THE PATTERN

CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONAL PICTURE

There have been many attempts at a thumb-nail definition of Judaism. There is that of Hillel, the first-century B.C. scholar and saint, in reply to a gentile's request to be taught Judaism while he stood on one foot: 'What you do not like yourself, do not do to others.' There is the medieval Rabbi's (in the words of the Psalmist): 'Knowing God in all thy ways.' There is the prophet Jonah's: 'I am a Hebrew, and I reverence the God of Heaven who made the sea and the dry land.' A famous one is that of Micah: 'He hath told thee, O man, what is good; and what doth God require of thee but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.' What is common to all these summary statements is that they are couched in purely general terms. They are concerned with no one individual or group of individuals but with man.

The content of Judaism would thus seem to be universal, yet its bearers are a particular people, the Jews; and so far as Judaism may be said to have a history, it is the story of the balance (often an uneasy one) between the universality of the doctrine and the particularity of its transmitters. The connexion between the two is laid down decisively from the very first. God is represented as having 'known' Abraham (that is, singled him out from all others) 'in order that he should command his children and his household after him to practise the way of God, that is, to do justice and judgement'. Here too the terms used are completely general: justice, judgement, the way

of God; and the children of Abraham are to be the vehicle through which the way of God (that is, the way of justice and judgement) is to be displayed.

This is the doctrine of the 'chosen people', a doctrine which has been misunderstood by both Jews and non-Jews, and which has done much harm. It is so easy to claim to be of the chosen people, and to forget that the choice means duty, not privilege. But in any case the 'choice' was not of individuals. It was of the community: the '*house* of Abraham', the '*children* of Israel'. Individuals may go their own way. It is the people which is the 'peculiar treasure'.

Yet the Biblical appellation of the Jews is not the 'chosen' but the 'holy' people, that is, a people set apart with a special vocation. Thus Judaism is not to be considered in terms of the Jews but the Jews in terms of Judaism. Judaism is not what some or all individual Jews happen as a fact to do. It is what Jews should be doing (but often are not doing) as members of a holy people. Judaism comes first. It is not a product but a programme and the Jews are the instrument of its fulfilment.

When it is said that the Jewish people is the bearer or carrier or transmitter of Judaism, the phrase 'Jewish people' has to be understood in the widest sense. In principle, the tie constituting this people is not one of 'race' or 'blood':

'If a man wishes to become a priest, he cannot; a levite, he cannot. Why? Because his father was not a priest or a levite. But if a man wishes to be righteous, he can, even if he be a gentile. Righteousness is not a matter of family. It is those who fear the Lord, not the *house of* those who fear the Lord, that the Psalmist [Ps. cv, 10] calls on to bless the Lord. The righteous are not a hereditary house, but men who of their own volition offered themselves and loved God; therefore God loves them.'

So we read in a Rabbinic homily (Lev. R. viii, 1) and the point could not be made more clearly; but the conception goes back to the earliest times. The Bible itself speaks of those Jews who do not do iniquity, as a 'remnant', as a 'tenth of a tenth',

'as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough'; while on the other hand it proclaims that, at the time of the future consummation, 'many nations shall join themselves unto the Lord and be my people'. Judaism does not seek converts, and indeed since Talmudic times has actively discouraged them. But a convert once accepted is a full member of the community of Judaism whatever his 'blood' may be. Some of the greatest Jews of history (e.g. the patriot and scholar-saint Akiba who was killed by the Romans for participation in the revolt of 132–5) are reported to have been converts or the descendants of converts. A convert is one who, in the beautiful Hebrew phrase which harks back, significantly enough, to the Book of Ruth (herself a 'convert' and ancestress of King David), has 'come to shelter under the wings of the Divine Presence'. As the early rabbis put it, he is a 'son of the household of God'.

The 'household of God' is the community of Judaism. Its root loyalty is not to a person or to an aggregate of persons but, like the root loyalty of Buddhism, to a Teaching. This Teaching is the 'Law [in Hebrew, *Torah*] of Moses' as it has been lived and interpreted, with ever-changing emphasis and modification, during the many long centuries of its history. The length of this history should not pass unremarked. The traditional date of the founding father of Judaism, the patriarch Abraham, is roughly the same number of years before the Christian era as we are now after it. The traditional date of Moses is some four centuries later (say, 1500 B.C.); that of David and Solomon (1000 B.C.), five centuries later still. The great literary prophets (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) range onwards from the eighth century B.C. The books classified as the Apocrypha are from Hellenistic times (third–first century B.C.); and it is to the latter half of this period that most of the contents of the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls should apparently be ascribed. The Mishnah (below p. 72 f.), the basic Rabbinic collection of traditional law, is of the second

and third centuries of the Christian era; the Talmud (ibid.), in its two recensions, of the fourth to the sixth. The standard Codes, based on the further discussions of the schools and the decisions of the courts, appeared from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, and they are contemporary with the work of the systematic theologians, moralists and philosophers; while more general trends and tendencies, some pietistic and ethical, some occult and mystical, some both together, are, at least from the time of the compilation of the book of Psalms, a constant accompaniment to the whole.

This is all Torah, all—by conscious fiction—the 'Law [of Moses]'; and we may consider for a moment the treatment of Moses in Jewish tradition since it offers a key to much which to our generation is unfamiliar.

We are accustomed to think of Moses as the lawgiver, and to contrast the 'spirit' of prophecy with the 'letter' of law as if legal 'externality' had to be swept away by prophetic 'inwardness' before religion could be born. This is not so in the history of Judaism, and that for the reason that in Judaism these factors were never dissociated.

Judaism knows Moses not as lawgiver but as prophet (which means a spokesman of God, not a soothsayer), indeed, as the greatest of the prophets; and 'his' law is not his at all: it is God's. The law is the detail of the 'way of God', and Moses is only its announcer and expounder. Moses's own exposition is given traditionally in the book of Deuteronomy; and in the humane legislation of this book we find both 'inner' and 'outer', both spirit and discipline, combined. For the traditional Moses there is no opposition between law and feeling, between love and reverence and command. It is 'Moses the man of God' in whose mouth the Bible puts the noble prayer (Ps. xc) beginning 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations' and ending 'Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us'; and it is Moses, the Moses of Deuteronomy, who knows that the Commandment is not something far off and distant from man, but 'very near, in our very mouths and hearts'.

Yet in the tradition Moses as an individual disappears. He never became, as did the Buddha, the centre of a cult. The Teaching dropped the teacher's name. It is no longer for Judaism, as in the Bible, the Torah *of Moses* ('Remember the Torah [Law] of Moses my servant which I commanded him in Horeb before all Israel'), but, barely, and anonymously, Torah.

It is this Torah, in its length and breadth and depth, which is Judaism and which, in the words of the Prayer-Book, 'planted in our midst everlasting life'.

Judaism is what is called by theologians a monotheism, that is, the affirmation of one God; and God is conceived of by Judaism as the creator and maintainer of everything that exists. He is thus not only a distant first cause. He is an ever-present help and supporter.

The unity of God means unity of control in the created world. The king of Aram in the biblical story, having been beaten by Ahab's troops in the hills, was advised to make a second attack in the valley because (his advisers said) the Jewish God is obviously a God of the hills. But he was wrong. The Jewish God, or rather the God of Judaism, is God of the whole earth.

More characteristically, he is the 'God of Heaven', that is, lord of all alike and above minor distinctions in the configuration of land and sea. The entire creation attests equally his one will. There is one order throughout: law, not chaos. 'While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'

This physical order we can see with our eyes; and we are bidden to lift up our eyes to the stars and from the sight of nature see nature's God. More subtly, one of the Psalmists says: 'Shall not the creator of the eye have sight?' If *we* can see, our creator too must be able to see; and see (here the metaphor or analogy or inference is bold indeed) 'into *our hearts* and understand all our actions'. The book of Leviticus strikes an even deeper note. 'Be ye holy', it says, 'for I your God am holy.' God is not only creator of the physical world, and the physical is not

the only order. There is a moral order too, and it too is rooted in God. God 'tells us what is good'. He gives the pattern to which our lives should conform. He is the source of our powers not only of physical but also of moral perception.

The Psalmist's sentence is an argument; and it has often been expanded in modern times to the effect that the creator of mind cannot himself be less than mind. The sentence from Leviticus is a command. The recognition of God's holiness involves for man a change in his mode of living. We cannot 'walk before' him and keep to our old ways. God has a way for us of his own and it is not the way of untutored man; it is something that has to be learned. And what has to be learned has to be taught; whence the need for teaching ('*Torah*'). Thus Torah and its study became the centre of Jewish life, shaping it and elevating it and transforming it through the moulding influence of learning and the felt necessity of education. Without knowledge we are not yet men.

That God is the one creator of all; that he has told man what is good; that man should walk in the path of the good; that in so walking he finds his real nature—all this is traditionally expressed in the Bibilical formula that man is created in the likeness of God. Yet Judaism would seem to affirm that the uniqueness of man lies not so much in this as a bare fact, as in the fuller fact that man knows it. 'Beloved is man', as an early Rabbinic teacher puts it, 'in that he was created in the likeness of God; but it was by a *special* act of love that it was *made known* to him that he was so created'. For the knowledge gives man a new status and a new stature and a new type of obligation, the obligation to measure himself by a standard higher than himself. That man knows that he is made in God's likeness means that he recognizes and realizes that he is to be judged by God's standard.

Unity is seen as the universal pattern. Just as the one God created one world into which he put one law, so he created one man who is the one progenitor of humankind. Between men

there is no difference of blood. The pedigree of all is the same. Since we are all descended from the one Adam, no one's blood is 'bluer' than any other's.

The ethical objection to polytheism is that it makes possible a variety of moral standards: an act disapproved of by one divinity may be approved of by another. Monotheism cuts this away. There is one standard only, one right and wrong. And the one God, being a creator God, cares for his creation. He is 'father' as well as 'king'.

Judaism registers this in the names with which it addresses God. In the everyday benedictions of the Prayer-Book he is 'Our God, King of the Universe'; in the Grace after meals and elsewhere, the 'Merciful One'; in ordinary prayer, 'Our Father, Our King', or, 'Our Father which art in Heaven'. A favourite Rabbinic mode of address is 'the All-Merciful'; another, 'the Holy One, blessed be He'. A very usual circumlocution is 'the Place' (below, p. 34), or, simplest of all, 'the Name'.

For there is a sobriety about the attitude of Judaism to God. It claims no intimate knowledge of God's nature. Indeed it frowns on over-curiousness. As the Talmud quotes from the book of Ecclesiasticus: 'In what is hidden from thee do not enquire.' It is only in the moral sphere that it makes positive assertions about God; and these concern rather the practical requirements made by God from man than the metaphysical questions addressed by man to God. The prophets tell us that what God 'delights in' is the practice on this earth of kindness and judgement and righteousness, and the Rabbis follow suit: 'As God is merciful, be thou merciful; as he heals the sick, heal thou the sick; as he feeds the hungry, feed thou the hungry.' These, they say, are the ways of God, and the duty of man is to 'cleave to' them, that is, to imitate them and to do likewise.

Thus the doctrine of God in Judaism, however it may have been arrived at, seems in every case to eventuate in a practical outcome. The unity of God is not an abstract consideration. It means one world, one humanity, one universal order, one

norm for logic, one standard for morals; it means that truth and justice are not mere words but a way which man is expected to learn and to follow. The idea of God is thus not a bare idea but a living force, thrusting itself into every department of life and claiming us (often vainly) for its own.

A striking illustration of this (the more striking because it is unexpected and not in accordance with modern taste) is provided by the Pentateuchal law of sanitation. The law in Deuteronomy prescribes that latrines should be outside the camp; and the reason given is: 'the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, therefore thy camp shall be holy'. The comment to be made is this. That 'God is holy' is a conventional statement to be found in the scriptures of most religions; and 'holy men', particularly in the East today, are not rare. But the holiness of God in Judaism has a concrete and practical relevance to the way in which ordinary men should live. The English proverb uses abstract terms and says that cleanliness is next to godliness; but Judaism, and the Hebrew language, is always concrete. It is God, the Most High, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, who refuses to abide with us if we live in dirt: '*therefore* shall thy camp be holy'.

This concreteness of Judaism is so important and pervasive a characteristic that it requires further illustration.

The American psychologist William James advised the young, whenever they felt inclined to kindness, not to leave the feeling without an outlet but to work it off in a specific act, e.g., giving up their seat in a tramcar to an older person, or visiting a neglected aunt. Unless a feeling is exercised, he said, it will become atrophied and die. In somewhat the same way Judaism has always insisted on translating general virtues into particular duties. I offer an example or two.

All religions speak of goodness and justice and love in general. Judaism adds concrete specification. Justice, for example, means having only one set of weights; not taking bribes; not favouring the rich nor (a striking novelty this) the poor. These may not

be the only ways in which justice can be exhibited or maintained, but they are at least practical ones and in our power. And they prevent our enthusiasm for the general idea of justice allowing us to overlook the doing of particular just actions. Kindness to animals assumes the form of the prohibition to plough with an ox and an ass together or to muzzle the ox when it is treading out the corn; kindness to human beings, that of the command to pay workmen every day and not to take in pledge the instruments of a man's livelihood. You love your neighbour by helping him with his load and returning his strayed animals; you look after the poor by leaving them the gleanings of the harvest and vineyard. Love and charity may be something more than this but they are at least this; and it is in and through the practice of particular acts such as these detailed in the Law that the habit of right action, and ultimately right feeling and sound character, is formed.

The same quality of concrete particularity may be observed in the later great texts of Judaism. A glance at a chapter of Maimonides's Code (below, p. 88 ff.), for example, will show that he always starts from particular cases, and only afterwards sums up in a general rule. This may be a weakness from the point of view of legal theory but it is a blessing to the public. Law exists in order to help human beings, not human beings in order to help the law; and it is this principle which forms the basis of much which is peculiar to Judaism, and particularly in the five Books of Moses, the Pentateuch itself. For what is remarkable about Pentateuchal legislation is that it is concerned deeply with the individual person and bases itself squarely on his human feelings.

Thus in the law of punishment, a wrongdoer is not to be punished beyond his strength so that he should not break down in public and be shamed. We are bidden repeatedly to show kindness to foreigners. And why? Because we 'know the heart of the foreigner'. And how do we know the heart of the foreigner? Because (in the land of Egypt) we have been foreigners ourselves. We are enjoined to rest on the Sabbath day and to allow

rest to the other members of the household. The phrase used is: 'That thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest *as well as thou*.' That is to say, master and servant are alike men and, as such, have the same need of (and refreshment in) rest; and it is notable that the Hebrew phrase translated in this verse 'as well as thou' is the same as that used in the 'Great Commandment': 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*.' The appeal is from human feeling to human feeling: 'Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman . . . *therefore* I command thee to do this thing.' A most delicate instance is that of the 'beautiful woman taken in war' who has aroused her captor's desire: 'Thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not deal with her as a chattel, because thou didst humble her.'

If consideration for the individual human being is at the root of much of Pentateuchal legislation, it is not a matter for surprise that the same characteristic pervades historical Judaism as a whole. In the Berlin Jewish community at the end of the nineteenth century there was still working, we are told, a 150 year old system of communal help to families left in immediate want owing to the death of their head. The system was so devised that both givers and takers remained not only unknown but unknowable. This is in the full spirit of Talmudic legislation. The Rabbis of the Talmud held that to help one's fellow man is the best of all deeds but to bring shame on him is one of the worst: a man should be (like Job) 'eyes to the blind' without being himself seen. Similarly, one should not 'wrong' one's fellow-man *even in words* (below, p. 76); and so a convert ('even to the tenth generation'!) should not hear derogatory talk about 'gentiles' in his presence. And the thought is developed with such appreciation of human failing as to lead to a prohibition not only of adulteration of articles of food and drink but even of asking a shopkeeper the price of goods if we have no intention of buying.

All this is made a matter for legislation. It is the subject of specific articles in the Codes. Feeling is made manifest, as it is fostered, through actions prescribed by law. Detailed regulation

of everyday conduct may not attain the ideal maximum of the elect few, but it secures the indispensable minimum from the average many.

Thus the 'way' is not left for improvisation. It is expressed in definite rule. Indignation at social wrong, like instruction in personal behaviour, is poured into specific moulds. Judaism not only tells man to do good in general. It exemplifies in the precepts of the Law what good to do.

The precepts are conventionally distinguished into moral and ceremonial. The convention however, like the distinction itself, is overdrawn. Ceremony is the device by which the feeling of the presence of God is brought into everyday life. Thus whatever its detail may be, its total intent is moral. Similarly, morality does not consist in the mouthing of abstract principles but in acting in a particular way. The duties it imposes are specific, and therefore in a sense ceremonial.

For life is an all-day affair. It is lived in definite actions. But if actions have no rhythm or pattern, they are the cause of disorder and discontent. The art of living lies in the imposition of form on the indiscriminate welter of feeling, passion, impulse, emotion and phantasy which are the raw material of our lives; and if this is so of our lives as individuals, it is even more so of our lives as lived with others in groups and in the social whole.

A notable example of the inextricable blend of ceremony and morals, alike in the individual and the social sphere, is offered by the Sabbath. By nature, as the author of Ecclesiasticus remarks, all days are the same. The picking out of any one of them is thus an artificial act. It is 'legalism', the imposition of an arbitrary and rigid rule on the fluidity of life and time.

Yet, although the Sabbath is apparently an outward rite or ceremony, it is by no means a meaningless, 'external' act. Its benefits are spiritual as well as physical, and both for individual man and for the body of society. It is at once a signal example of social legislation, and a call to the individual to remind himself what it means to be a man. Readers of Heine

(and Matthew Arnold) will remember his affectionate portrait of Moses Lump:

'There lives at Hamburg, in a one-roomed lodging in the Baker's Broad Walk, a man whose name is Moses Lump. All the week he goes about in wind and rain, with his pack on his back, to earn his few shillings. But when on Friday evening he comes home, he finds the candlestick with seven candles lighted, and the table covered with a fair white cloth, and he puts away from him his pack and his cares, and he sits down to table with his squinting wife and yet more squinting daughter, and eats fish with them, fish which has been dressed in beautiful white garlic sauce, sings therewith the grandest psalms of King David, rejoices with his whole heart over the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, rejoices, too, that all the wicked ones who have done the children of Israel hurt, have ended by taking themselves off; that King Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, Antiochus, Titus, and all such people, are well dead, while he, Moses Lump, is yet alive, and eating fish with wife and daughter; and I can tell you, Doctor, the fish is delicate and the man is happy.'

In Jewish practice the Sabbath is inaugurated on the Friday evening at sunset by the lighting of candles and the ceremonial drinking of wine. The day is distinguished by the public reading and exposition of the Law. It is thus both an occasion of family reunion and passive rest from the work of the week, and an opportunity for study and instruction and active renewal of spiritual vitality: in short, a day of re-creation and re-dedication and re-generation.

The Sabbath is a typical instance of the way in which Judaism succeeded in turning what may have been a magical practice, or a sporadic fulfilment of a natural need, into a moral institution; and the practical fact of its visible beginning and end (it is kept not from midnight to midnight but 'from evening unto evening') helped powerfully to make its purpose manifest. In the same way, the three great annual festivals, all possibly once nature feasts, were re-dedicated to moral ideas. The first, Passover, the spring festival, is now the festival of Freedom;

celebrated by the eating of unleavened bread and the recalling of the deliverance from Egypt, it consciously reminds each new generation of the fact of slavery and invites it to the re-experience of liberation. The second, Pentecost, seven weeks later, originally a harvest festival, is now the festival of the Giving of the Law, the day laid down in the Bible having been identified, by an ingenious calculation, with that of the giving of the Ten Commandments. The third, Tabernacles, celebrated in the autumn with the open-air booth, the 'fruit of a goodly tree', and palm branch and myrtle, remains associated with nature; yet it is nature transformed. It is nature turned into history ('that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt'), attesting in its new shape the primary source of man and nature alike.

The lesson of the weekly Sabbath and the yearly festivals that the world has a creator and that life's purpose is other than labour, is reinforced with all the devices of sanctity and solemnity by the Sabbath of Sabbaths, the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement concludes the period inaugurated ten days earlier by the New Year, celebrated by Judaism in the autumn. It brings man directly before his maker. On this day of days the worshipper is removed from the world of the body. He neither eats nor drinks nor attends to affairs; and this because he reviews his past and ponders his future in the presence of the one and only judge of all flesh.

But life is much besides Sabbaths and feasts and fasts. Man walks before God every day and all the day. His every act is therefore to be hallowed. Those that bear the vessels of God must be themselves clean.

The food regulations of Judaism are in principle simple. The use of meat is restricted. Certain animals (e.g. pigs) are not eaten at all; while those permitted are killed in such a way that the minimum of pain is caused and the maximum of blood drained away. They are then subjected to strict examination

to ensure their freedom from disease. When declared fit for consumption ('kosher'), the meat is thoroughly washed in the kitchen and salted in order to extract any blood that remains.

The religious value of these and similar observances lies in the spirit in which they are performed; and those who smile at a 'kitchen religion' ('pot-and-pan—theism', as it has wittily been called) would do well to ponder the remark of the early Greek philosopher on entering a poor cottage: 'Here too are gods.' Judaism would seem to hold that the occupation of a housewife is a holy one and that a kitchen too is, or can be made, a place of worship. Holiness is not asceticism, the negation of the world and its fulness. It is rather, in the presence and enjoyment of the world and its fulness, a conscious exercise of self-control; it is a guiding, not an obliteration, of natural desire. All hygienic considerations apart, therefore, food regulations, however irksome, are of deep moral significance. Just as the weekly Sabbath reminds a man that he is not a mere wage-slave, so abstention from certain foods, and a deliberate delay in their preparation, adjure him not to behave as a mere animal, greedily snatching at the first desire of his eyes. Dietary laws and daily prayers, no less than Sabbath and Day of Atonement, foster a life of quality and purpose. They raise the trivialities of the daily round into one continuous act of worship. They are 'religion breathing household laws'.

In this brief account of some of the main heads of the ceremonial law it will be remarked that no mention is made of the sacrificial system and the temple in Jerusalem. There is a clear reason for this. Whatever the importance or significance of the sacrificial system may have been once, it has long ceased to exist. It is now some two thousand five hundred years since the original Jerusalem temple was destroyed by the Babylonians; and since that event, even during the time of the second temple (sixth century B.C. to A.D. 70), the masses of Jewry have lived far away from Jerusalem. Synagogue and House of Study have long taken the place of temple, and prayer that of sacrifice.

It is still arguable, as is maintained in a Rabbinic view afterwards adopted by Maimonides and dimly suggested in the Bible itself (Lev. xvii, 7), that the sacrificial system was a survival from an idolatrous past and that its retention was a concession to popular weakness and an attempt, through regularization, to limit it. But whether it was a survival or not, its abuses were already noted by prophet and psalmist in the time of the first temple itself; and this feeling remained so strong that to this very day the lesson from the prophets ordained for the morning of the Day of Atonement, when the Pentateuchal text of the sacrificial functions of the high priest on that day is read, is the passage from Isaiah beginning with the end of the fifty-seventh chapter:

'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever. . . . I have seen his ways and will heal him. . . . Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith the Lord and I will heal him. . . .

'Wherefore have we fasted [say they] and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul and thou takest no knowledge? Behold in the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold ye fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye fast not this day so as to make your voice to be heard on high. . . . Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? . . . Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer. . . .'

This is the trumpet call of prophecy. The dry sentences of the Mishnah are in their way not less emphatic:

'If a man says, "I will sin and repent, and sin again and

repent", he will be given no chance to repent. If he says, "I will sin and the Day of Atonement will effect atonement", then the Day of Atonement effects no atonement. For transgressions which are between man and God, the Day of Atonement effects atonement; but for transgressions that are between a man and his fellow, the Day of Atonement effects atonement only if he has appeased his fellow.'

Thus the Day itself has no sacramental power of its own and a verbal repentance is worthless. In the same way no mediator is efficacious. 'The soul which sinneth, it shall die.' Man has to make his own peace with God. And he has to make his peace with man first. Atonement must be preceded by restitution. This was so by temple law. The sacrifice was offered only after the restitution. It was a public acknowledgement of wrong done, to be made and accepted only after the wrong had been repaired: 'He shall restore in full, and shall add the fifth part more thereto; unto him to whom it appertaineth shall he give it. . . . And he shall [then and then only] bring his guilt offering unto the Lord . . . and the priest shall make [the ceremony of] atonement for him . . . and he shall be forgiven.' The doctrine is the moral one of individual personal responsibility. When Moses asked to be allowed to take upon himself the sin of his people, he received the stern reply: 'Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.'

How far in time the responsibility extended is not determined. Although the theory of the transmigration of souls is made much of in some late mystical writings (as indeed in all Gnostic speculation), ordinary Judaism never taught that wrong-doing committed in this life is expiated in another life (or in a succession of other lives) on this earth; and while it affirmed an after-life in which the good persisted and in which wrongs committed were expiated, it was never dogmatic as to its nature. And its emphasis was always on the good. Although it recognized clearly the existence of human sin, it never looked upon it either as inevitable or as irremediable. On the contrary. Just

as in the Bible we are told repeatedly of the mercy and love of God whose anger does not last for ever, so the living Judaism expressed in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement is one prolonged call to the wrong-doer to change his heart and his ways. It is rather an appeal to the possibilities of good in the worst of us than a threat based on a total and final condemnation of the bad; and the appeal derives from the conception of the 'presence of God' which is throughout a guiding principle of Judaism. In the solemn words of the Atonement liturgy: 'Thou has set man apart from the beginning, and recognized him that he should stand before thee.'

For in spite of his high origin man remains man. He stands 'in the presence of' God; he walks 'in the way of' God; he 'appears before' God. He does not *disappear in* God or *become* God. He is not identifiable, certainly never identical, with God. God is the ideal of holiness to which man strives; he is not the psychic or spiritual whole into which man is, or can be, absorbed. The basic religious feeling of Judaism remains that of the Law and the Prophets and the Writings. The eternal God is its dwelling place, and in his light it sees light. But no more.

A word must be said about the attitude of Judaism to other faiths. The general tone is set by a very early use (or misuse) of the verse in Exodus (xxii, 28): 'Thou shalt not revile judges.' Owing to an ambiguity in the Hebrew word translated 'judges', the words could mean: 'Thou shalt not revile God' or 'the gods'; and the injunction was made to mean: 'Thou shalt not revile the gods *of other people*.' This may have been a counsel of prudence, but it is also a mark of maturity. There are admittedly in the literature individual instances of slighting references to the prophets of other creeds; but the best authors avoided religious controversy and recognized value in the beliefs of others. The Talmud itself affirms that the pagan is worshipping 'not the mountain but the spirit of the mountain'; and it is a commonplace among the philosophers that adherents of other

religions are also seekers: 'The yearning of them all is to draw nigh to thee.'

But this does not mean that Judaism abandons its own positions, or that it has no positions to abandon. It has its doctrine of the unity of God with its corollaries of one world, one humanity, one truth and one good. It has its concrete detail of the right way for man: the Ten Commandments, the Law of Holiness (Lev. xix). It has its guiding vision of the creation of man in God's likeness and, with it, the promise of his re-creation. It has its institutions, its disciplines, its liturgy, its austerities; its historic sorrows, its annual recall of common joys. It has its great acceptance of the world and its fulness, its condemnation of asceticism, its principle of enjoyment under control; it has its great rejection of polytheism and image-worship, and its abhorrence of all forms of cruelty and injustice. It can agree with Buddhism that there are metaphysical questions the solution of which is irrelevant to the religious life; but it clings to the link between God who is at least personal (though he is, too, much more) and the individual soul, a soul which is one and enduring and responsible. It is this living dependence of the living soul on the living God ('thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee') which turns what might have been a bare deism on the one hand or a bare moralism on the other into one of the most living, in human history, of all religions.

Dreams are notoriously an index to character. The dream of Judaism is of the coming of the Messiah; or rather, since the Messiah in Judaism is not so much a person as the inaugurator of a new epoch in history, of the coming of the Messianic age. Famous pictures of this age are given by Isaiah. Its coming into being is the victory of wisdom over violence; its fruit, justice and universal peace. But peace, justice and wisdom are manifestations of the divine spirit and are patterned on the nature of God. It is only when and because the earth is filled with the knowledge of God that men will do no more violence or wrong:

'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And it shall come to pass in that day that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek.'

This is a vision of the end, but it reflects the call which constituted Judaism, and created Jewry, at the beginning. Abraham's family was singled out, as we saw (above, p. 15), in order to follow and exemplify the way of God which is 'to do justice and judgement'. The function of the 'shoot of the stock of Jesse' upon whom the 'spirit of God' will descend is to complete the task and to bring the knowledge and practice of that way to all mankind. In that 'latter day':

'Many peoples shall go up and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'

The Messianic conviction is a conviction about the future. It sees the coming on this earth of the Kingdom of God. The constitution of the Kingdom and the way of its coming may be understood variously, but the fact of its coming at the appointed time ('this very day if ye would hearken unto his voice') is not in doubt.

This conviction that there is a future and not an endless repetition of ancient wrong is one of the great qualities of Judaism. The vision of a future gives the strength to live for a future, that is, the strength to live.

I have tried to set out this preliminary survey simply and humanly; that is, in terms of common sense. But its background is neither simple nor human, and common sense has nothing to

do with it. 'In the beginning God created'; 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred'; 'I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt'; 'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God'—these sentences and the like are at the root of Judaism but they are not matters of observation or demonstration or argument. They are primary premises; and they refer not to events in nature but to him in whom nature dwells. God is the 'place of the universe', say Philo and the Rabbis, although 'the universe is not his place'.

We are accustomed to the idea of man reaching up to God, yearning with Job 'Oh that I knew where I might find him'. But Job did not find God. God found Job, answering him from the whirlwind. The epitaph on Moses, the 'man of God', does not say that Moses knew God. It says (Deut. xxxiv, 10) that God knew Moses. God called Samuel; caused Elijah to hear a still, small voice; sent and appointed prophet after prophet. He gave them the 'tongue of them that are *taught*, wakening their ears morning by morning', that is, like children at day school. The prophets were pupils, not teachers; messengers, not innovators. As the gentile prophet Balaam complained, they had no choice: they had to speak as they were told. Many of them fought against the summons. Moses himself asked to be excused from it. Jeremiah was broken by it. Jonah fled from it. Theological fashion today will have it that religion is communion, the coming together of the 'I' and the 'thou'. Judaism would seem to be more modest. God is not spirit communing with, or being communed with by, other spirits. He is spirit's creator. In a remarkable phrase, found twice in the Pentateuch, he is 'God of the spirits of all flesh'. He is not man's fellow. He is man's maker and instructor. Man may be, to himself, urgently important, but he cannot contend with the Almighty. It is God who sets the scene. Beyond and apart from the visible sequence of facts and actions there is an initiating and directing power which will not be gainsaid.

Once the scene is set, however, the rest follows logically. We are told, for example, that since the whole earth is God's, no

title to land can be given in perpetuity. This is the law as it is laid down in Leviticus xxv, 23. For the modern man the premise is as breath-taking as the consequence is revolutionary. Yet for the Hebrew Bible the premise is obvious, and the consequence a simple deduction. Agrarian legislation flows immediately from theology, a theory of property from the nature of God. Moral living rests on a similar basis. It is uncompromisingly God-derived. When we are told not to reap the corners of the field or put a stumbling block in the way of the blind; when we are to love our neighbour as ourselves and to honour the old; it is not in the interest of private advantage or of the smooth running of society but because 'I am the Lord your God'.

Thus God is for Judaism the 'first and the last', and we are brought to see the justice of the shortest description of Judaism ever offered. It is the passing comment of a non-Jew and a detractor, and is the more noteworthy in that it represents not how Judaism saw itself but how Judaism appeared to others. I refer to the five words with which the Roman historian Tacitus, in his account of the Roman war of 64–70 which extinguished the Jewish state, summed up the creed of the Jews. *Mente sola unumque numen intelligunt*, he writes: 'They understand the Divine to be one and grasped by the mind alone.'

It is tempting to contrast Judaism with Hellenism, but the comparison is not easy. Judaism has little in it of the neat and tidy. Its boundaries are ill-defined. It is no self-complete artistic unity. It is exuberant, never clear-cut. It offers for our wonder no finished plastic art; no harmonious picture of a completely balanced life; no tragic masterpieces to still the fiercer emotions; no finely etched geometry or algebra; no sense of the 'too little' and the 'too much'; no classic mean; no 'style'. Judaism is on the contrary romantic, disharmonious; even, on occasion, explosive. Its ideal for man is charity in action rather than clarity of thought; but it has found from long experience that the ideal is never achieved and it persists in beating its head against the wall. Hellenism gave the world the 'heroic' outlook

with its motto 'ever to excel and to surpass others'. Its counterpart in Judaism is the vision of divine holiness and the consciousness not of that wherein human nature excels but of where it requires correction.

Yet within limits the two are not incompatible, and it will be part of our enquiry to see where and how.