

## CHAPTER 16

# THE JEWS AND JUDAISM

**W**e have been watching throughout a gradual process of self-discovery. The attempt to force it led to difficulties, and we saw the crisis which arose in the world of Judaism through Maimonides's attempt to turn belief into dogma. But the attempt was necessary and, in the light of the future, providential. It prepared the Jewish mind for what was to come.

We may recall the heads of Maimonides's account of Judaism. It will be remembered that he presented Judaism as a unity of intellectual doctrine and moral discipline. The intellectual doctrine can be expressed in thirteen articles of faith; the moral discipline is contained in the precepts of the Law. Both are rational, not however in the sense that they *proceed from* reason but that they *accord with* reason. The moral discipline in particular, being attuned with the human condition, contains historical elements which are not deducible from *a priori* premisses. It has however a general basis in the principles of morality, and its practice leads to religious truth.

We have here all the elements of a complete apologetic: a definite theological creed; a definite moral theory; a definite and strict way of living. Challenged by the outside world the Jew could expound rationally the grounds of his distinctive life while yet himself joining in the intellectual strivings of that world.

For ultimately that is what the marriage of Judaism with

Aristotelianism (above, pp. 175 f.) meant. The Platonists (and with them the visionaries of the Kabbala) fixed their eyes on heaven and lost themselves in its infinite mysteries. The Aristotelian came to theology through the study of the physical world and with the instruments of observation and logical deduction. It is no accident that the Platonizing Kabbala could accept magical practices and the belief in the efficacy of divine names and the various combinations of their letters.

And there is a further point. The Aristotelian tradition accorded well with the place given in Judaism to the moral life as a social phenomenon. When Maimonides in his small handbook of Logic (written, it is said, when he was fifteen) came to sketch the world of knowledge, he could accept quite simply the received Aristotelian scheme. 'Philosophy' for him is 'practical' and 'theoretical'. The 'practical' comprises ethics, economics, politics and the art of government. The 'theoretical' moves from the introductory disciplines of mathematics (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) to physics, and from physics to metaphysics and theology. Thus the Jew passed easily into the world of Western culture; and although the horrors of the expulsion from Spain (1492) and the 1648 massacres in Eastern Europe led to the great revulsion and indrawing which produced the upsurge of messianic mysticism in the Palestine and Poland of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (above, pp. 150, 153), the Maimonidean tradition remained standard.

Maimonides's Judaism is in effect a fresh creation. It is neither Biblical nor Talmudic. It is Maimonidean. And its great achievement is to have adapted Judaism to the Western mind. The Western mind is ultimately the Hellenic; and Maimonides showed how the Westernized Jew, i.e. the Jew who accepted the Greek bias towards science and metaphysics, could yet remain within the community of traditional Judaism.

It is for this reason that Maimonides roused such opposition. Great Biblical scholar and master of the Talmud though he was,

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his whole cast of thought was non-Biblical and non-Talmudic.<sup>1</sup> But it was for this reason that Maimonides is of such central importance for the thinking of the modern Jew. It is not because he put order into the Halachah; as a fact it was not his Code that became standard. Nor is it because he was a philosopher; other philosophers, possibly (as philosophers) equally eminent, were forgotten or rejected or ignored. It is because, being in outlook both Jew and Greek, he had prepared Jewry in advance for what, on the European stage, was to be its greatest test.

The occasion for this test was not primarily the religious one of confrontation with other faiths but the political one of being granted civil rights. The change of political status was the result of a long process, and its duration differed in different countries. Its more obvious landmarks were the admission into the Netherlands of some of the refugees from Catholic Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century, the re-admission of the Jews to England in the seventeenth, the emergence in Germany of a Jewry educated on Western lines in the eighteenth. Its great symbolic manifestations were in the France of the Revolution: the tearing down of the walls of the Ghettos in the first years of the Republic, the calling of a 'Sanhedrin' (supreme Jewish religious court) by Napoleon in 1807.

Up to this point in the history of European Jewries the previously elaborated tool of survival, religious law or Halachah, was astonishingly successful. It supplied the organization which kept each community a self-contained islet in the Gentile sea; and it prescribed the type of action which, for better or for worse, satisfied the majority of individuals. The discipline may have been over-rigid, the teaching over-intellectualized, but the life lived was, within its limitations, vigorous. Its moral and intellectual standards were high, its social organization effec-

<sup>1</sup> For a modern version of the Talmudist's indictment of Maimonidean Judaism see the learned and penetrating discussion in Kadushin: *The Rabbinic Mind*, New York, 1952. It should be remembered that Maimonides, on his side, had a low opinion of mere Talmudic learning.

tive. It bore with dignity the ills of this world, and it looked with confidence to the hope of a better. When one considers the condition of the majority of its non-Jewish contemporaries, one wonders whether the life within the Ghetto was not preferable to the life without.

When the walls fell, however, a new situation was created, and not for Jews only but for Judaism. The relationship between them suffered a significant change. Till now Judaism had made the Jew. From now on the Jew made Judaism. The tradition was made pliable to the political fact. For a score of centuries Judaism had taught the Jew how to survive political oppression. It had now to be re-adjusted to the fact of political freedom. In the resulting struggle, the struggle to save the Jew for Judaism, it was, if anything, Judaism which was sacrificed.

The change is associated popularly with the name of the German Jewish scholar and philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), and a glance at his *Jerusalem* shows wherein the change lay. The book is not, like the *Khuzari* or the *Guide for the Perplexed* or other classics of medieval Jewish philosophy, a theory of Judaism in the light of this that or the other system of metaphysics. It is a political treatise in the full European tradition, and its framework is a discussion of the relations between Church and State.

Its general tenor may be judged from Mendelssohn's own recapitulation:

'The purpose of Church and State is to promote by public measures the happiness of man both in this life and in that to come.

'They both work on the persuasions and the actions of men, on principles and their application. . . .

'Principles are free. Persuasions from their nature admit neither of compulsion nor bribery; they are the business of man's judging faculty and must be decided on by the standard of truth and untruth. . . .

'If principles are to render happy, man must neither be terrified or wheedled into them.. . .

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‘Neither State nor Church has therefore a right to submit the principles and persuasions of men to any compulsion whatsoever.’ (*Jerusalem*, trans. Samuels, London, 1838, pp. 61–2)

We are here in the full swing of the liberal tradition in political thought. Opinion, it is urged, cannot be forced, and in any case it is not the business of the State. Each man has a right to think as he wishes and to try to win over others to his views. The State can interfere only if he misbehaves.

The position is familiar and had been presented in demonstrative detail by Spinoza in his *Theologico-Political Treatise*, a work with which Mendelssohn was thoroughly familiar. Its application to religion is obvious. It is a claim for the complete severance of Church and State. Citizenship is one thing, religion another. Religious persecution is not only morally wrong. It is a political error:

‘Let everyone who does not disturb public happiness, who is obedient to the civil government, who acts righteously towards you and towards his fellow-countrymen, be allowed to speak as he thinks, to pray to God after his own fashion or after that of his forefathers, and to seek eternal salvation where he thinks he may find it. Suffer no one to be a searcher of hearts and a judge of opinions in your states; suffer no one to assume a right which the Omniscient has reserved to himself. *As long as we are rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, render ye, yourselves, unto God the things which are God’s. Love truth! Love peace!*’ (*Jerusalem*, concluding paragraph)

The case for State toleration of all religions having been presented, the position of the Jew became clear. The demand for conformity expressed in the old maxim *cuius regio eius religio* drops to the ground. Citizens differ in their religious opinions as they differ in their faces, but they are for all that citizens. Their religion is their private affair.

Judaism itself, according to Mendelssohn, was a special system of living superimposed on general articles of universal religion:

‘I believe that Judaism knows nothing of a revealed religion

in the sense in which it is taken by Christians. The Israelites have a divine legislation: laws, judgments, statutes, rules of life . . . revealed to them through Moses . . . but no dogmas, no saving truths, no general self-evident positions. (*Jerusalem*, p. 89)

And again:

'Judaism boasts of no *exclusive* revelation of immutable truths indispensable to salvation; of no revealed religion in the sense in which that term is usually taken. Revealed *religion* is one thing, revealed *legislation* is another. The voice which was heard on Sinai on that memorable day did not say 'I am the Lord thy God, the eternal self-existing Being, omnipotent and omniscient, who rewards men, in a future life, according to their works.'" All this is the *universal religion of mankind* and not Judaism.' (*Jerusalem*, p. 102)

We are left with:

'1. Religious dogmas and propositions of *immutable truths* of God. . . . These are revealed to all rational beings and inscribed in the soul. . . .

'2. Historical truths . . . containing the groundwork of the national union . . . received on *trust*. . . .

'3. Laws, judgments, commandments, rules of life which were to be peculiar to that nation and by observing which it was to arrive at national—as well as every single member thereof, at individual—happiness.' (*Jerusalem*, pp. 150-2)

Mendelssohn's Judaism is thus a compound of a theistic universalism, a recognition of a historic community, and an acceptance of its special way of life. As an analysis it was, so far as it went, sound. Its failure lay in ignoring the unique characteristics of the elements distinguished: the God of Judaism is not just the God of universal theism, the community is not just any historic community, and the commandments are not just national habits of utilitarian import. There is a fundamental conception missing from the Mendelssohnian analysis, the conception of holiness with all its implication of practical strivings for ideal ends.

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It is here that the significance of the break-up of the community of Judaism which is the mark of the modern epoch becomes apparent. It meant the break-up of the tradition of holiness. Such history as Judaism has after the Mendelssohnian period is that of the attempt to re-capture it.

Mendelssohn himself—he was known in Jewish circles as Rabbi Moses of Dessau—was a pious and learned Jew of the old school. The next generation (Mendelssohn's own family included) were Jewishly neither pious nor learned. Judaism, like all other religions, had become a matter for the individual Jewish conscience; and with the entry of Jewry into the public life of the non-Jewish community, the individual conscience, if only through lack of the necessary knowledge and training, became less and less in touch with Judaism till it was often lost to the Jewish community.

And the community too became in danger of being lost. Sociologically the point is familiar. Any community can maintain itself as an independent unit so long as it sees itself as differing from neighbouring groups and so long as it values the difference sufficiently to desire to maintain it. But when the sense of difference and its value fades away, the community fades away with it.

In the case of Mendelssohnian Judaism the process was hastened by the nature of its theoretical basis. Mendelssohn fought his battle on the ground of general political theory, and political theory in Europe since the sixteenth century was pre-occupied with the problem of the different religions. The Reformers had demanded freedom of religion as against the comprehensive claims made by the older Church; but where they triumphed politically, they often refused to others the freedom which they had taken for themselves. It was only the very widest claim for the toleration in every country of members of all religions (the claim of free-thinkers and atheists had to wait) which could meet the patent fact of their diversity. When the claim was finally conceded and the historic 'disabilities'

removed, it was the factor of a common citizenship which alone remained of public concern. The differences became a matter of private 'confession'; and it was the 'confession' alone which differentiated the holders of the various 'creeds', whether Catholic, Protestant, Dissenter or Jew. Thus the door was open to the Jew of English, French or German citizenship to become successively (i) the English, French, or German citizen of the Jewish confession (or 'persuasion'), (ii) the Englishman, Frenchman or German of the Jewish persuasion, and (iii) the Englishman, Frenchman or German *without* the Jewish persuasion. (Paradoxically, the clearest example of this 'Mendelssohnian' development is now provided by the citizenry of the new state of Israel.)

This in Western Europe. Eastern Jewry was more tenacious. First, it was incomparably larger and, in its various centres, more concentrated. (The town of Berdichev, for example, was said to have contained before the First World War 70,000 Jews out of a total population of 80,000.) Second, its so-called citizenship was precarious indeed. (The prognostication ascribed to the all-powerful adviser of the Czar Alexander III is notorious. One third would be killed, one third be made to emigrate; and the rest would be 'absorbed'.) Lastly and most important, its cultural level was high compared with that of the surrounding peoples. It retained its attachment to traditional Hebrew learning; and in its 'Yiddish' (a variety of High German written in Hebrew characters brought from the Rhine to the Dnieper at the end of the middle ages) it had a popular language which served as a medium both of personal communication and of literary expression. This gave it strength and confidence in the face of its environment. The sense of community remained firm, and the Eastern European Jew took as much pride in being a Jew as the French Jew took in being French and the German Jew in being German.

All this however was on a restricted and, comparatively speaking, parochial scale. The real test came in the United States of



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America where the principle of the legitimacy of religious non-conformity was written into the constitution and re-affirmed through the countless empirical facts. Here were no Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Scandinavians or Italians but (although some of the immigrants themselves might not have realized it) a new people dedicated to the proposition that man as man has inalienable rights. The political problem being thus resolved *ab initio*, the religious problem resumed its importance.

It is not to the discredit of American Jewry that so far it has produced no new solutions. Although its first synagogue dates back three hundred years and its members took part in all the decisive events of their country's history, the great immigrations of the last quarter of the nineteenth century had no time to settle down before the First World War threw America back into the affairs of Europe. In the present turmoil some fresh turns of thought have been made prominent, but their fuller implications have not been yet thought out; and broadly speaking it remains true that the clearest recognition of the general nature of the problem is that which came from a Russian Jewish thinker and publicist known under the pen-name of Ahad HaAm ('One of the People').

Ahad HaAm (in private life Asher Ginsberg, 1856-1927) lived through the great crises of European Jewry which in the last decade of the nineteenth century resulted in the emergence of Zionism as a practical political movement. He wrote in Hebrew but was in no sense a professional writer: he was neither a Rabbi nor an academic. His published work consisted of essays contributed to current periodicals and collected under the title of 'At the Parting of the Ways' (1895-1921; English selection, translated with an Introduction by Sir Leon Simon, in the East and West Library, Oxford, 1946).

The novelty of Ahad HaAm lay in his method of approach. The most notable change in our manner of thinking during the past hundred years lies in the general adoption of the evolutionary outlook and the shift of interest from metaphysics to psychology. Ahad HaAm was penetrated through and through

by the idea of evolution and was deeply read in the psychologists and sociologists, particularly in those of France. His masters, together with J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, were Ribot, Janet, Paulhan and Tarde. He came to look on Judaism not as an eternal metaphysical essence but as a living growth, rooted in the psychological constitution of the mind and the structure of society, and subject, like all living things, to change:

‘. . . The answer to the question what Judaism is, depends of course on the meaning one attaches to the vague terms “Judaism”, “religion” and “culture”. In the sense in which I understand these terms, I should say that religion itself is only one of the forms of culture, and that Judaism is neither the one nor the other, but is the national creative power, which in the past expressed itself in a primarily religious culture. In what form it will express itself in the future—that we cannot foretell.’  
(*Letter to Israel Abrahams*, Simon, p. 270)

There is thus a ‘national creative power’ in the Jewish people which manifests itself in phenomena called Jewish. Among these, religion is one but not the only one. In the past it was the national creative power’s primary expression. But what will be its primary expression in the future, we do not know and cannot say: only time will show.

Looking on Judaism as a phenomenon in history Ahad HaAm thought he could define its characteristic mark till now. It is a striving for absolutes, especially in the field of human behaviour, where it took the form of a demand for absolute justice. This is essential Judaism, and it is this which brought into being the historic people of the Jews. For the demand for justice, being absolute, is not achievable in one generation of men or in one epoch of time. It requires a continuous community dedicated to it.

The idea of absolute justice was, in Ahad HaAm’s view, embodied in the Biblical prophets, and that is why he expounded his conception in an essay on the greatest of the prophets, Moses. Moses, for Ahad HaAm, was an impassioned practical moralist who sought to infuse his passion into his people, a

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people which was to continue its life bearing and sustaining the same passion for absolute justice. Its key-word is the Pentateuchal exhortation: 'Justice, justice, shalt thou seek.'

Ahad HaAm saw Judaism as the mind, Jewry as the body, of a permanent moral tradition. He thought of Zion as the central tenement of that far-flung body, and the rebuilding of Zion as a worthy aim for that mind; and he hoped that the restored life in Zion would act as a magnet and pattern and stimulus which would stir up the dry bones of Jewry wherever they might be and give it cause of pride and hence a spur to continued life and fresh creation.

Ahad HaAm's greatness lay in his attempt to recall Jewry to its ancient moral ideal which he identified with the morality of the prophets. His thought is rooted in the doctrine that the Jewish people is bound to morality in the prophetic sense, and that its function is to bear and transmit the prophetic ideal. It is this function which in his view created the community of Jewry and the institutions of Judaism, and which justified the claim of Jewry to the physical Zion.

But here difficulties arise, not with regard to the position itself but to its legitimacy on Ahad HaAm's own pre-suppositions. Ahad HaAm starts out from the 'spirit' of the Jewish people, the 'national creative power'; and it may well be that as a historical fact this spirit manifested itself in or even created a moral ideal. What is difficult to understand is why, on Ahad HaAm's principles, it should continue to be bound to it. The 'spirit' may well change. The 'national creative power' may well create something else. Its old manifestations may be out of date. The past is the past. It has no permanent validity. It is the subject of historical investigation and of the curiosity of the learned. It is what we think and do now that counts, not what past generations thought and did (or what we think they thought and did), or what we find written in the records of another age.

This criticism is a commonplace in modern Israel; and it

forms the background of the ideal of starting afresh and becoming a 'normal' people which underlies much of Israeli life today. It constitutes indeed the obvious and received objection to any sociological theory of ethics or religion. For the sociologist, ethics is the descriptive study of the norms of a given society. Morals are *mores*, habits of action: what men as a fact do, how men as a fact behave. Whatever is done, is right. Yet as a fact men do what we call immoral things and perform what we recognize as immoral acts; and the fact that we know them as immoral and wrong shows that what is done is not necessarily right. In the same way, religion for the sociologists is the descriptive study of how men as a fact worship. But if so, in what lay the defect of the worship of Baal? Baal is what the people as a fact worshipped and Elijah was contravening the people's manifest will; it was Elijah, therefore, who was wrong. Ahad HaAm's account of the nature of Judaism may hold good of some few individuals—Moses and Elijah and the like; it does not hold good of Moses's people. The 'spirit of the people' in the time of Moses worshipped the golden calf! The people consistently accepted the 'false' prophets, not those whom we call (why do we?) the true. Ahad HaAm may well be right in recognizing Moses and Isaiah as among the 'true'; but it is not clear what cause, on his theory, he can show for the recognition. His doctrine, which is the general sociological doctrine, gives no ground for holding prophets to be either 'false' or 'true', certainly no ground for following the one class in preference to the other. Ahad HaAm talks easily about 'absolutes'; and it may be that he is right in thinking that moral commands *are* absolute. But we cannot extract an absolute from the ever-changing face of the 'national creative power' which is in practice the ever-changing face of national opinion. If we were to try to do so, we should find the so-called absolutes changing with the change of opinion. They would become, like opinion, relative.

It may be (although on this Judaism would seem to disagree) that there *are* no commands and absolutes, and that, as Aristophanes remarked some twenty-four centuries ago, 'Vortex is

king'. But for Ahad HaAm 'Vortex' is emphatically *not* king. The very foundation of his thinking is the absolute character of the moral law and the absolute character of the Jewish commitment to it.

This in itself is an interesting sociological fact. It may be even one of the facts which make nonsense of sociological theories of morals. But on the sociological theory, and it was this which was held by Ahad HaAm, there is not and cannot be such a thing as an absolute. So we are faced with a dilemma. If we accept his general theory, we have to abandon his moral outlook; if we accept his moral outlook, we have to abandon his general theory.

In the history of the theory of Judaism Ahad HaAm attaches himself not to the modern social psychologists who provided him with his method and vocabulary, but to Nachman Krochmal. Krochmal (1785-1840), one of the creative minds in the 'historical school' of Judaism of which Zunz, Geiger, Steinschneider and Graetz were the finest ornaments, was strongly influenced by the writings of the German romantics, and particularly by Hegel. Krochmal made much play, in a chapter of his posthumous *Guide of the Perplexed of the Time*, with the 'spirit' (*Geist!*) of the different peoples which he identified with their various 'princes' (cf. Daniel x, 13, 20; xii, 1), that is, their gods; and he saw, as the 'spirit' of the Jewish people, the Absolute Spirit or God. He himself recognized specifically that these phases are to be taken as pictorial thinking or metaphor; but like other members of the Hegelian school he tended to move indifferently between immanence and transcendence, with the result that the distinction between human and divine was liable to be overlooked or obliterated. This tendency was even stronger, owing to his psychological bias, in Ahad HaAm. It came to full fruition in many of his followers. It is a sad perversion of an age-long tradition and I record it with reluctance. It is difficult to reconcile oneself to the reduction of the God of Judaism to a 'national creative power' or 'national spirit', or a 'national

will to survive'. ('In the beginning the National Creative Power created heaven and earth?' 'What doth the National Spirit require of thee but to do justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy National Will to Survive?')

We may refresh ourselves by turning back to the original vision.

When the Psalmist (cxlvi) calls on his soul to praise God, he knows what kind of God it is who deserves praise. God is not man whose breath goes forth and who then returns to the particular parcel of earth he happens to be in. He is the creator who made heaven and earth and sea and all that in them is; and he cares for his creation:

*He executeth judgement for the oppressed;  
He giveth food to the hungry;  
The Lord looseth the prisoners;  
The Lord preserveth the strangers;  
He upholdeth the fatherless and widow;  
But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*

It is a simple faith, but at its heart lies the affirmation of one unique centre of authority which calls man to account. It is this God who 'shall reign for ever', who is (or is to be?) 'thy God, O Zion, to all generations'.

We may pursue the thought in two books of the Hebrew Bible, that of the prophet Jonah and the Book of Job.

The book of Jonah is the *reductio ad absurdum* of topographical religion. Jonah assumes that he can escape God by the normal human device of going away and leaving no address. God accepts the challenge and provides Jonah with a floating lodging but for all that keeps Jonah under his eye; and just as God needs no postal address in order to find Jonah, so Jonah soon discovers that a fixed residence is not required in order to find God. It was when his soul fainted *within* him that he remembered the Lord.

Jonah returns to duty in a country which is not 'his'. There he makes a second and even more difficult discovery. God's

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ways are not men's ways. Not only is he not confined to a special geographical area. He is not bothered by the supposed requirements of logic either. His interest is in moral growth; and moral growth means unpredictable change, not predictable permanence. Jonah complains that this puts an end to his career as a scientist, and it were better for him to give up and die. Science means to predict exactly what is going to be, and Jonah is prepared to do that; but if men are allowed the right to moral change and are even encouraged to change, no science of human behaviour is possible.

God takes up the point and talks to him as one intelligent being to another. He says in effect that the important thing in human behaviour is not biological growth (up one day and down the next like the vegetable world exemplified in the gourd of Chapter 4) but the moral business of learning to give up violence and ill-doing. If a choice has to be made between predictive science and human improvement, it is the science which has to be foregone. Human behaviour is not a matter for factual accountancy. It is to be weighed according to the measure of pity it displays.

The book culminates with the lesson to be drawn from creation. The creator of all fact does not allow fact to be supreme. As the source of existence he is *responsible for* existence. *Because* he creates he has not only knowledge but compassion. And his compassion extends beyond man. It covers the whole sentient world:

‘And the Lord said, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?’

The Book of Job deals with a challenge similar to that posed to the egocentric Jonah but on a larger and more magnificent scale. Jonah had a country to flee from and was assigned a

country to work in. Job's only 'witness' is 'in heaven'. Since a human being must be situated at some point of space, he is put in the Land of Uz (wherever that may be). But the significance of the setting is that geography is irrelevant; and when at the end of the drama the God of Heaven comes to reply to Job, it is in no particular country: it is from the whirlwind.

As in Jonah the ultimate secret is seen to lie in the fact of creation. But creation now outsteps not only humankind; it outsteps the sentient world too. It covers the mountain-goats and the eagles, the war horse and the ostrich, but also and primarily the sea and the stars, the winds and the frost and the hail. Its rain falls to satisfy the waste and desolate ground and to cause the tender grass to spring forth. The greensward too is the work of God; so is the desert where there is no man.

The instructive thing is that Job declares himself convinced. He is silenced and lays his hand upon his mouth: 'I had heard of thee before but by the hearing of the ear but now mine eye seeth thee.' It is often asked what he became convinced by, and what it is that he became convinced of; but the answer is surely that whereas there had been *brought before* him the wonders of the creation, what he *saw* was the far greater wonder, the wonder of the creator. He does *not* say: 'Mine eye seeth Behemoth and Leviathan.' He says: 'Mine eye seeth *thee*.' He had an immediate apprehension of the unity which lies behind the variety and majesty of the world, the unity in which power, authority, goodness and wisdom, meet together in cosmic creativity. Job was justly proud of his integrity. He had seen God as his enemy. He had challenged God to justify his rule of the world. God retorts by showing Job that the world is an even stranger affair than Job had imagined, but strange as it is, it yet has meaning. It may not make sense to us but, as G. K. Chesterton remarked in his Introduction to the Book of Job, the author of the book contrives to let fall here and there 'sudden and splendid suggestions that the secret of God is a bright and not a sad one.

'For instance, there is that famous passage where Jehovah



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with devastating sarcasm asks Job where he was when the foundations of the earth were laid, and then (as if merely fixing a date) mentions the time when the sons of God shouted for joy. One cannot help feeling, even upon this meagre information, that they must have had something to shout about.'

Jonah, like Jeremiah, was a prophet to the world at large. Job is man as such. Jonah says he serves the God of heaven and earth who created the seas and dry land, and he is made to live up to his profession. Job demonstrates, to the incredulity of the powers of Heaven itself, that it is not external circumstance which makes a man. Neither Jonah nor Job, the lesson of the Whale and of the Whirlwind, is, as has been so often imagined, primitive or naive. They are both works of advanced reflection. They are masterpieces of irony, and irony springs from a body of settled opinion so deeply embedded in the popular mind as to serve as a permanent background for thought. Irony dares to suggest that received opinion, however deeply embedded and widely spread, may be wrong.

The book of Job turns on the question of the nature of religion: can man serve God for naught? The test is made *in corpore vili*. Job is put on the operating table and examined. When Job says, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, he vindicates both himself and God.

The book of Jonah depicts the bearers of God's oracles: their recalcitrance, their suffering, their doubts. They flee, or are made to flee, from country to country, yet they cannot escape the Word.

As God is found everywhere, so man can live anywhere. He can survive even the inside of a whale. And just as God can put man there, so from there can man seek for God, and so too can God find man.

*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place  
in all generations.*

*Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.*

*Thou turnest man back to the dust,  
and sayest, 'Turn back, O children of men!'  
For a thousand years in thy sight  
are but as yesterday when it is past,  
or as a watch in the night.*

*Thou dost sweep men away; they are like a dream,  
like grass which is renewed in the morning;  
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.  
For we are consumed by thy anger;  
by thy wrath we are overwhelmed.*

*Return, O Lord! How long?  
Have pity on thy servants!  
Satisfy us in the morning with thy steadfast love,  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.  
Make us glad as many days as thou hast afflicted us,  
and as many years as we have seen evil.  
Let thy work be manifest to thy servants,  
and thy glorious power to their children.*

*Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and establish thou the work of our hands upon us,  
yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*