

ON THE SUFFERING OF THE RIGHTEOUS: REFLECTIONS ON YOM HA-DIN

Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter

In memory of Dr. Boruch Frankel

אהרן ברוך מרדכי בן הרב פנהס מנחם

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Musaf Services for Rosh Hashanah

Now, let our Kedushah ascend
To thee, our God, who art King.

Generalizations

Let us tell how utterly holy this day is and how awe-inspiring. It is the day when thy dominion shall be exalted, thy throne shall be established on mercy; and thou shalt occupy it in truth. True it is that thou art judge and arbiter, discerner and witness, inscribing and recording all forgotten things. Thou openest the book of records and it reads itself; every man's signature is contained in it.

The great shofar is sounded; a gentle whisper is heard; the angels, quaking with fear, declare: "The day of judgment is here to bring the hosts of heaven to justice!" Indeed, even they are not guiltless in thy sight. All mankind passes before thee like a flock of sheep. As a shepherd seeks out his flock, making his sheep pass under his rod, so dost thou make all the living souls pass before thee; thou dost count and number thy creatures, fixing their lifetime and inscribing their destiny.

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On Rosh Hashanah their destiny is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed, how many shall pass away and how many shall be brought into existence; who shall live and who shall die; who shall come to a timely end, and who to an untimely end; who shall perish by fire and who by water; who by sword and who by beast; who by hunger and who by thirst; who by earthquake and who by plague; who by strangling and who by stoning; who shall be at ease and who shall wander about; who shall be at peace and who shall be molested; who shall have comfort and who shall be tormented; who shall become poor and who shall become rich; who shall be lowered and who shall be raised.

→ But repentance, prayer and charity caused the storm to stop.

Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 73

It will be evident without much elaboration that the problem of theodicy appears most sharply in radical and ethical monotheism, that is, within the orbit of Biblical religion. If all rival or minor divinities are radically eliminated, and if not only all power but all ethical values are ascribed to the one God who created all things in this or any other world, then the problem of theodicy becomes a pointed question directed to this very conception. Indeed, more than in any other religious constellation, it may be said that this type of monotheism stands or falls with its capacity to solve the question of theodicy, "How can God permit . . . ?"

פומת לזרען וווען

וְיָמֵן וְעַמְלָקָה וְעַדְעָנָה וְעַדְעָנָה וְעַדְעָנָה

Comments

זאתה לאקי קראת נחלם, כי הוא נראה כאלו; ובו הקלא
פלטינה, ובו גומס פבאה, וזהב עליי גנאטי. אמיה כי
אלה הוא בון ממלכת רודע מער, ובולב רודע, ומלר
ומלרת, והוא מלך כל נסחאות; ותקנת את כדר סוכנות
ואלון ערואתנו וזהב דב אלון גן.

וְקַשְׁפָּר בָּדָל בְּקַבְּעָת, וּכְלִיל דְּפָקָה בְּשָׂחוֹת אֲפָמִינָה; וּפְלָאָבָט
בְּבַשְׂרוֹן, וְתִיל וְזִקְנָה יְאֵתָהוּן, לְאַקְרָבָה נָהָר יְהוָה סְרִין, לְקַפְּדוֹ
עַל קְבָא מְרוּם גְּדוּין, כִּי לֹא חִנּוּ בְּצַחַק גְּדוּין. וְכָל גְּאוֹן
עוֹלָם יַמְבִּרְכוּן לְקָנָה גְּבוּרָה מְרוֹן. בְּבַעֲרָה רְוַחָה שְׁרוֹן,
פְּגַבְּרָד מְנוּטָה טְהָרָה שְׁבָטוֹן, בְּנֵי פְּגַבְּרָד וְסְפָאָד וְחַבְּשָׁתָה,
וְזַקְנָה בְּבַשְׂרוֹן כָּל צִי, וְסְמָלָךְ גְּזָבָה לְכָל שְׁרָרִתָּה, וְסְבָולָבָה

Brodbeck

קָרְאָלֶת קָרְאָה יַקְרָבָוּ, וְקִיםָ צָמָם תְּפֵרָא נְצָבָוּן, פְּנָה
צְבָרוֹת, וְקִמְתָּה יְקָרְאָה: כִּי יִזְעַת, וְכִי יִמְתַּחַת כִּי בְּקָאָה, וְכִי
לֹא בְּקָאָה כִּי בָּאָה, וְכִי בְּקָמָה: כִּי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה:
כִּי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה: כִּי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה:
וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה: כִּי בְּקָרְבָּה,
וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה: כִּי בְּקָרְבָּה, וְכִי בְּקָרְבָּה:

תְּשׁוּבָה וְמִתְּחַדֵּשׁ

שְׁבִידָה שֶׁמֶת כַּפְרָה

וְהִנֵּה אָם שָׁמַע תְּשֻׁמְנוּ אֶל מִצְוֹתִי, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוָה אֶחֱזָב
סִים, לְאַפְּכָה אֶת גַּן אֶלְמִיכָּם, וְלַעֲבָדוֹ קָבֵל לְכַבְּכָם וּקְבָּל
גְּפַשְּׁכָם. וּתְהִיא קַטָּר אֶרְצָכָם בָּעֵת, יוֹתָר וּמְלֻקָּתָה; וְאַסְפָּתָ
דָּגָן, וַתִּרְשַׁךְ וַיַּאֲדַבֵּר. וּתְהִיא עַלְבָּשׂ בְּשָׂרָךְ לְכַהְמָתָה; וְאַכְלָתָ
וּלְבָצָת. הַשְׁמָרוּ לְכָם שׂוֹן יְקָתָה לְכַבְּכָם, וּסְרָפָם וּצְבָרָפָם
אַלְהָדִים אַתְּרִים, וּהַשְּׁפָטוּתָם לְכָם. וְחַרָּה אָף גַּן לְכָם, וְעַצְרָ
אַתְּפָקִים וְלֹא יִתְהִיא קַטָּר, וְהַאֲרָמָה לְאַתְּפָן אָתְּ יִבְלָאָן;
וְאַכְלָפָם מִהְרָה מַעַל אָרֶץ רַקְבָּה אֲשֶׁר יִנְזֹן לְכָם. וְאַכְלָתָ

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וועת לשבטן הוואך

ספוק ר' יוחנן. וזהו גזון הבדל שבין האב סמל ווי שלא נחלון בו. גדריקות גדריקות
בנתקון ובתקון לאלהם להויהם. כי כל גדריקות גדריקות גדריקות חמת והלא גדריקות כל
חמתה שלן לדשעתם זהא. חמתותם גוזו נבנזה. יש בדיק אובד בבדיק. וכותיב כי יש
גידיקות שגבעו אליהם כבשעת הרשותם.¹³ הכל שיק. שפוק רשותם גדריקות בנתקון ובתקון
לאלהר לפירוה. שוחתוב אוור ווי רשות פאריך בברשותו.¹⁴ הכל גדריקות אין תבוחן גאל
ול גוד גדריך זיק אורה זו כי אויב אליך ומי.¹⁵ גדריך הבקע למוח ורואהין און
וונפל חבטש ווועד קומ לבני.¹⁶ החומר כי רשות פאריך און גדריך כל כי יאנט פשפש
טנטול.¹⁷ וכי לא רוחן ער חיקס סדר איזון גדריקות שוואן פלאו הומחה על גג הדריכו
או אונט פנדולו גו כי האידיוט שפערוין הדריכו נבורוין. הדריך בזקן עד פנזרו

[Regarding Rabbi Yochanan's statement, "Three books are open on the New Year's day: those thoroughly righteous are inscribed immediately sealed for life, etc."], one may ask: How could Rabbi Yochanan make an absolute statement about this great and profound [Divine] judgment [on the New Year] on which all secrets of the world are suspended? [How could he assert] that "those thoroughly righteous are inscribed and immediately sealed for life"? Do all the righteous people live and do all the wicked ones die? Is it not true that the world and all its precious things belong to the wicked people? The Scriptures also cry out against [Rabbi Yochanan, as it is said], *there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness.*¹⁸ It is further stated, *they are righteous men, unto whom it happeneth according to the works of the wicked.*¹⁹ Furthermore, [one may ask why Rabbi Yochanan absolutely stated [without qualification] that "the thoroughly righteous are inscribed and immediately sealed for death" when the verse states *there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his evil-doing!*²⁰ All the prophets expressed astonishment on this phenomenon [the success and longevity of the wicked]. Thus, Jeremiah said, *Thou must be the right, O Eternal, if I were to contend with Thee, [yet will I reason with Thee: why doth the way of the wicked prosper?].*²¹ Habakkuk said, *Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and beholdest mischief? Why are spoiling and violence before me?*²² Again he states, *for the wicked doth beset the righteous; therefore right goeth forth perverted.*²³ Furthermore, has this Sage [Rabbi Yochanan] never seen the Book of Job which is replete with utterances on this [problem]

R. Isaac Arama,

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כחנת א ז קפין טל גיטיניות? ערך עט פכוונו גיז קפינו יונכט כאנעטוד טל חדיד
חעביס טרכטן קדריקוט גזע קדריקות געפֿט טיפֿט חסיט טן החרטן מטה טינזלוו גו.
חתה כי גאה נאפעיס גערויס נט מהו גיזו קפניש גגען פקפקט נפנֿי חסֿט וכימת חקֿיָּט
גערליס נכלחו יטפס וווען פאכט קדריקוט גערויס גערויס גערויס גערויס גערויס
גערויס וווען פאכלין מוקוטיט גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן
ודס ווי יעד לא גיזט טהוילן וויס פיט לדיק גערל גערל גערל גערל גערל גערל
יונכט א ז קדריקוט פאכלין גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן גערלן
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ליאך גערלן גערל טעל פון ליל דרכן חצון גערל גערל גערל גערל גערל גערל גערל
חנמונ גאנטן לי גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן גאנטן
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מדרש נה פר' לג סי' א רבה

פרקsha לג

א. (ח. א) ויזכר אלהים את נח ואת כל החיה וגוו'
וכותיב (מלחלים לו. ז) צדקהך בנהרוי אל משפטיך תחוי
רבה אדם ובכמה תושיעיך ר' רבי ישמעאל ורבי עקיבא
רבי ישמעאל אומר בזכות הצדיקים שקבלו את התועה
שנתנה מהרורי אל את עושה עמם צדקה עד בנהרוי אל
אבל רשעים שלא קיבלו את התועה שנתנה מהרורי אל את
מנזריך עמם עד תחוי רבה ר' עקיבא אומר אלו ואלו
מדקדק עמם עד תחוי רבה מדקדק עם הצדיקים וגובה
מהם מעט מעשים רעים שעשו בעולם הזה כדי להשפי
ליהם שלוחה ולתן להם שקר טוב לעולם הכא משפי
בעולם הזה כדי להפריע מהן לאחד לבודא אמר ר' לוי

CHAPTER XXXIII (NOACH)

I. AND GOD REMEMBERED NOAH, AND EVERY LIVING THING, AND ALL THE CATTLE, etc. (VIII, 1). *Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God; Thy judgments are like the great deep; man and beast Thou preservest, O Lord* (Ps. xxxvi, 7). R. Ishmael interpreted: To the righteous who accepted the Torah which was revealed on the mountains of God Thou shewest righteousness [i.e. love] reaching unto the mountains of God; but as for the wicked, who did not accept the Torah which was revealed on the mountains of God, Thou dealest strictly with them, even to the great deep. R. Akiba said: He deals strictly with both, even to the great deep. He deals strictly with the righteous, calling them to account for the few wrongs which they commit in this world, in order to lavish bliss upon and give them a goodly reward in the world to come; He grants ease to the wicked and rewards them for the few good deeds which they have performed in this world in order to punish them in the future world.¹

§ 2. THAT FEEDETH AMONG THE LILIES. R. Johanan had the misfortune¹ to suffer from gallstones for three and a half years. Once R. Hanina went to visit him. He said to him: 'How do you feel?' He replied: 'My sufferings are worse than I can bear.' He said to him: 'Don't speak so, but say "The faithful God".' When the pain was very great he used to say 'Faithful God', and when the pain was greater than he could bear, R. Hanina used to go to him and utter an incantation which gave him relief. Subsequently R. Hanina fell ill, and R. Johanan went to see him. He said to him, 'How do you feel?' He replied: 'How grievous are my sufferings!' He said to him: 'But surely the reward for them is also great!' He replied: 'I want neither them nor their reward.' He said to him: 'Why do you not utter that incantation which you pronounced over me and which gave me relief?' He replied: 'When I was out of trouble I could be a surety for others, but now that I am myself in trouble do I not require another to be a surety for me?'² He said to him: 'It is written, THAT FEEDETH AMONG THE LILIES. This means that the rod of the Holy One, blessed be He, lights only upon men whose heart is pliant like lilies.'³ R. Eleazar said: It is like a man who had two cows,⁴ one strong and the other weak. Which one does he work hard; is it not the strong one? So the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked, because they could not stand the trial, as it says, *But the wicked are like the troubled sea* (Isa. LVIII, 20). Whom then does he try? The righteous, as it says, *The Lord trieth the righteous* (Ps. XI, 5), and also, *And it came to pass after these things, that God did press Abraham* (Gen. XXII, 1), and it is also written, *And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph* (ib. XXXVII, 7). R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: A flax-beater does not beat his flax very vigorously when it is hard, for fear it should split, but if it is good flax, the more he beats it the better it becomes. So the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked, because they could not stand the trial, but He does try the righteous, as it says, *'The Lord trieth the righteous.'* R. Johanan said: When a potter tests his furnace, he does not test it with cracked jars, because a single blow would break them, but he tests it with sound jars, which can withstand many knocks. So the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked; and whom does He try? The righteous, as it says, *'The Lord trieth the righteous.'*

ב. (ט) 'הַלְּעֵה פְּשֹׁוֹשִׁים' וְבָי יוֹחָנָן אֲמִינָר וְאֶבֶד
בְּשֶׁשׁ בְּצָמְרָמוֹרָה קָלַח שְׁנִים וְקָלָג קְלָק רְבִי חַנִּיאָ
לְמַבְּגָדָה יְתִיחָ אָמֵר לְהָכָה אַתָּה עַלְךָ אָמֵר לְהָיָה אַתָּה
יְוָתָר מַפְשָׁאִי אָמֵר לְהָיָה לֹא אַתָּה אָמֵר גַּם אַתָּה
הַאֲלָה הַנְּאָמֵן כִּד בְּהָה אַגְּנָרָה קָשִׁי עַלְוי בְּנָה אָמֵר הַאֲלָ
תְּנַאֲמֵן כִּד בְּהָה פְּקָשָׁה עַלְוי צְעָרָה יְתִיר מַאֲרָבָה בְּהָה פְּלָק
רְבִי חַנִּיאָ אָמֵר עַלְוי מַלְהָה וְבְהָה נְפָשָׁה לְקָטָר יְמָמָן
אַתְּחַשֵּׁשׁ רְבִי חַנִּיאָ קְלָק רְבִי יוֹחָנָן לְמַבְּגָרָה אָמֵר לְהָיָה
אַתָּה עַלְךָ אָמֵר לְהָיָה שְׁלִשִּׁין טַן סִיטְוִין אָמֵר לְהָיָה וְמָה
שְׁכָרָן מַרְכָּה אָמֵר לְהָיָה לֹא אַתָּה שְׁנֵי לְהָזָן וְלֹא לְאַגְּרִיהָן
אָמֵר לְהָיָה לְפָה לְיִתְהָא אַתָּה שְׁמַר תְּהִיא מַלְכָה וְדָרוּיָה אָמֵר
אַלְיָ וְאַתְּגָסִיב נְפָשָׁה אָמֵר לְהָיָה מַד בְּרִיאָה מַלְכָר בְּנִיאָה עֲרָב
לְאַתְּרִיאָן וְכָדִין דְּאָנָא מַלְגָּזִי לִתְהִיא אַנְאָ קָעִי אַתְּרִיאָן
יְיַעֲרָבָיָן אָמֵר לוֹ קָחֵב 'הַלְּעֵה פְּשֹׁוֹשִׁים' אֵין שְׁרָבִיטוֹ שֶׁל
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַפְשָׁמֵשׁ וְכָא אַלְיָ בְּנֵי אָרָם שְׁלָקָם רְבִי
פְּשֹׁוֹשִׁים.

אמֵר רְבִי אַלְעָזָר לְבָעֵל הַבַּיִת שְׁהָיו לוֹ שְׁחוֹי קְרוֹת
אַחַת מִתְּחָה בְּקָה וְאַחַת מִתְּחָה דַעַל אֵי זוּ מִתְּעָן הָוּא מְטָרִית
לֹא עַל אַוְתָה שְׁבַחָה בְּקָה קָה אֵין הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְנֻשָּׁה
אֵת קְרָשָׁעִים לְעָמָה שְׁאָנוּ יְכוֹלָן? לְעַמּוֹד דְּקָחָבִים (שְׁעִירָה נִיְּהָ)
(ט) 'וְהַרְשָׁעִים גַּם נְגַשָּׁה' וְכֵי הוּא מְנֻשָּׁה הַאֲדִיקִים שְׁאָנוּ אָמֵר
(תְּהִלִּים יא. ח) 'ה' אָדִיק יְבָחָן' (בראשית כב. א) 'וְיָהִי אָכָר
הַדְּקִים הָאֶלָּה וְהַאֲלָלִים נְפָה אֶת אַבְרָהָם' וּקְתִיב (שם לט.)
) 'וְיָהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּקִים הָאֶלָּה וְמַשָּׁא אַשְׁת אַדְנִיו אֶת עִנְיָנָה
אֶל יוֹסֵף'.

אמֵר רְבִי יוֹסֵף בְּרִכְבִּי חַנִּיאָה פְּשַׁבְּגַנִּיאָה זֶה קְשַׁפְּשַׁבְּגַנִּיאָה קָשָׁה
אַיְנוּ פְּקִישׁ עַלְוי קְיֻמָּר לְפָה שְׁהָיָה שְׁפָעָת וּבְשַׁפְּשַׁבְּגַנִּיאָ
בְּקָה כָּל שְׁהָוָא מַקִּישׁ עַלְיהָ הָיָה מְשַׁבְּחָת וְהַוְּלָכָת קָה אֵין
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְנֻשָּׁה לְרָשָׁעִים שְׁאָנוּ יְכוֹלָן לְעַמּוֹד
וְנְפָה הַדְּקִים שְׁאָנוּ אָדִיק יְבָחָן'.

אמֵר רְבִי יְהָנָן פְּלִיאָר צֶהָה קְהָדָה גְּזִיקָה גְּבָשָׁנוּ אַיְנוּ
בְּזִיקָה בְּקָנְקָוִים מְרוֹאָצִים לְעָמָה שְׁפִינָן שְׁמִיקִישׁ עַלְיהָם הָנִ
בְּשִׁבְרָן וּבְקִי הָוָא בְּזִיקָה בְּקָנְקָוִים יִסְטִים שָׁאָפָּע עַל פִּי
שְׁמִיקִישׁ עַלְיהָם פְּפָה קָעָמִים אֵין נְשִׁבָּרִין קָה אֵין הַקָּדוֹשׁ
בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְנֻשָּׁה אֶת הַרְשָׁעִים וְכֵי הוּא קְנִיסָה הַאֲדִיקִים
שְׁאָנוּ אָדִיק יְבָחָן'.

Robert Frost,

A MASQUE OF REASON

A fair oasis in the purest desert,
A man sits leaning back against a palm.
His wife lies by him looking at the sky.

Man You're not asleep?

Wife No, I can hear you. Why?

Man I said the incense tree's on fire again.

Wife You mean the Burning Bush?

Man The Christmas Tree.

Wife I shouldn't be surprised.

Man The strangest light!

Wife There's a strange light on everything today.

Man The myrrh tree gives it. Smell the resin burn-

ing²

The ornaments the Greek artificers

Made for the Emperor Alexius,

The Star of Bethlehem, the pomegranates,

The birds, seem all on fire with Paradise

And hark, the gold enameled nightingales

Are singing. Yes, and look, the Tree is troubled.

Someone's caught in the branches.

Wife He can't get out.

He can't get out.

So there is.

Men

He's loose! He's out!

Wife

I'd know Him by Blake's picture anywhere.

Now what's He doing?

It's God.

Here by our atoll.

Pitching throne, I guess,

Wife

Something Byzantine.

(*The throne's a plywood flat, prefabricated,
That God pulls lightly upright on its hinges
And stands beside, supporting it in place.*)

Perhaps for an Olympic Tournament,
Or Court of Love.

Man

More likely Royal Court—

Or Court of Law, and this is Judgment Day.

I trust it is. Here's where I lay aside

My varying opinion of myself

And come to rest in an official verdict.

Suffer yourself to be admired, my love,

As Waller says.

Or not admired. Go over

And speak to Him before the others come.

Tell Him He may remember you: you're Job.

God Oh, I remember well: you're Job, my Patient.

How are you now? I trust you're quite recov-

ered,

And feel no ill effects from what I gave you.

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Job

Gave me in truth: I like the frank admission.

I am a name for being put upon.

But, yes, I'm fine, except for now and then

A reminiscent twinge of rheumatism.

The let-up's heavenly. You perhaps will tell us

If that is all there is to be of Heaven,

Escape from so great pains of life on earth

It gives a sense of let-up calculated

To last a fellow to Eternity.

God

Yes, by and by. But first a larger matter.

I've had you on my mind a thousand years

To thank you someday for the way you helped

me Establish once for all the principle

There's no connection man can reason out

Between his just deserts and what he gets.

Virtue may fail and wickedness succeed.

'Twas a great demonstration we put on.

I should have spoken sooner had I found

The word I wanted. You would have supposed

One who in the beginning was the Word

Would be in a position to command it.

I have to wait for words like anyone.

Too long I've owed you this apology

For the apparently unmeaning sorrow

You were afflicted with in those old days.

But it was of the essence of the trial

You shouldn't understand it at the time.

It had to seem unmeaning to have meaning.

And it came out all right. I have no doubt

You realize by now the part you played

[589]

R. Joseph B. Solovetchik,

Tradition 17 (1978): 71

A Tribute to the Rebbetzin of Taine

pass on? I admit that I am not able to define precisely the mas-
soratic role of the Jewish mother. Only by circumlocution I hope
to be able to explain it. Permit me to draw upon my own ex-
periences. I used to have long conversations with my mother.
In fact, it was a monologue rather than a dialogue. She talked
and I "happened" to overhear. What did she talk about? I must
use an halakhic term in order to answer this question: she talked
me-iryan de-yoma. I used to watch her arranging the house
in honor of a holiday. I used to see her recite prayers; I used
to watch her recite the sidra every Friday night and I still
remember the nostalgic tune. I learned from her very much.

Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only
in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience.
She taught me that there is a flavor, a scent and warmth to
mitzvot. I learned from her the most important thing in life
to feel the presence of the Almighty and the gentle pressure of
His hand resting upon my frail shoulders. Without her teachings,
which quite often were transmitted to me in silence, I would have
grown up a soulless being, dry and insensitive.

The laws of Shabbat, for instance, were passed on to me by
my father; they are a part of mussar avikha. The Shabbat as a
living entity, as a queen, was revealed to me by my mother; it is
a part of lovet Imekha. The fathers knew much about the Shab-
bat; the mothers lived the Shabbat, experienced her presence, and
perceived her beauty and splendor.

The fathers taught generations how to observe the Shabbat;
mothers taught generations how to greet the Shabbat and how
to enjoy her twenty-four hour presence.