in the literature and traditions of his people, to solve a vital intellectual problem, of urgent importance for the thought of the day, in the spirit of that tradition and with its help.

When however Jews, through their wide intellectual interests and broad knowledge of languages, took a prominent part in the translating into Latin of those works of Greek and Arab thinkers which helped to shape the mind of the Middle Ages, it is hard to say that their work was Jewish: it was work of the highest importance, done by Jews. It was a labour not of creation but of transmission; and the books transmitted were the classics of general thought, not only those of Jewish origin or interest. (A similar observation may be made on the participation of Jews in so many fields of endeavour in modern times—philanthropy, journalism, art, music and the stage, as well as law, economics, medicine, psychology, sociology and the new developments in mathematical physics. Their contributions are contributions made by Jews but neither in scope or intention are they Jewish contributions; though they may owe much of their inspiration and drive to the love of learning and the general admiration for things of the mind which has characterized the Jewish tradition of life throughout its long and troubled history.)

14. An intermediate and somewhat ambiguous position is occupied by the so-called Cabbala, i.e., Jewish mystical literature. The roots of this literature can be traced back to very early times (although its chief monument, the Zohar or Book of Splendour, was given to the world only in the thirteenth century); and it was treated by its early Christian adepts in the fifteenth century as representing the original Hebrew wisdom. It would seem however that its philosophical doctrine is a form of Gnostic and Neo-Platonic speculation; and although of importance for the inner history of Judaism it has little original value of its own for the world.

Yet it has attracted many students and has had the most unexpected repercussions, from the religious doctrine of the Swedish and Russian theosophists to the aesthetic theories of the French romantics. It is certainly significant that recent writers on authors so diverse as Milton, Hugo and Rimbaud are constrained to devote much attention to it. Its masterpiece, the Zohar, is in style exuberant, full of striking images and extravagant (if not grotesque) similes. In subject matter it is diverse and at times confused. It contains many ideas, little

system. Always picturesque, it is often exhilarating and occasionally profound. To some it has appeared a treasure house of divine inspiration, to others a monument of human credulity and self-deceit; it is probably best described as a puzzling mixture of the two together. Yet it would be a mistake to judge it from the point of view of pure philosophy. It represents rather a revulsion against philosophy, and its interest for a later age is in its turning of the Pentateuchal narrative (on which it is ostensibly a commentary) into allegories of the inner life and in its insistence on moral intention in the performance of religious ceremony; though here too it is in the full current of a whole line of thinkers of whom the archetype (and historically the model for many of the early Church fathers) is the pre-Christian Alexandrian Jew Philo.

15. We have spoken so far of thought as expressed in literature. But thought is expressed in life as well; and one must ask what influence living Jewry has exerted on mankind. "There is a certain nation living here and there in small groups among the people in all the divisions of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of any other nation. . . ." So says Haman in the Biblical book of Esther, giving classic expression to the "dislike of the unlike" which is at the root of so many human ills. Yet Haman's own attempt to destroy the Jews was unsuccessful; and whether the narrative is history or not, it has always appeared to be typical. The Passover festival celebrates annually the many redemptions from the many Egypts in which the Jewish people escaped destruction. For the "unlike", remaining unlike, survive as the eternal protestants, leavening mankind through their very non-conformist existence.

Thus Jewry presents a problem to mankind, theoretical as well as practical. Is it, as (in a sense) is held traditionally by the Church or (in a different sense) by a modern philosopher, the "Clue to History"? Does it persist in order to bear witness, now as ever, to a new way of life for mankind?

The form of these questions is as old-fashioned as the old answers. In an existentialist world "missions" are out of date. Yet man has become an urgent problem to himself; and what is true now of all men has been true

many centuries of the Jew. The mere fact of his survival is disturbing. He is a perpetual stimulus to the intelligence of mankind, as he is a constant irritant to its conscience.

Surveys of Jewish history have shown different things to different observers. Some have seen in it the foundation of a true international community, some an extreme example of the narrowest nationalism. Perhaps the answer is, in Jowett's well-known phrase, "neither and both"; the disjunction may not be complete. But it will be agreed at least that no ordinary interpretative key will suffice to open this door. The Jew is a living witness to the bankruptcy of most theories of history, and not least of those called by the name of sociological.

V. EPILOGUE

1. Jewish thought is dominated by the idea of God with its immediate and complementary derivatives of freedom and law. The first ancestor, Abraham, was remembered as having been brought out from the bondage of "beyond the river" just as his descendants were brought out from the bondage of Egypt; and the highest vision of their future was that of a further release from the bondage of the external word through the writing of the law "in their hearts". But the freedom is freedom to live under law. Freedom is the basis of all community life, law—justice—is its framework and guarantee; and law, like freedom, is the more firmly established when written in the heart.

Bondage is of many kinds. It may be spiritual as well as material. The ultimate bondage is of the mind.

Mind is bound by being confined to any categories which are less than those of the whole. There are many such—stocks and stones, phrases, myths, wealth, political power. These all cramp and confine, and against them the Jewish mind has always waged war. Its God is jealous and will have none other gods besides himself. He is thus the supreme liberator.

The last and most brutalizing of all the idols created by man is the all-controlling and all-interfering state, and the last freedom comes to men from the recognition of their individual and immediate dependence on the God of the spirits of all flesh. Hence the supreme charter of *in*dependence: "they shall not be slaves because they are *my* slaves". As the Catholic Péguy wrote of the Jew Lazare: "Jamais je n'ai vu un homme croire, savoir, à ce point, que les plus grandes puissances temporelles . . . ne sont que par des puissances spirituelles intérieures".

If there is such a thing as a "Jewish mind", and if the Jewish mind as such has anything to contribute to mankind's common store, it may be said to consist in this sense of absolutes.

2. We have been tracing out ideas, but the paradox of ideas is that they are distinct from fact and yet fact has reality only through its participation in ideas. Few of the ideas we have been expounding are in accord with fact. Yet it might be held that the history of human culture is the history of the attempts to make them fact.

Today they seem farther from fact than ever. With the abominations of the last war—gas chambers, concentration camps, genocide—still vivid in our memory, it is hard to speak convincingly of the goodness of God and of his working in history. Before our very eyes history seems to have collapsed.

3. It is a tragic note on which to end but one true to fact. If ideas can help, it can only be through faith, a faith however which is not in contrast with "works", certainly not divorced from works, but which sustains and invigorates works, the faith by which "the righteous shall live". The religious passion is for salvation, whether salvation of the individual alone or of the individual within a community; and salvation is a life to be lived, not a theory to be upheld or a belief to be adhered to.

Such faith does not depend on immediate returns or on any hope of reward or fear of punishment. It is rational but not a calculation of chances. It springs from moral integrity rather than scientific knowledge. It rests on the authority of conscience and it is a choosing, not a blind acquiescence in "irresistible forces" and "brute facts". Its exemplar is the reply of the Jews of Babylon to Nebuchadnessar the king when he asked what god there was who could rescue them from his hands: "We have no need to answer thee in this matter.

"If it be that our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and from thine hand, O king, he will deliver us.

"But if not—be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, not worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

"But if not . . ."! One may continue the quotation from Péguy: "Je n'ai jamais vu un homme croire, à ce point, avoir conscience, à ce point, qu'une conscience d'homme était un absolu, un invincible, un éternel, un libre, qu'elle s'opposait victorieuse, éternellement triomphante, à toutes les grandeurs de la terre".

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

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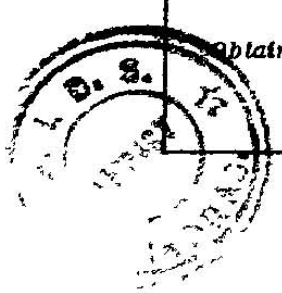

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