

ANGLO-JEWISH
MEMORIES

AND OTHER SERMONS

BY

HERMANN ADLER

PH.D., HON. LL.D. ST. ANDREWS

CHIEF RABBI OF THE UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATIONS OF
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And the monarch asked in wonderment, 'How can such things be?' 'Know thou,' answered the sage, 'Death always assumes the shape of the souls to whom he manifests himself. To the wicked as a fiend; as an angel of heaven to those pure in heart.' And the ruler earnestly bethought himself of his ways. He turned and repented, and did what was right in the sight of the Lord. Yes, it depends upon ourselves, upon the entire tenor of our lives, upon the use we make of this day, how Death will appear at the end; whether in the guise of a destroyer, or as a deliverer, who imprints upon us the Kiss of God.

Now the gate of repentance is open, and heaven's light streams through it. Now in love and mercy God calls unto us: יהשבו וחיו, 'Turn yourselves and live!' Live here on earth a life of loyalty to your faith, brightened by the consciousness of duty done. And you will live hereafter in the presence of God, crowned with glory undimmed, and honour unfading. Amen.

RELIGION OF THE HOME

CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE, סוכות חרס"א, *Feast of Tabernacles,*

October 8, 1900

וישב ארון יי בית עבד אדם הנתי שלשה חדשים ויברך יי את-עבד אדם
ואת-כל-ביתו:

'And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom, and all his household.'—2 SAMUEL 6: 11.

It is the purpose of our divinely instituted festivals to serve not merely as memorials of great historical events in our religious history, but also to influence and to shape our every-day lives. We should endeavour to weave some of the festival's golden threads into the warp and woof of our daily career. It is for this that we ask when we pray, 'O Lord our God, bestow upon us the blessing of Thine appointed times for life and peace, for joy and gladness, even as Thou hast been pleased to promise that Thou wouldst bless us.'

What are the lessons which the Feast of Tabernacles should teach for our every-day life? They may be gleaned from the text we have cited. 'And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.'

The ark was the symbol of the Divine Presence, in virtue of its containing the two tablets of the covenant, on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed. It was therefore termed the ark of the Lord of Hosts, the ark of the testimony, the ark of the covenant. During the journeyings of our fathers in the wilderness it was borne with great reverence by the priests in advance of the host. When the Temple was built it was deposited in the innermost shrine, the Holy of Holies. At the period referred to in our text the ark was still being carried from place to place, and we are here told, that when the ark of God was placed in the house of Obed-Edom, 'the Lord blessed his house, and all that he had.' 'The ark paid well for its entertainment,' quaintly says an old commentator. 'It is a guest that none shall lose by that bid it welcome.' We all hope, wish, and pray that God may bless our house and all that we have; that His blessing may rest upon our home. *Home*—it is a word of ineffable charm. There is hardly another word in our language which rouses so many pleasant memories and evokes such touching associations. The proverbs of well-nigh every nation have consecrated this love of home. 'To every bird its nest is fair,' says the Frenchman. 'East and west, at home it's best,' is the watchword of the German. Surely the place to which the bridegroom brings his bride, the place where they start on the pilgrimage of life; where we first press our little

ones to our hearts; where they grow up as olive plants around our table; where the parents climb the hill together, until by the inevitable law of nature they descend towards the dark valley; surely the scene of our birth and marriage, our growth, decline, and death, the place where we enjoy the gifts of Divine goodness, and where we also have to bear our struggles, our sicknesses and sorrows, this place must be very dear and sacred to us. Should not all our heart's desires and aspirations be directed to the one end, to render our home worthy of receiving the Divine blessing? And the Divine blessing will rest upon it if, like Obed-Edom, we place the ark of God within its walls. There is nothing mystical in this. It means the religion of the home, the sense of the Divine Presence in the house of our pilgrimage.

Let us recall to our minds the contents of the sacred ark. In addition to the two tables of the covenant, there were enshrined therein the Book of the Law, the golden chalice with the Manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded. I am not given to fanciful and far-fetched interpretations. But the purport of these symbols is not obscure. They indicate that the love of law and the law of love must sway the home. The Manna typifies the simplicity and contentment that should prevail therein, that we should regard our daily bread as angels' food, vouchsafed by Divine mercy. And Aaron's rod budding teaches that it is

only by the buds and blossoms and the fruitage of a man's life that his character can be judged.

There are houses—we all know of such—the appointments of which are to the eye fair beyond reproach; everything seems in exquisite taste. The inmates may be clever and gifted. And yet the true idea of a home is not realized therein. The members of the household are devoid of every high ideal, are dominated by one great desire—to live a life of ease and comfort. They are filled with one overmastering ambition—to push their way higher in the social scale, to shine in the world. All thoughts are centred upon self. And with what result? Disappointments and distresses come; the inmates are overwhelmed, and the great gilded mirrors reflect haggard, care-worn faces on every side. Be warned against such houses.

חנו עיניכם באחיכם שבגולה שלא יהיו בתיהם קבריהם.¹ Watch over your homes lest they become your graves, the graves of your hopes and joys, the graves of an Israelite's duty and mission. If you would rise to the true conception of home, God must be enthroned and worshipped therein. And if God is there, then love will enter and abide there, genuine family affection, the love of husband and wife, of parents and children. Now, if the union of husband and wife be dictated merely by outward attraction, by prudential considerations, by the promise of a rich dowry, disillusion, disenchantment too often comes in at the door, and love flies

¹ *Taanith*, p. 22.

out at the window, and in their stead coldness, self-will, and estrangement hold sway. But if husband and wife are bound together by high endeavours, by lofty ideals; if life means more to them than a round of pleasure and the pursuit of amusements; if they are linked together by the discipline of toil with its sweet guerdon of weekly rest; if the voice of prayer and praise ascends from their house; if from their house they go to the house of God on the Sabbath Day to pray with and for each other, then will their young loves grow in nobility and strength. A famous writer was asked how much he loved his wife. He answered, 'A little more than yesterday, a little less than tomorrow.' This is the secret of progressive happiness. Husband and sons must go forth on their daily tasks and duties. But home should remain the starting-point of all their ideals, their ambition, and aspirations. The Sabbath rest should be the reward for all the toil, the heat, and burden of the week. Who can fail to acknowledge the wealth of peace and happiness which the Sabbath brings to the household in which it is observed with truth and sincerity? The Sabbath Eve and the Sabbath Day have been the Jewish perennial fountains of youth. From their crystal waters the wearied and worried Hebrew has drunk and been refreshed.

The domestic virtues of the Jew are cultivated and strengthened at the festive board, upon which the Sabbath lamp casts its radiance. Not in vain has the Sabbath been named שבת המלכה, the 'Queen Sabbath,'

for beneath her gentle sway Judaism in its darkest days was safeguarded and blessed. And if Judaism is to be preserved, if our homes are to yield us true happiness, the Sabbath must be jealously and zealously upheld, and every sacrifice which its observance entails must be cheerfully borne. Yes, my friends, the foundation and the keystone of the religious home is the observance of the Sabbath. Every Sabbath and festival we celebrate, every religious ordinance we perform, will strengthen the bond that unites us to our Father in heaven, and with our brethren in faith throughout the world. Every ordinance of our faith will become a reminder of duty, an incentive to truth, purity, and righteousness. Then will your home be irradiated by a sunshine all its own, then will the morning be bright with the knowledge of how much has to be done during the day, then will the evening hour be light with the consciousness of how much has been achieved. Then will the mellow wisdom of old age be blended with the glad enthusiasm of younger days, and the home will prove an ark of refuge and a haven of rest amid the stress and storm of life, a little land-locked bay on a rocky coast, where the sailor, escaping the billows of the ocean, can anchor his frail bark and feel safe.

I cannot promise you wealth and abiding prosperity. We do not know whether Obed-Edom became a rich man. But of this we may be sure, that he possessed what is infinitely more valuable

than mere wealth. Addison tells us that a Rosicrucian promised to reveal to him the mysterious gift he possessed, the great secret by which he could irradiate every metal, and enrich lead with all the properties of gold. A single ray, he said, dissipates care and pain and melancholy from the person on whom it falls. In short, its presence changes every place into a kind of heaven. 'I know the secret,' exclaimed Addison; 'it is contentment; not to pine after what is beyond our reach, nor to fret because of the inevitable.'

I cannot promise you unbroken ease and unclouded sunshine. Not from the most godly house can care, sorrow, and misfortune be shut out. We cannot exclude the stern messenger of death from any home. Sooner or later in the desolate house, once so happy, the tears of the fatherless will flow. But of this we are assured, the wounds which God inflicts, He also heals. All that He sends, if borne submissively, becomes rich in mercy. Even in the hour when we have committed our beloved to the dust—

Through thick pangs, high agonies,
Faith unto life breaks, and death dies.

And a rich comfort is given unto those who go to their eternal home, the home beyond the grave. The ark was taken from the house of Obed-Edom at the end of three months. But the connection between the ark and his family did not

cease. We do not anticipate, as a rule, much illumination from the seemingly arid genealogical lists of the Book of Chronicles. But there appears the noteworthy record that Obed-Edom with his family of eight sons and their children, 'mighty men of valour, able men for strength for the service,' kept the south gate of the Temple and joined in the service of the Temple, 'for God blessed him.'¹ At a much later period, in the reign of King Amaziah, the family are spoken of as keepers of the vessels of the house of God.² This is the highest and best blessing of a godly home, that its influence descends from father to son, from generation to generation.

The anxious reflection must press itself upon every thoughtful parent, 'I am going the way of all flesh. I must leave my children, some of them with characters yet unformed, in a world of searching trial and fiery temptation. Will they preserve the sanctuary of Judaism? Will they maintain the divinely instituted ordinances of our faith? Will they toil for the welfare of the community?' Parents, if you have harboured the ark of God within your house, if the religion of the home has been yours, then you may hope that the God of your fathers will be the God of your children. Then you may cherish the comforting thought, 'I see them like unto the house of Obed-Edom, to

¹ 1 Chronicles 26 : 4-8, 15.

² 2 Chronicles 25 : 24.

the third and fourth generation, safeguarding and ministering to the ark of God. I die in peace.' These are some of the blessings with which religion of the home is fraught. Heaven grant that we may render ourselves worthy to possess these blessings in a rich measure, and bequeath them to our children after us! Amen.

DIVINE REVELATION AND THE WORLD'S PROGRESS

BAYSWATER SYNAGOGUE, שבועות תרמ"ב, *Pentecost, May 24, 1882*

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה :

'And God spake all these words.'—EXODUS 20 : 1.

WE have heard to-day the simple yet sublime commandments revealed by God on Sinai. As these familiar words fell upon your ears you may possibly have thought to yourselves, 'These precepts were given 3000 years ago to a people who had just been freed from slavery, who were entirely uncultured, who knew nought of literature, art, or science. And we are called upon to listen to those words with the same awe and reverence—we who, compared with the Israelites of old, are veritable giants! What grand strides have been made since the days of Moses in every department of science and industry! Progress is the great watchword of the age! The proclamation of the Ten Commandments may have been necessary at a time when the world was young. But now we have outgrown such leading-strings.'

These are the thoughts entertained by many a man and woman of the nineteenth century. But how

shallow and superficial is such a judgment! Many of us, undoubtedly, indulged the fond belief that mankind was steadily progressing, not only from a material point of view, but was also developing morally and intellectually; that each generation successively was ridding itself of the errors of its predecessors, that it was casting off the crimes and sins of former days, as the serpent sloughs off its skin. But alas! it was but a dream, out of which we have been rudely and harshly awakened. We had hoped that religious persecution, fanatic hate, and intolerance had been for ever relegated into the limbo of medievalism. But what are we witnessing? I will not speak of the outrages that have been committed in Russia, for that land is regarded as but half civilized. But in a country that boasts of its enlightenment and superior intelligence, literary resurrectionists, whilst deceitfully waving the flag of truce, the white banner of culture and learning, have unearthed the putrid carcass of intolerance from its ancient grave, have galvanized its hideous form with a spurious life, and are filling the atmosphere of brotherly love and charity with the miasma of malice and ill-will. And even in our land, the sanctuary of freedom and justice, we are startled now and again by the revival of effete prejudices, and the publication of unjust insinuations. We will, however, not limit our view to our own narrow horizon, but regard the matter as citizens of this great Empire. Who would have believed that

this much lauded century would be stained by crimes as huge and dark as ever disgraced those days when the 'right of the fist' stalked triumphantly through the land? Who would have imagined that our sister isle would be disgraced by foul and murderous conspiracies, and that there could be men who would glory in deeds of blood? You may fitly ask, 'Is this the progress on which the age vaunts itself? Is this its boasted civilization, this the enlightenment it flaunts before the world?' You may have heard of a strange misadventure which befell Parry, the great Arctic explorer. He was endeavouring to reach the North Pole, and travelled onward indefatigably with his dogs and sledges. He was buoyed up with the hope that he was reaching the desired goal. But when the sun at last broke through the darkness, and he was able to compute his position, he found to his dismay that in reality he had been journeying several degrees backwards. He had been travelling on an immense icebank, which had broken loose, and which was being driven by the current to the south, so that his fancied progress was, in reality, a retrograde movement. Does it not strike you that we are having a similar experience in respect to the world's progress? If this progress is not to be limited to mere material advance, but if it is to signify improvement in the moral nature of the race and the individual, are we not bound to confess, in the presence of war with its attendant horrors, in the presence of sedition trying

to rear its hateful head, in the face of the mad greed of gain and of degraded selfishness, that mankind has no reason for self-congratulation and self-satisfaction?

How can we account for this grave anomaly? The reply is given in the words of the prophet, which are as true this day as when they were first proclaimed: 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?'¹ The anatomist can describe minutely the action of the valves of the heart, but he cannot supply you with a chart of the intricate windings of your moral nature. Science can trace the path of the sun, foretell the appearance of a comet and the return of an eclipse. But in vain do we turn to science, in vain do we turn to history, 'her ample page rich with the spoils of time,' to curb human passion, or to restrain the sinful longing. In vain are all human nostrums, sedatives, and correctives. There is but one influence that can sway the human heart with potency: 'The voice of the Lord with power, the voice of the Lord with majesty.'² Science may try to set up its system of ethics; it will never effectually influence the human heart. In moral as well as in physical science the truth holds good, that the stream cannot rise higher than the source. Human morality creeps and grovels or struts and frets on the level of the earth. Religion alone can raise man from earth to heaven, for it comes from

¹ Jeremiah 17:9.

² Psalm 29:4.

heaven. And this is the hope that sustains us, that the time will and must come when God's word will reign supreme upon earth. How different would the world be if only the elementary teachings of the Decalogue were fully obeyed! 'I am the Lord thy God.' If men were really imbued with the truth of God's moral governance, they would not suffer the hell-hounds of war, of persecution, and of lawless ambition to be let loose on their fellow-creatures. 'Thou shalt not murder.' Would not Ireland be a precious jewel in the crown of the British Empire, if that command were universally honoured and obeyed? 'Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet.' What ineffable wretchedness would mankind be spared, and the world would become even like a Garden of Eden, 'truth flourishing out of the earth, righteousness looking down from heaven,' if these precepts were rigorously obeyed!

And yet we hear the argument repeated nowadays, 'All these restraints and commands were of extreme value and moment in the early stages of human civilization. But now they are superfluous, seeing that the exercise of justice and humanity has become instinctive in mankind, and that the veneration for law is innate.' This argument is absurd. It is almost as grotesque as the saying of the boor, who observed that we ought to be grateful to the

moon, which gives us light on dark nights, but that we owe nothing to the sun, who only shines by day, when there is always light. What is it but the law of Sinai to which we owe the most valued achievements of civilization,—the law of Sinai, which offers the only solution of the enigmas of life, which reveals to man a Being, Almighty and All-good, as the object of his adoration, which gives to our conscience a code of duty that alone can curb man's wayward will?

Let us just consider what would become of mankind if these restraints of religion were removed. Then would the world again assume the hateful type which it bore in the days of imperial Rome, in which luxury, cruelty, and sensuality were supreme. In that moral glacial period, all aspirations after truth, goodness, and purity would come to an end, practical charity would cease to exist. For what is the teaching of science on this head? The survival of the fittest is the law of nature. What does this mean, but that the strong and gifted should inherit the earth, and that the weak and simple must be blotted out? And what is to sustain us, when the iron has entered the soul, when cherished hopes have been blighted, when we stand with bleeding hearts, bereaved and lonely, at the grave of our dear ones? If faith in God has been abandoned, if hope in immortality has been lost, how utterly desolate would be the fate

of the children of men! Avaunt, thou terrible nightmare of a faithless world! God lives. In His light, we see light. He has given us His Law of Truth, 'a Tree of Life to them that grasp it, and of them that uphold it every one is blessed. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.'¹ And therefore we have listened with rapt attention to the sacred Decalogue revealed on Sinai—

Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale
Its infinite variety.

Oh, that we would give to the world the example of unqualified obedience and unwavering attachment to the law divine!

Almighty God! Amid the fair bowers and the sublime beauty of Paradise Adam needed to hear Thy voice to keep him from sin. How greatly do we need it, we, who are so apt to go astray in this world, beset as we are by temptations and lures! How great the need that we should listen to Thy voice and hearken to Thy teachings! Help us to renew our covenant with Thee, so that we may exclaim with heart and soul, as did our forefathers, 'All that the Lord hath said we will do and hear.' Send Thy help to fathers and mothers, that they may deem it their precious privilege to train their children in the fear of Thee and in the knowledge

¹ Proverbs 3 : 17, 18.

of Thy will. Speed the time when the law of Sinai will be acknowledged by the whole of mankind, when all the dwellers on earth will obey Thy eternal, immutable law. For, when Thy judgments are on the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Amen.

presume that the illogical utterances of soul-hunters could have any real force with you. But there is reason to fear that some of our brethren are, unhappily, not so familiar with the principles of Judaism, and are not so thoroughly conversant with their Bible, as to enable them forthwith to detect the fallacies of these arguments, or to quote chapter and verse of the texts that effectually rend the cunningly woven web of sophistry. I will, therefore, speak to-day of the Jewish doctrine of Atonement, with special reference to the taunts of our opponents.

Is it in the power of any human being to obtain forgiveness for the sin committed by his fellow? Let us turn to a memorable incident recorded in the Bible. The wrath of the Almighty was roused against His people Israel, for they had set at naught His behests, and had made themselves an idol of gold, and worshipped it. Moses, deeply grieved, cries to the people, 'Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up to the Lord; peradventure I will make an atonement for your sin.'¹ The great leader was ready to sacrifice himself for his nation. He prays to God: 'Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.' Did the Lord accept this vicarious atonement? No. He said unto Moses: *מי אשר חטא-לי*: 'Whosoever has sinned against Me, him

¹ Exodus 32 : 30.

THE JEWISH DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

GREAT SYNAGOGUE, שבת שובה תרנ"ט, *Sabbath, September 24, 1898*

לְבוֹ אִישׁ בְּדַרְכָּיו אֲשַׁפֵּט אֶתְכֶם בַּיּוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל נָאִם אֲדֹנָי יי שׁוּבוּ וְהִשְׁבוּ
מִכָּל-פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם וְלֹא-יְהִי לָכֶם לְמַכְשׁוֹל עוֹן :

'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.'—EZEKIEL 18 : 30.

At this season of the year we receive numerous tracts and pamphlets from conversionists bearing upon the Day of Atonement. The aim of the writers is to shake our faith in the efficacy of that great day. They argue, 'When the Temple was standing on Mount Moriah, when sacrifices were offered up by the High Priest, Israel could hope to have his sins forgiven. But, now, you have no Temple, no altar, no blood that maketh atonement for the soul.' And, therefore, they call upon us—of course, affectionately—to believe in the founder of their faith, who, they assert, by his death obtained forgiveness for all the transgressions of humanity. 'Believe in him,' they say, 'and you need no further atonement.'

It would be an insult to your common sense to

will I blot out from My book.' These words enunciate the doctrine, that every man is accountable to God for his own actions, and cannot release himself from his individual responsibility by the intercession of another person, however great. We require no mediator to save us from the effects of our guilt. Our own sincere repentance suffices to achieve for us Divine forgiveness.

This doctrine of individual responsibility is repeatedly insisted upon in the Bible. It is clearly set forth in the 18th and 33rd chapters of Ezekiel. To quote but a few verses. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.' 'I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God.'¹ 'Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?''² How clearly do these verses tell us, that naught is needed but the love and mercy of our God and our own penitence to obtain for us forgiveness and salvation!

But it is argued, 'Was not the sinner required to bring a sacrifice to the Temple? How, then, can he obtain pardon now, when there is no Temple, when its altar is overthrown, and its ashes scattered?' This

¹ Ezekiel 18 : 20, 30.

² Ibid. 33 : 11.

argument is based upon an entirely incorrect theory of the law of sacrifices. It is clearly taught in Leviticus, that the offering itself was not sufficient to obtain forgiveness. If a wrong had been committed against a fellow-man, reparation had to be made before the offering was brought. The Law enacts, 'Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.'¹ And only then was he to bring his trespass offering unto the Lord. But the sin offering was declared to be devoid of all efficacy unless the sinner had unfeignedly repented of his guilt. He had, therefore, to place his hand on the head of the victim, and to confess the offence he had committed. The only value and efficacy of the offering consisted in this, that it proved the sacrificer to be repentant; it was an outward test and sign of his sincerity.

And the same rule applied to the entire service in the Temple on the Day of Atonement. The supposition that the sprinkled blood of the animal could obtain the pardon of Heaven is thoroughly opposed to the letter and the spirit of the Divine command.

¹ Leviticus 6 : 4-6.

Before the sacrifice was offered, the High Priest was bidden to lay his hand upon the head of the animal, and to confess successively his own sin, and the trespasses of his household, and the transgressions of the house of Israel. Certain other rites had to be observed, such as the sending of the scapegoat into the wilderness. But there is abundant evidence to prove that these acts in themselves were not efficacious, but were to serve as symbols and admonitions to the people. The rite of the scapegoat was to admonish the house of Israel to cast off their sins entirely. 'Sins are not burdens,' says Maimonides,¹ 'which can be shifted from one man to another. All these rites were calculated to impress the soul of the worshippers and to stimulate them to repentance.'

It may, however, be asked, 'Was not the High Priest constituted on that day the representative of the people, who by his ministrations obtained the Divine pardon, so that he may be regarded as a mediator interceding between Israel and his God?' The plain words of Scripture forbid such a supposition. If it had been in the power of the High Priest to achieve the forgiveness of the people, the Israelite would have been permitted on that day to pursue his ordinary occupation. But the *יום הכפורים* was to be observed by the whole house of Israel. 'And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall

¹ *More Nebuchim*, iii. c. 46.

afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you.'¹ This precept, and the admonitions addressed by the prophet to the people on that day, indicate clearly that the ministrations of the High Priest were of no avail without their prayers, their confessions, and their promises of sincere amendment. What can be more emphatic than Isaiah's admonition:² 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?' The teachers of the *Mishnah*³ tell us: *האומר אחטא ויום הכפורים מכפר אין יום הכפורים מכפר*, 'Unto him who sins with the idea that the Day of Atonement will expiate his guilt, unto him that day is of no avail.' The whole object of the Kippur, on which we repeat again and again the solemn formula, 'For beside Thee we have no one who pardoneth and forgiveth,' is to impress the truth upon us, that we have no mediator to save us from the effects of our sins but our own repentance and our own amendment, and that we have naught to help us but the infinite mercy of our Creator.

It is, however, said, 'If it be true that you rely exclusively upon Divine mercy, and your own actions, how is it that you refer again and again in your prayers to the merits of your fathers, and to the cove-

¹ Leviticus 16: 29.

² Isaiah 58: 6.

³ *Joma*, c. 8, § 9.

nant the Lord made with the patriarchs? How is it, that in your litany you implore the Lord to have compassion upon you "for the sake of those who were slain for His holy name, and who went through fire and water to sanctify Him"?'

In answer to this, I would bid you bear in mind, that prayer is a self-preached sermon. When we beseech the Lord to remember the זכות אבות, the merits of the patriarchs, the main purpose of the supplication is that we shall call to mind their pious deeds, and strive to tread in their footsteps. When we ask Him to remember the covenant He made with Abraham, this remembrance is to stimulate us to walk with God, even as he did in perfect faith. When we pray to Him to remember the binding of Isaac, the memory of this event is to urge us to surrender cheerfully even what we hold dearest in life at the bidding of our Heavenly Father. When we entreat Him to bless us for the sake of Jacob, we should resolve that the struggles and trials of our earthly career shall chasten and purify us, even as they chastened and purified the sorely tried patriarch. And when we beseech the Lord to save us for the sake of those who went through fire and water for the sanctification of His holy name, this prayer is to kindle in our hearts a spark of the devotion and enthusiasm which fired the hearts of the martyrs of old.

But the writers of our prayers were carefully on their guard not to permit us to indulge the thought,

that the merits of our fathers would obtain for us Divine pardon, even though we persist in our sinfulness. The concluding prayer of the Litany is: 'Our Father, our King! be gracious unto us and answer us, for we have no good works of our own; deal with us in charity and kindness, and save us.'

The famous preacher of Dubno was asked, 'Why is this last prayer spoken silently?' He answered, as was his wont, with an apologue. 'A tradesman came to the Leipsic fair to make purchases. He entered the store of a prosperous merchant, and proceeded with much assurance to select a number of costly wares, velvet, satin, silks, and furs. He gave his own name, and the names of men of high standing in the commercial world with whom he had business concerns. But when the purchaser had completed his selection and the time of payment came, he altered his tone, and said with bated breath and whispering humbleness, "Dear friend, I grieve to say that I am not able to pay you now; I am but a poor man; I throw myself on your forbearance. I will pay my debt as soon as I am able." This,' continued the Maggid, 'is obviously the meaning of the concluding prayer. Great is the merit of our pious ancestry, but we know full well that this will not obtain for us Heaven's favour. We can only hope that our Father and King will deal with us with mercy and loving kindness.'

And this is the purpose of these penitential days,

that we may probe ourselves and discover our failings as Jews and Jewesses, as husbands and wives, as parents and children. We must tear off the veil of conceit which obscures our sight; we must rend the mantle of self-righteousness in which we are so apt to enwrap ourselves, so that on the coming great day we may obtain the pardon of our Heavenly Father by our confession, our penitence, and our sincere purpose of amendment.

THE RITE OF BAR-MITZVAH

NORTH LONDON SYNAGOGUE, ש"ק" פ' שמיני חרס"ב, April 5, 1902

ועתה לעיני כל-ישראל קהל-יך ובאזני אלהינו שמרו ודרשו כל-מצוות
 יי אלהיכם :

'Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God.'—1 CHRONICLES 28 : 8.

WHEN any of the solemn and joyful events of life are about to happen to some member of an affectionate and united family, the thoughts and prayers of the rest are naturally directed to, and centred on him. In this your family, your Synagogue, a youthful congregant attains his religious majority to-day. We feel with him; we hope and pray for him. And I deem it right to address to him, and indeed to all who are here assembled, some words of loving encouragement and of serious counsel.

With this view I would speak to him, and to all of you, my dear brethren, young and old, on the spiritual significance of the Rite of Bar-Mitzvah.

The authorized expounders of the written law have ordained¹ that an Israelite, on attaining the age of thirteen, has to take upon himself the observance

¹ *Ethics of the Fathers*, chap. v., § 24.

history relates, that when Hannibal's sons became of age he took them to the altar of their gods and made them swear perpetual hostility to the enemies of his country. Your father has summoned you to the table upon which the Torah is placed, that you may swear lifelong allegiance to your faith. Your parents have given their thank-offering this day to the Synagogue, a precious scroll of the Law, so as to teach you the Love of the Law and the Law of Love, and to remind you of what the Bible has ever been to Israel, and what it must be to you—your teacher, monitor, guide, and friend. 'Now, therefore, in the sight of Israel the congregation of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God.' In the solemn stillness of your heart, and in the presence of those to whom you are dear, whose soul is bound up with your soul, resolve and determine ever to be firm and unwavering in your attachment to your God and your faith. Loyalty must be written on your heart. Loyalty must be the mainspring of your life, so that after a career of sterling worth and usefulness you may be worthy to enter heaven, 'the land of the leal.' And may the Lord in His mercy watch over you, protect and safeguard you!

The Lord bless thee and keep thee :

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee :

The Lord turn His face unto thee and give thee peace. Amen.

INTERMARRIAGE

CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE, סוכות תרס"ז, October 14, 1905

וְהָיָה חִבְרָתָךְ וְאִשְׁתְּ בְרִיתְךָ :

'She is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant.'—MALACHI 2 :
part of verse 14.

EACH book, nay each section of the Bible is charged with its own solemn, special message. One of the primary teachings which pervade the first book of the Torah, the reading of which we shall shortly recommence, is the sanctity of the marriage tie. This was the first moral lesson which God was pleased to teach mankind. He is revealed to us as the first maker of marriages. 'He brought Eve unto Adam,' and thus taught Adam's descendants that the tie which unites husband and wife is even closer than that which knits the child to his parent. 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh'¹—united in that perfect fellowship which springs from true sympathy, from absolute identity of interests, from communion between soul and soul. The poet claims that man and wife should constitute—

Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one.

¹ Genesis 2 : 24.
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This is in most instances an unattainable, and perhaps not even a desirable ideal. But it must be admitted that the union of hearts, which is the sole foundation of happy wedded life, cannot exist unless there be entire harmony, not merely of tastes and dispositions, but what is of infinitely greater moment, *an identity of religious faith*. Husband and wife must acknowledge the same God, and entertain an identical belief as to the supreme concerns of life. The wife must be not merely thy partner and companion, but also the wife of thy covenant, bound to her husband by the same religious faith. Hence it was that our patriarch Abraham was so scrupulous in impressing upon the faithful steward of his house, that he should not select as a wife for his son a daughter of the Canaanites, but that he should go to his own country, and his own kindred, where the one true God was acknowledged and worshipped, so that Isaac might obtain a wife worthy of his regard and affection by aiding him to preserve purity of faith and purity of life. Hence our Law is so insistent in teaching the religious duty not to intermarry with the daughters of an idolatrous race.¹ 'Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter shalt thou not give to his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.' And the reason for this prohibition is very precisely indicated in the verse that follows: 'For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they

¹ Deuteronomy 7 : 3, 4.

may serve other gods.' And not content with these general injunctions, the Bible shows very clearly in its historical portions the evils likely to spring from unions in which the partners are not linked together by the bond of a common faith. The names of Esau, Samson, and Solomon will recall to you instances of conjugal unhappiness and disaster arising from such unions.

And there is one specially instructive example of the evil result of such mixed marriage. We read in Leviticus¹ of a grave scandal in the camp of Israel. 'The son of an Israelitish woman blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed.' What an outrage! The son of an Israelitish woman to dishonour the sacred name of God! How was it that such a grievous offence could be committed by a member of the chosen people? The answer is given in the sacred narrative. We are told that the criminal was the son of an Israelitish woman, *and of an Egyptian man*. When a daughter of Israel marries an idolatrous Egyptian, what can be the result of such an ill-assorted union? Children are more apt to follow the evil than the good example set before them. They will learn more readily of an Egyptian father to blaspheme than of an Israelitish mother to pray and praise.

But the question will be asked, 'How can you justly apply these prohibitions and these examples to the present day? It was no doubt of commanding

¹ Leviticus 24 : 10, 11.

importance to enforce the injunction upon the sons and daughters of Israel to marry within the pale of their creed at a time when all the nations around them were idol-worshippers. But the Gentile does not now worship wood and stone. Does it not, then, savour of intolerance to enforce the same exclusiveness with respect to the people in whose midst we dwell, who pay the same homage as we do to the Bible, and who teach and practise identical moral duties?'

Now we gladly concede that Christianity marks a decisive and marvellous step in advance of the polytheism of bygone days. Yet, scan its fundamental doctrine, which teaches that the founder of that religion was the son of God; that the one God, eternal and indivisible, is composed of three persons; that he assumed the form of man, was crucified, and by his death atoned for the sins of mankind. Are not these various dogmas—the Incarnation and Vicarious Atonement—in diametrical opposition to our pure Monotheism, and to our belief in Human Responsibility? If husband and wife entertain different views on matters that constitute the very breath of spiritual life, surely the essential conditions of all intimate companionship, of true harmony, and abiding friendship must be absent. The woman united with thee in wedlock is no longer 'thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.' We sometimes hear people who object to such unions stigmatized as bound in the shackles of mediæval exclusiveness and mysticism. But is it

narrowness to be attached to the race from which one has sprung? Is it intolerance to cling with every fibre of our heart to the faith, its teachings and observances, which we have imbibed with our mother's milk? Who will gainsay the fact, that the race and faith of Israel can only be preserved by the loyalty of his sons and daughters? For what is the inevitable result of such unions? As a rule a compact is entered upon. Each is to retain his and her individual religion. What ensues? Christianity is the dominant religion, the faith professed by the bulk of our fellow-countrymen. Judaism is the faith of the minority. What more likely than that these Jews and Jewesses, belonging as they do, as a rule, to the class of indifferentists, will be merged and absorbed in the mass?

I need not stay to enforce this statement by any illustration. Trace the genealogy of any family in this country, descended from Jews, and you will find that intermarriage was the first step in its alienation. Can we be surprised at this result? Children are born. It is not merely by precept but by example that children can be taught religion. What kind of example is set in the case of such mixed marriages? Which day of the week is the child to keep as the day of rest? Is the child on the Sabbath to follow his father into the Synagogue, and there hear it proclaimed, 'Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me,' and on the following day to accompany the mother to

church, and there offer up prayer in the name of the Trinity, and invoke the intercession of a saviour? The obvious and inevitable issue will be, whatever the agreement originally made, that the children as they grow up will adopt the faith of the majority, and that the family will be altogether lost to Judaism.

There is certainly one other course of action. The offspring can be brought up without any religious faith whatever. This has been termed 'emerging from the mire of intellectual stagnation, and advancing in the onward march of intellectual freedom.' Have we not witnessed the outcome of such training?—that most odious product, persons *sans foi et sans loi*, who are steeped in the narrowest selfishness, and sunk in the mire of a repulsive and repellent materialism, who may not inaptly be described as *the blank page between the Old and the New Testament*. Yes, brethren, it must unhappily be admitted that, as a rule, a mixed marriage marks the parting of the ways. It is an act of disloyalty; it is the first step on the road to desertion and eventual apostasy. I frankly admit that there have been a few men and women who, despite such union, have remained staunch, who have cast in their lot with their brethren, and toiled for their welfare. But one Esther can neither atone nor compensate for a number of craven renegades.

But let us carefully guard ourselves against a misconception. It has been asserted by our detractors that our opposition to intermarriage is due to our

tribal exclusiveness; that we look upon non-Israelites as aliens in blood, and hold that union with them would sully the purity of our race. This is not the teaching of the Bible. Ruth was by birth a Moabitess. But when she of her own accord renounced her idolatry and adopted the faith of Naomi, when she proclaimed, 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,'¹ Boaz took her to wife, and she was accounted worthy to become the ancestress of David, and of the future Messiah. And we are at all times ready to welcome with cordiality those who have entered the fold from force of conviction. We call them sons and daughters of Abraham our father, and children of the covenant. But the conversions must be sincere and genuine, and not merely dictated by convenience and complaisance.

I have spoken of the disastrous consequences of mixed marriages for the community at large. Do they uniformly prove felicitous for those who contract them? I have seen strong men shed scalding tears because of the folly they had committed, that, blinded by passion, they had taken unto themselves alien wives. They have deplored the fact that the perfect confidence, and the thorough trustfulness—the Sabbath of the heart—which constitute the charm and glory of wedded life have been pitifully lacking.

It should, therefore, be our most earnest and prayerful endeavour to ward off this insidious and in-

¹ Ruth 1 : 16.

creasing peril. Judaism must exercise so firm a grip upon the hearts and minds of our young, that entering upon such unions must lie beyond the range of possibility. The knowledge of the dangers with which such alliances are fraught must be so absorbing, that they are prepared to make sacrifices, aye, painful and heart-searing sacrifices, for the sake of their religion.

But there is also a positive duty incumbent upon our young men. The theme is somewhat delicate: but as one who has grown grey in the service of the community, I may be permitted to touch upon it. There is, I fear, a growing reluctance on the part of some of our young men to take upon themselves the duties and responsibilities of matrimony, and a disposition either to refrain altogether from entering upon the holy estate, or to enter upon it late in life. I surely would not advocate improvident and therefore imprudent unions. But does not this reluctance often spring from the fact that young people are not content to begin life in the simple fashion that their fathers did, but desire forthwith to live in luxurious ease? Or they are so strongly imbued with selfishness that they refuse to labour for others beside themselves. This reluctance leads to many evils, not the least of which is intermarriage. Youths and maidens, if you hope to derive true blessedness, peace, and contentment from the married state, choose as your partner in life a child of the covenant. Let your mutual love and loyalty be based upon its only sure foundation, your

love and loyalty to God. Be steadfast in your separateness, so that your wedded state may bring you true happiness, so that not merely on this festival, but throughout your life you may rejoice with your wife, your sons, and daughters, and that you may preserve and transmit untarnished to future generations the precious heritage of our faith.