



FIG. 69. SPOILS OF THE TEMPLE

The details of the Triumphal Procession with Temple Spoils on the Arch of Titus are now much obliterated by ill usage (see Fig. 5 and description, p. 28). The monument was, however, carefully studied in the seventeenth century by the artist-engraver Pietro Santo Bartoli (1635-1700). His representation is reproduced of the triumphal procession with Temple spoils. It shows clearly many points now obliterated, such as the form of the table and the trumpets. Other details which survive on the Arch prove that Bartoli made a faithful copy.

JEWISH THOUGHT IN THE MODERN WORLD

Introduction : Jewish Thought and the Renaissance

THE close of the fifteenth century saw Hebrew established as one of the three languages of higher education, and the result may be traced in both theological and humanistic spheres. Luther on the one hand, Pico della Mirandola on the other, exemplify its influence and importance. But whereas the theologians saw in the Hebrew language only the means to the interpretation of the Bible, the humanists believed that in it they had found the key to the secrets of creation. Ideas derived from the Hebrew mystical books powerfully aided the new movements of thought. Telesio and Patrizzi, typical Renaissance philosophers, reproduce their theories of the creative light and of the nature of matter and space ;¹ while pioneers of the experimental sciences like Agrippa and Paracelsus may well have drawn from them their sense of the unity and continuity of nature which became one of the main factors in the new outlook. A favourite philosophical book of the age was the *Dialoghi di Amore*² of 'Leon the Hebrew' ('Leone Ebreo' = Don JUDAH ABRAVANEL, ? 1465-1530); while some essential doctrines of Giordano Bruno have been traced back to the *Fountain of Life* of the medieval Jewish thinker IBN GABIROL (eleventh century).

¹ See A. Franck, *Philosophes modernes* (1879), p. 111 f. Through Henry More, the Cambridge Cabalist, these ideas reached Newton.

² Written about 1502, first published 1535; also in contemporary versions in French, Spanish, and Latin; re-edited by Gebhardt as vol. iii of the *Bibliotheca Spinozana* (in the Oxford press). The English reader will know it from the 'third partition' of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Borrow's *Lavengro* (cap. 50).

In this way both mystical and scientific tendencies of the Renaissance were nourished from Jewish sources,¹ and 'the enlargement of Japhet' was found 'in the tents of Shem'.

It would be an easy, although voluminous, task thus to trace out the influence of individual Jewish thinkers. Our problem, however, is not that, but the disentangling of a specifically Jewish factor from their thought. We are met at once with the difficulty which faces every inquiry involving abstract terms. How is one to arrive at the general class without a study of particular instances? And yet, without a knowledge of the characteristics of the class, how are the particular instances to be selected? Unless we can define exactly what we mean by Judaism or *Jewish* thought, it is dangerous to fix on any particular points and declare them to constitute the Jewish 'legacy'. If, however, we do set out from any one definition, we run a grave risk of its being partial or preconceived. The only way in which a criterion can be established is to examine the primary documents themselves. It is necessary therefore to go back to the Hebrew Bible and to see what points of philosophical interest it presents. We shall then be in a position to estimate the Hebraic quality of the contributions to modern thought made by the Jewish philosophers. A survey of the Biblical data is the more germane to our task since we are to start from the epoch of the Reformation.

I. *Some characteristics of Biblical Hebraism*

The charter of monotheism is comprised in articles not of metaphysical theory but of ethical precept. Its sole dogma, that of the unity of God, is not offered (was possibly never understood) as theoretic creed. Polytheism involved a variety of moral standards, that is to say, no standard at all. Monotheism substituted the principle of unity, one 'judge of all

¹ For details as to the influence of the Cabala see article by Canon Box, pp. 315-375.

the earth' ¹ with 'one law' ² for all. Much is said of the 'particularism' of the chosen people and the 'transcendence' of the chosen God; yet in the moral life, emphasized alike by legislator and prophet, the place of both is seen. 'And a stranger shalt thou not oppress: *for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt*' ³—it is only through personal experience that the universal can be reached. 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy. . . . *Was not this to know me?*' saith the Lord' ⁴—the 'hidden God' ⁵ of the physical universe is revealed in the moral life.

How it came about that the ancient Hebrews laid such stress on conduct is a difficult question. We only know that Canaan is said to have 'vomited forth its inhabitants' ⁶ not for erroneous beliefs but for immoral practices; that Ahab was denounced not for Baal-worship but for the murder of a poor man; ⁷ that it was the '*doings* of the land wherein ye dwelt' and the '*doings* of the land whither I am bringing you', not their doctrines, which the Israelites were forbidden to follow; ⁸ that the original choice itself of Abraham was conditional on his 'commanding his children after him to *keep the way of God*', that is, 'to *do justice*'.⁹ The idea of God seems in fact to have meant, whatever else, justice and moral order.

It is easy to understand how it is only within monotheism that the conception of the unity of mankind is attained. Polytheism rends the earth into fragments, each autonomous with separate tribe and private deity; even the aspirations of a Plato rose no higher than the dream of a united Greece.¹⁰

¹ Gen. xviii. 25.

² e.g. Num. xv. 15-16; Isa. xlii. 4.

³ Exod. xxii. 21, xxiii. 9; Deut. x. 19, xxiv. 17-22.

⁴ Jer. xxii. 16.

⁵ Pascal's *Deus absconditus* (*Pensées*, iv. 242) from Isa. xlv. 15.

⁶ Lev. xviii. 24-30, xx. 22-23.

⁷ 1 Kings xxi. 17 f.; 2 Kings ix. 25-26.

⁸ Lev. xviii. 3.

⁹ Gen. xviii. 19.

¹⁰ *Rep.* 469 f.

Within monotheism the earth and its people are one, 'the children of the Ethiopians' as much as 'the children of Israel'.¹ Monotheism unites; polytheism divides.

A similar tendency may be traced in the spheres of logic and metaphysics. Polytheism involves, although it is not of course identical with, what would now be called a pluralism. It pre-supposes, that is, the existence of a number of co-ordinate wills, each equally active in the government of the world. This is the obvious or 'common-sense' theory and has been accepted and justified by some philosophers. But whatever one may think of the nature and origin of Biblical monotheism, it clearly demands precisely the opposite view. It has no place for any doctrine but that of unity of source—'in the beginning God created both heaven and earth'; and the doctrine of unity of *source* involves that of unity of *control*. That feature of pluralism which William James was fond of calling 'tychism'—the reign of chance—is thus overcome. Sporadic or magical interference is at once put out of court. Only one supreme God is concerned in the government of things, not many minor deities. Power is concentrated in one hand. First the importance, then the reality, finally the very possibility, of miracles not wrought by the one God is denied; and even the miracle-working 'false prophet' is declared to be sent by God to test a credulous generation.² The greatest of God's miracles, however, lies in the way in which he once for all controlled the rebellious chaos: 'set a bound to the sea', 'fixed the earth on its foundation', so that 'seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease'.³ These 'ordinances of heaven and earth'⁴ are thus at once the index of God's power and the expression of his sole wisdom.

This complete dependence of all things on God, itself source of the ethical doctrine of the divine impartiality which

¹ Amos ix. 7.

³ Gen. viii. 22.

² Deut. xiii. 1-5.

⁴ Jer. xxxiii. 25.

is the highest justice, opens up wider vistas than the narrowly human. The Hebrew Bible, although it gives full measure to the claims of the human heart, is notoriously theocentric. Man is neither the measure nor the centre of things. The cattle of Nineveh,¹ the farmer's ox and ass,² the very trees of the forest,³ are of account to the Maker of all; and the 'God in his holy habitation' who is 'father of the fatherless and judge of the widow'⁴ gives the raven its food⁵ and waters the grass of the 'wilderness in which there is no man'.⁶ In this firm sense of totality lies the unique character of the Biblical account. Its universality is thoroughgoing. It holds the scales equal between all the various parts of creation. Nothing is small; nothing is great. 'They wait all upon thee.'⁷

II. *The Medieval Development and Modern Thought*

Importance of Maimonides and his school

Jewish philosophy proper, so far as it has made itself felt in modern European thought, emerges, for the first time after PHILO,⁸ with the medievals, beginning with ISAAC JUDAEUS (855-955)⁹ and SAADIA (892-942)¹⁰ and reaching its highest point in MOSES MAIMONIDES (1135-1204).¹¹ There were of course many divergent streams in the movement, and one important current approached its problems from a different direction altogether; but Maimonides holds a unique position not only because of his intrinsic pre-eminence, but also because, up to the opening of the eighteenth century, he was the main channel through which

¹ Jonah iv. 11.

² Exod. xxiii. 12; Deut. v. 14, xxv. 4, &c.

³ Hab. ii. 17. The command of Deut. xx. 19 against destroying fruit-trees was developed notably by the Rabbis into a unique prohibition of any form of destruction.

⁴ Ps. lxxviii. 5.

⁵ Ps. cxlvii. 9.

⁶ Job xxxviii. 26.

⁷ Ps. civ. 27, cxlv. 15.

⁸ See above, pp. 42-63.

⁹ Above, p. 187.

¹⁰ Above, p. 326.

¹¹ Above, pp. 192-202.

post-Biblical Hebraism reached the non-Jewish world. The remarks which follow, necessarily short as they are, are made therefore with central reference to him and his school, and concern themselves with the question of the contribution made by them to the store of modern thought, and of the relation in which that contribution stands to the older Hebraism.

§ 1. *Logic and Metaphysics : Unity of God and Unity of Nature*

In the Hebrew Bible God is conceived as being not only the sole but also the immediate cause of each single thing or event. It is true that he alone can perform miracles and that his greatest miracle is the establishing of order in the world. Within the world itself, however, there is little idea of reciprocal interaction. Traces of the appearance of this view may be seen in those passages in which the operation of secondary causes is emphasized—the lifting up of the sea through a strong wind; the feeding of Elijah by the agency of ravens; the sheltering of Jonah by means of a gourd. Still, such passages are few and probably not representative. Biblical writers are so full of the majesty of God that in each single phenomenon they see the immediate consequence of a particular act of his will.

When one considers the character of scientific inquiry, however, it is clear that this simple doctrine fails to satisfy. Chance has been banished from the world and in its place the wisdom of God has been enthroned. But unless the acts of God's wisdom constituting nature are such as we can understand, we can never penetrate into the heart of things. The interpretability of nature depends on its being one whole, any part of which theoretically is explicable in terms of the rest. This great development of the implications of monotheism was clearly enunciated by the medieval Jewish thinkers, particu-

larly Maimonides. Through them in various ways (the principal being the philosophy of Spinoza) it reached the modern world. The Bible had declared that the whole of nature had one Creator. They added the corollary that created nature is one.

To the recognition of the ethical weakness of polytheism is thus explicitly added that of the logical. Polytheism is seen to involve a chaos in science as well as in morals; or rather, it is seen to preclude the very possibility of science, as formerly it had been seen to preclude the very possibility of morality. If there is no unity of control in nature there is no standard of conduct. If there is no unity of structure in nature there is no such thing as ordered knowledge. The establishing of this position is the central point in the argument of the masterpiece of the whole movement, Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*.¹ The clarity with which it is seized is remarkable. God is a 'free cause', but a rational one; and his rationality lies in the homogeneity of his creation.

The point is so important as to merit the closest attention. The world is treated as one individual whole, and it is one because the God who made it is one. The position achieved is not that of monism, since it insists on a transcendent creator; but it has come to the doctrine of the unity and harmony of the *structure* of things from a sense of the unity of their *source*. Hence Hebraic monotheism is not originally a *scientific* theory, arising, as among the Greek philosophers, from the contemplation of the unitary character of natural phenomena;² rather the unitary character of natural phenomena is a deduction from the primary intuition of religion. But, the result once arrived at, the *religious* theory proved much more thoroughgoing

¹ Available in an English translation by M. Friedländer.

² For an interesting comparison between Greek metaphysical and Hebrew ethical monotheism, see H. F. Hamilton's *People of God* (Oxford, 1912), vol. i, cap. i. The book suffers from the usual disadvantage of neglecting the post-Biblical Jewish data.

than the *scientific*. Greek metaphysics never threw off the polytheistic taint. Both Plato and Aristotle believed in the existence of a real contingency in Nature. Such a doctrine, however, is inconceivable to a philosophy arising from monotheism. Monotheism can have no more dealings with 'errant causes', 'chance' or 'fortuitousness' in science, than with a host of co-ordinate controls in morals. And its emotional appeal is immeasurably more powerful than that of contemplative analysis. To the religious mind, even when turned towards science, the spirit of God still moves upon the face of the waters.

It is impossible here to follow out fully the consequences of this doctrine, and to show how, by the transference of emphasis from the unity of God to the unity of nature, scientific inquiry (the inquiry into the uniformities of the structure of things) was raised to the supreme religious duty. Search after truth in the sciences was even held to have been a high and essential step in the grades of wisdom culminating in the illumination of the prophet. Theories of prophecy apart, however, the position as a whole remains striking. Theism is not a confession of ignorance but the expression of knowledge. God, in Biblical phrase, is not only 'justice' but 'wisdom', and his service is in the intellectual as well as in the moral life.

This bold setting of science in the very shrine of religion is the chief contribution to the modern world of the medieval Jewish thinkers, since it was this lesson which, impressed three and a half centuries later on the mind of Spinoza, was set by him in the very heart of his system. Whether they were right in deducing it, as they did, from Biblical Hebraism is an interesting question. It is noteworthy, however, that not only this idealizing of scientific endeavour, but also the very background of modern scientific ideology, is Hebraic. As a matter of history this derives not from the empirical monism of Greece but from the transcendental monotheism of Israel. The ideal

of absolute cosmic regularity, so far as it has reached general thought, is of theological origin. 'Laws of Nature' are originally decrees of God. At least one most important strand in their history can be traced back through the Deism and Rational Theology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to Spinoza, and back from Spinoza to his Jewish predecessors.¹ Detail apart, however, the whole conception derives all its force from the 'words' and 'commandments' of God whereby the universe is created and sustained. Hebraism, in fact, far from being the enemy of science, is the rock from which its philosophy was hewn.²

§ 2. *Ethics and Politics : the theory of the Covenant and its Outcome*

A remarkable feature in the whole movement of philosophical Hebraism was the freedom with which the most various doctrines were entertained, a fact to be connected with the traditional lack of interest in speculation as such. What mattered was not theory but practice. So long as the conduct was right, any extravagance of theory could be, if not welcomed, at least condoned. It was this flexibility which formed the strength of the whole tradition. Few indeed were the doctrines which could not find some support in a judicious selection and interpretation of Biblical phrase. The written word remained the standard, but the way in which it was understood varied. Hence, under the semblance of uniformity the greatest diversity of opinion prevailed. Never within the bounds of a religious system was freedom of thought so widely offered or so curiously

¹ The famous sixth chapter 'On Miracles' of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* can be documented verbally from Maimonides. See M. Joel, *Spinozas Theologisch-Politischer Traktat* (Breslau, 1870), p. 57 f.

² I am glad now to be able to refer in support of the above to the similar point urged by Professor Whitehead in his recently published Lowell Lectures, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 17 f.

disguised ; nor, so long as the historical and poetical portions only of the Bible were allegorized away, was there much harm done.

It became obvious, however, even in the time of Philo, that the code of conduct stood in danger. Religious discipline, in both Alexandrian and Arabist periods, speedily decayed as a consequence of this 'creative' interpretation, and, as ever, the resulting antinomianism refused to confine itself to rejection of ceremonial alone. It became an urgent social problem to provide a justification of the whole system of conduct which should not be affected by the symbolical use of the text of the code.

The solution was found in the reference to history. Habits of conduct, we learn, are not capable of an *a priori* deduction. Objections against them based on *a priori* grounds are therefore invalid. Whatever the origin of the practice may be, its validity depends on its acceptance as a part of a whole system. The people entered freely, that is, in agreement with its native character, into a 'covenant', and bound itself to follow definite ways of life. The obligation to retain them lies therefore in the self-consistency of the people's character. In the working out of this theory¹—Biblical through and through, and sustained by powerful arguments from Rabbinical literature—there emerged three ideas of far-reaching importance for the modern age : the theory of a universal moral code, the 'comparative method', and the problem of values, human and divine.

¹ It is repeated by Spinoza (*Theol.-Pol.*, cap. v) and to all intents and purposes by Mendelssohn (see below, p. 458 f.). The *ethical* character of the covenant lay of course in the freedom of its acceptance (see the remarks of Robertson Smith in *Prophets of Israel* (1882), pp. 161 f., 169, and 175, and in a similar connexion, *Religion of the Semites* (1889), p. 42). This is well brought out in the Rabbinic comment on Deut. xxxiii. 2, which asserts that God offered the Torah to all the other nations before giving it to Israel ; they all refused it, however, on the ground that its moral demands conflicted with their accustomed way of life.

(i) *Contract and 'natural' religion*

It would be paradoxical to affiliate so separatist a doctrine as that of a national covenant with the theory of a universalistic morality, if we did not remark the obvious point that contracts are binding only on the contracting parties. 'No positive law whatsoever', as Locke puts the argument in the first of his *Letters on Toleration*, 'can oblige any people but those to whom it was given. "Hear, O Israel" sufficiently restrains the obligation of the law of Moses only to that people.' Jewish tradition, from the very earliest times of which we have record, stressed the uniqueness of the ceremonial law to the Jews.¹ For the non-Jew a simpler code was held to exist, a code the universality of which is marked by its being associated with the ancestors, not of the Jews specifically, but of all mankind, the 'sons of Noah'.

We need not enter into the sources of this doctrine as the whole subject is treated elsewhere in this volume.² We need only remark that obedience to the 'Noachide laws' constituted 'righteousness' for the 'nations of the world', and conferred upon them, just as much as did adherence to the Sinaitic covenant upon Jews, a 'portion in the world to come'. From the point of view of general religious thought it is important to observe the interpretation involved herein of the doctrine of 'election'. The divine choice of Israel entails not rights but special duties;³ Israel is after all only the 'first born'⁴ of the family of nations. But in addition, one

¹ Exegetically, the point was made to depend on the Pentateuchal differentiation between 'judgements' and 'statutes', e.g. in Lev. xviii. 4. 'Judgements' are the universal moral laws which 'if they had not been written down, would have had to be written down', i.e. laws the validity of which is not merely legal; 'statutes' are the seemingly arbitrary points of ceremonial (*Babli Yoma*, 67 b).

² *The Influence of Judaism on Western Law*, above, p. 377.

³ So already in the famous outburst of Amos (iii. 2). It is, of course, central in the 'servant' passages of Isaiah.

⁴ Exod. iv. 22.

point in the detail of the 'Noachide code' invites special comment. It contains no creed, no theoretic statement about the nature of God, belief in which is the condition of salvation. It consists solely of such articles of practical morality as are an essential condition of civilized life. This twofold characteristic is reflected in the use made of it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹ In the hands of the jurists it became one of the main elements in the foundation of the edifice of universal, *international law*; while thinkers like Bodin² made it part of the theoretic basis for the general plea for tolerance of dissent in religion.

(ii) *The 'reasons for the commandments' and the science of cultural anthropology*

More significant even than this is the place which these discussions hold in the rise of the 'comparative' outlook, the characteristic mark of the modern as opposed to the ancient and medieval spirit. They came to a head in the *Guide for the Perplexed* of Maimonides, the first part of the third and last book of which offers a masterly exposition of Pentateuchal law from this point of view. The attempt there developed to find an explanation of the customs of Israel in those of neighbouring peoples gradually broadened in the hands of later inquirers into the study of the customs of all early and primitive

¹ Spinoza's unfortunate reference (*Tract. Theol.-Pol.*, cap. v) is set right by M. Joel, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6; and Hermann Cohen, *Spinoza über Staat und Religion*, now reprinted in his *Jüdische Schriften* (Berlin, 1924), vol. iii, pp. 345 ff. The general question is dealt with in the latter's *Nächstenliebe im Talmud* (*Jüd. Schrift.*, vol. i, pp. 145 ff.).

² For the relation of Bodin to Jewish thought reference should be made to Jacob Guttman's long and important essay in the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* for 1905. It is noteworthy that, like Montaigne and L'Hôpital, Bodin had one Jewish parent.

racés.¹ The influence on general thought of this comparative study, particularly in the spheres of morals and religion, is incalculable. Yet behind it lies not only an old Jewish problem but also an old Jewish answer. John Spencer's work on the *Laws of the Hebrews* (1685), according to the testimony of Robertson Smith,² laid the foundations of the whole science; but the portly folios of the Cambridge orientalist and theologian who was 'so much before his time that his work was not followed up', rest directly and confessedly on the pregnant chapters of the *Guide* of Maimonides (1190).

(iii) *Values human and divine*

The return to the Biblical idea of covenant and the consequent stress on the historical character of the detail of Pentateuchal legislation led to the enunciation of a third and more specifically metaphysical concept. The justification through history of the validity of habits of conduct necessarily drew attention, as we have seen, to their empirical origin. The argument is now thrown out wider and joins the treatment of the great problem of the divine attributes.³ Validity in general is validity for us. Ultra-personal experience, expressed in the revelation on Sinai, may determine what for us is finally valid, finally consonant, that is, with the wider structure of human life as apprehended by prophetic insight or social discovery. We are not then driven to the desperate chaos of a relativity in morals. Yet for all that, moral values and standards of conduct, although final to man (or rather,

¹ For some interesting remarks in this connexion see Sir James Frazer's preface to his *Folklore of the Old Testament*.

² *Religion of the Semites*, Pref. p. vi. (The special point of Spencer's dependence on Maimonides is worked out in Julius Guttman's essay in *Festschrift Simonsens* (Copenhagen, 1923), pp. 258-276.)

³ See David Kaufmann's *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters* (Gotha, 1877).

because final to man), are final for man only. Human categories of good and evil are not applicable to the universe as a whole. God himself, we are told, is called 'good', as He is called 'wise', 'living', even 'existent', only *homonymously*, 'as the constellation (*canis*) is called by the same name as the animal, dog'.¹ Ethics is then a specifically human science, and its principles hold only for humanity.

We would seem to be on the way to a pure naturalism, and in a certain sense this is the case. To interpret the universe as a whole in the light of human opinions or human needs—the presentation to the mind of 'all that is unintelligible in the world as a glorified image of itself'²—is to Hebraism the ultimate blasphemy, and the development by Maimonides of this old Biblical theme is only reproduced in Spinoza's famous attacks on anthropomorphism. Yet, since ethical principles *are valid for men*, arising as they do out of man's place in the universe, Maimonides (therein again to be followed by Spinoza) reverts to the old answer to the difficulties aroused by the doctrine of the transcendence of God. God's 'glory' may not be known, but his 'ways' are,³ and his 'ways' are the ways of the moral life. It is only through the practice of 'loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness'—'*on this earth*', as

¹ The conventional example given by Maimonides (*Introduction to Logic*, cap. 13) and repeated by Spinoza (*Cog. Met.* ii. 11, § 3 and *Eth.* i. 17 sch.).

² I borrow the phrase from Mr. Lowes Dickinson's characterization of Greek religion in his *Greek View of Life* (1898), p. 7.

³ The reference is to the famous passages in Exod. xxxiii. 17–23, xxxiv. 5–8 which had already been expounded in this sense in *Guide*, I, liv. For Spinoza see *Theol.-Pol.* xiii, § 22; xiv, §§ 25 and 30; and for the significance of the doctrine of the *exemplar humanae vitae* in his finished system, *Eth.* iv, Pref. [For the Rabbinic use of this Greek conception see Abrahams's *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, Second Series, Cambridge, 1924, pp. 138–182. The Jewish contribution to the doctrine lies, as usual, in the ethical turn given to it.] It is important to note that both for Maimonides and Spinoza ethical perfection comes first. A man must be good before he can be wise.

they are careful to complete the quotation¹—that the final perfection of man can be attained.

If we ask wherein this perfection lies we are met with a noble appeal to disinterestedness. 'Rewards and punishments' are not external judgements on, but natural developments of, actions; the very promises and threats of the Scriptures are only statements of these intrinsic consequences. The 'end' then is not the attainment of some thing or goal outside of ourselves but the perfecting of the mind. The supreme command to 'know the God of thy father'² through his works has its end only in the pure ideal of knowledge. 'Say not: "I shall study in order that I may become rich"'—so Maimonides, in the words of the Talmud, concludes the introductory book of his digest of Rabbinic law—'Say not: "I shall study in order that I may be called learned, or in order that I may receive reward in the world to come."' The command that thou shouldst love God³ means that thou shouldst do nothing except from love. . . . Only children and the uneducated are taught to serve from fear of punishment or from the hope of reward; and as their intelligence becomes more developed, we must gently accustom them to the thought of serving from love. . . . We love God through the knowledge which we have of him, and as the measure of the knowledge so is the measure of the love. We must therefore devote ourselves to the study of those sciences which, so far as is given to man at all, offer him knowledge of his Maker.'⁴

¹ Jer. ix. 24 (Maimonides, *Guide*, III, liv, end; Spinoza, *Theol.-Pol.*, xiii, § 21).

² A favourite motto adopted from David's last charge to Solomon (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). Critics pointed out drily, much as Pascal did long after, that the 'dieu des savants' was not the same as the 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'.

³ e.g. Deut. vi. 5.

⁴ *Treatise on Repentance*, x, § 4 f. (available in a rather poor English translation by Soloweyczik, London, 1863, and in Bernard's *Selections from Tad Hachazakah*, Cambridge, 1832).

The position is saved from degenerating into an egoistic intellectualism by the profound Hebraic appreciation of the social character of human life, an appreciation which is most clearly manifested in the doctrine of the Messiah. To Maimonides, as to the essential Old Testament tradition, the Messiah is not so much a person as an age; or rather, emphasis is laid not so much upon the Messianic person as upon the age of which he is the initiator. This age, the last and highest in human history, is a kingdom of *this* world, and Maimonides recognized the advent of Christianity and Islam as stages in the evolution of its accomplishment. In it what are now the aspirations of the few will become the common heritage of all, and thus the conflict between wisdom and justice be reconciled in a human society patterned on the unity of God's name. 'They shall no more *teach*', he quotes,¹ 'every man his neighbour and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord; for they shall *all know* me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, for my Torah shall be in their *heart*.'² In this fusing of a naturalistic metaphysics with a positivistic ethics and politics in the religious enthusiasm of 'service in the heart',³ medieval Jewish philosophy found its inspiration and consummation.⁴

¹ In the introduction to the attempted formulation of 'articles' of a 'Jewish creed' in his commentary to *Mishnah Sanhedrin*, xii (available in an English translation by J. Abelson in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, October, 1906).

² Jer. xxxi. 33-34.

³ *Guide*, III, li (the phrase is Talmudic).

⁴ The direct influence of this school on the widest circle of modern thought is not confined to the points we have noted already or to those in which it is followed by Spinoza. This is obvious from the numerous translations of Maimonides' philosophical works which appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We may instance among others the reprint of the old Latin version of the *Guide* (Paris, 1520); Buxtorf's new version (Basel, 1629); Pococke's *Porta Mosis* (Oxford, 1655); Voorst's *Foundations of the Law* (Amsterdam, 1680); Clavering's *Treatises on Education and Repentance* (Oxford, 1705). The result may be seen not only in the casual references of polymaths like Bayle but in the reasoned system of the Cambridge

III. Spinoza

With Lessing's historic declaration that 'there is no other philosophy than the philosophy of Spinoza', the Dutch Jew BARUCH (BENEDICT) SPINOZA (1632-1677) began to assume his place among the foremost thinkers of the world. Although himself alienated from his people and excommunicated¹ by the local congregation in which he had been educated and of which his father had been an elder, he yet retained throughout life so strong an impress of his early training that his mature system recalls, both in general feature and in detail, the work of his Jewish predecessors.

By this statement is not intended any depreciation of Spinoza's originality, or any denial of his debts to non-Jewish sources. Spinoza is in the line of the Hebraic tradition because he brought to the problems of his age a mind steeped in the outlook of that tradition. The very passage in which he tells us of the impulse which drove him to philosophical reflection sets him within it at once. 'After experience had taught me that the common occurrences of ordinary life are vain and futile, and I saw that all the objects of my desire and fear were in themselves nothing good nor bad save in so far as the mind was affected by them; I determined at length to search out whether there were not something truly good and communicable to man, by which alone, all other things being set aside, his spirit might be affected; yea, whether there were anything through the discovery and acquisition of which I might enjoy continuous and perfect happiness for ever.'² The problem is not one of theory, the

Platonists. In this connexion the series of penetrating comments and summaries made by Leibniz during his study of the *Guide* (printed in Foucher de Careil's *Leibniz, la Philosophie juive, et la Cabale*, Paris, 1861) is of especial interest.

¹ See below, p. 452, n. 3.

² *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, cap. i. The passage is set at the head of Mr. Bridges's anthology, *The Spirit of Man*, and I have used his translation.

discovery of an abstract truth. It is the old Hebraic problem of practice, the finding of a way of life.

The contention that Spinoza is a *Jewish* philosopher, Jewish, that is, not only in origin but in inspiration, needs to be limited carefully. 'Spinozism', it has been happily remarked, 'is not a system but a habit of mind.'¹ Now it is this 'habit of mind', not any specific system of doctrine, which divergent opinion in the modern world has found valuable in Spinoza, and it is this 'habit of mind', again apart from any question of specific doctrine, which Spinoza derived from the Hebraic tradition. Like any other thinker he took over the detail of problems, often indeed solutions, from many sources; but his way of looking at the most general problem of all, the problem of life itself, was that of his Jewish predecessors.² His 'vision', to use the term of William James, is natively Hebraic, and it is this 'vision' which appeals.

The complex elements making up the human world may be summed up under the two heads of moral and intellectual. Ethics and science, the practical and the theoretical, divide between them the universe of human problems, and no one of the wider syntheses, if it hopes to maintain a permanent hold, can afford to relinquish either. Most systems, whether of philosophy or of religion, stress one of these primary factors at the expense of the other, or cover up an unresolved opposition by the device of a one-sided disparagement. Spinoza's philosophy is the most thoroughgoing and successful attempt we have to do justice to both.

To take one example, no other thinker has given in so small a space so suggestive an account of the possibilities of the

¹ Pollock, *Spinoza* (ed. 2, 1912), p. 381.

² Lack of space precludes a discussion of indebtedness on special points. An idea of the factors involved may be gained from Prof. Wolfson's series of essays in *Chronicon Spinozanum*, i-iii (1921-1923), and Dr. Gebhardt's *Uriel da Costa* (Oxford and Heidelberg, 1922).



FIG. 70. BARUCH SPINOZA, 1632-1677

human body ; but the recognition does not blind him to the equally existent powers of the human mind. He is enabled to follow out impartially both lines of reflection (how fruitfully in each case, later literature shows), because in his view specific human minds, no less than specific human bodies, are only ' modes ', within parallel ' attributes ', of the one reality. The complaint has been made that he reduces all mysteries into one great one ; and in a sense this is true. But the very simplification is an advance, since all explanation consists in showing that any one puzzling phenomenon is only an instance of a wider puzzle ; and the point is doubly important for our present inquiry because the simplification so effected is just that reference to unity which is the characteristic of Hebraism. The *Ethics* touches on all subjects connected with human conduct : psychology and the theory of Law and the State as well as practical moral precept ; but the key-note of his theology, the rejection of the merely human point of view, is the general characteristic of the whole. Spinoza's work is an attempt to get rid of prejudice and preconception, and allow things to speak, as it were, for themselves. It offers a theory independent of the human spectator which should yet include the facts of the human. But this is only to set out explicitly what is implicit in the theocentricity of the Hebrew Bible. As Spinoza himself said : ' Some begin from created things and some from the human mind. I begin from God.'¹

It is sometimes thought that the seventeenth century was unique in its interest in nature, and that therefore its great thinkers had to start completely afresh with problems never faced before. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Research has shown that Descartes himself was a medieval (the best of the medievals were very modern) ; and a glance at Steinschneider's monumental work on the Hebrew trans-

¹ *ap. Stein, Leibniz und Spinoza* (Berlin, 1890), p. 283.

lations of the Middle Ages¹ shows the burning interest in contemporary scientific theory of medieval Jewry. It is not then a matter for surprise that the religio-philosophical synthesis elaborated within the earlier epoch should have sufficed, when passed through a rich and appreciative mind, for the later. Spinoza had not to fashion, he had only to absorb, the 'vision of all reality as one' which students recognize as the informing principle of his outlook.² He had only to repeat the conception that God is not a mere 'refuge of ignorance' but a unity of intellect and will; that theology therefore must rest on physics, and both on the 'eternal verities' recognized by the human mind. It was within the philosophy of the Jewish Schoolmen that the profoundest stress on conduct had been combined with the realization that human norms are no more than human; theirs too was the commonplace that the highest worship was that arising from the study of the systematic unity of Nature. Further, the explicit equation of God with Nature was formulated in the history of Jewish thought long before Spinoza. It could not indeed have appeared strange to the minds which treasured the 104th Psalm.

It is so often thought that the famous excommunication of Spinoza was due to his enunciation of this and similar 'heresies'³

¹ *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1893).

² Cf. Sorley in *Proc. Brit. Acad.*, 1917-1918, p. 477. So already Hegel in the first paragraph of his account of Spinoza in his *History of Philosophy*.

It was Hegel who wrote that to become a philosopher a student must first soak himself in Spinoza, a piece of advice which, with Fichte and Schelling in his own day and most great thinkers since, he certainly followed himself. Among his own debts to the master is the fruitful doctrine that 'the truth is the whole'.

³ It was of course a 'political' move. The new community, itself hardly tolerated, was bound to dissociate itself from the holder of views which were becoming a scandal in the wider world and were likely to prejudice its own hardly won position.

The 'Synagogue', as one organized body like the Roman Church, never existed, and so could not as such at any epoch issue a general decree of

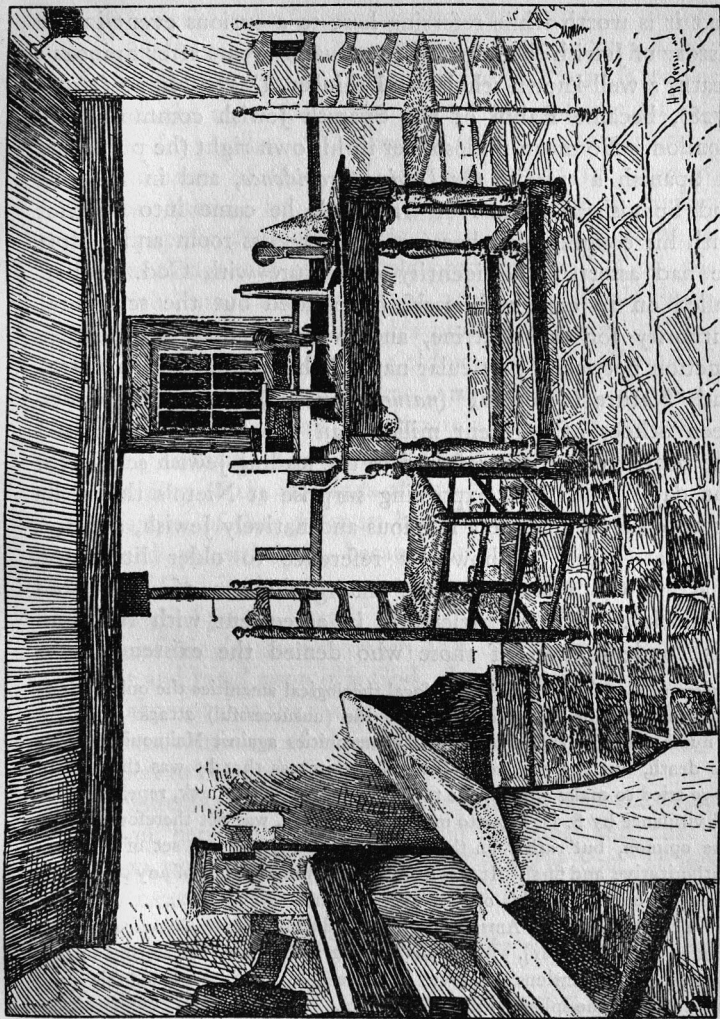


FIG. 71. SPINOZA'S WORK-ROOM AT RHIJNSBURG.
The instruments that Spinoza used for his work as a maker of lenses are on the table.

that it is worth while referring here to a curious event in the history of Jewish theology. About twenty years after Spinoza's death, a well-known scholar and thinker, DAVID NIETO (1654-1728), became Rabbi of the Spanish Jewish community in London. No mean philosopher in his own right (he published in Spanish a treatise *On Divine Providence*, and in Hebrew and Spanish a defence of tradition), he came into conflict with his congregation because both in class-room and pulpit he had asserted the identity of Nature with God. When called on to explain himself, he pointed out the scriptural authority for the doctrine, and availed himself of the distinction between 'particular natural things' (*natura naturata*) and 'Nature in general' (*natura naturans*). It seems to have been echoes of a recent millenarian upheaval which caused the controversy to be referred to the leading Jewish scholar of the day.¹ Far from expressing surprise at Nieto's thesis, he accepted it as genuinely religious and natively Jewish, and was even at pains to show, by reference to older literature, that it was a commonplace among thinkers of undoubted authority.² He is particularly in agreement with Nieto in his condemnation of those who denied the existence of a

excommunication. Apart from local theological amenities the only serious attempt at suppressing opinion was the (unsuccessful) attack made by a number of individual leaders of communities against Maimonides after his death, but the essence of their objection was that he was thought to have tried to make *opinion* the test of Judaism. The attack, repeated with all virulence by S. D. Luzatto in the last century, was not therefore on any one opinion, but rather on the attempt to make any one set of opinions authoritative and final. It was hence a condemnation not of any particular 'heresy' but of the idea of 'heresy' as such.

¹ Zevi Ashkenazi of Amsterdam (for the documents see *Chronicon Spinozanum*, i, pp. 278-282). Ashkenazi's ruling is the more interesting in that he had no pretensions whatever to philosophy, having earned his great reputation in the sphere of pure Talmudics.

² '*Antiqui omnes Hebraei*' as Spinoza himself remarked (to Oldenburg, *Ep.* lxxiii).

'general world-order', or who thought that the God-idea was saved by conceiving Nature as an intermediary between God and the objects of his providence.¹ There is no room left for doubt as to the significance of the doctrine for ethics as well as for physics. 'The reward of those who perform the commandments of God and the punishment of those who transgress them', he quotes approvingly from a favourite book of popular philosophy, 'are natural, since it is of the very nature of things that good should produce good.' God, then, is one with Nature in the profound sense that it is only through Nature and its workings that his providence, even in human affairs, is operative. Hence the old equation of suffering with sin. There are not two realms, one of nature, another of morality. Either nature is ultimately moral or morality is ultimately natural. The unity of things is such as to preclude the possibility of the workings of two distinct powers.

If this type of thought must be called by a name, it should be termed *panentheistic*, because, in the Rabbinic phrase, although 'God is the place of the world', 'the world is not his place'.² Spinoza himself strongly protested³ against the twisting of his doctrine to mean that the material world as we see it and tread upon it is God. In any case it is with him a cardinal point that the real is not confined within or exhausted by the two attributes of thought and extension which happen to be open to the understanding of men.

This widening of the boundaries repeats itself in the typical opposition between Spinoza's ethical teaching and that of pantheism proper. The pantheism of the Far East, at least, rests on negation, the denial of life and its values. The aim

¹ Nieto's position on this point is curiously like that of Berkeley some years later (see *Principles*, § 150).

² So already Philo (*De Somn.* i, 11, §§ 63-64; *Legum Alleg.* i, 14, § 44). For the interpretation of the phrase see *Guide*, I, lxx.

³ *Ep.* lxxiii.

set before man is to rid himself of this world, to escape from illusion and to find consummation in disappearance. Spinoza's system rests throughout on affirmation. Human values are not denied but set in their place. It is not that nothing human is valuable but that everything else is as well. The result is an optimism which cries aloud for more and more activity, the 'transition from less to greater perfection' which is accompanied by joy. It is an error to suppose that the doctrine of the omnipresence of God stultifies human action. Human action is encouraged and stimulated by the knowledge that it is God's strength which is working within us. The 'immanent causality' of the *Ethics*, whatever else it may involve, is a reaffirmation of the individual essence, and everything alike, by the very fact of its existence, persists in that essence. The joy then which is the accompaniment of activity suffuses the whole of nature; and the motto 'to act well and to rejoice'¹ holds as well of the whole creation as of man.

In this universal affirmation the spirit of the new age finds its oracle. The cramping confines of the medieval world-scheme fade away. The 'attributes' of God whose essence is activity² are infinite, and the 'modes' appearing under the attributes are infinite too. How far soever we may broaden our vision, there are new continents ever spread before us. It is the voice of the new age and of its prophet, but the message is of the ancient wisdom. It is the adoration of the Psalmist: 'How manifold are thy works, O God!'; the challenge from the whirlwind: 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?'; the 'joy' of the pastures and the valleys, the 'clapping of the hands' of the trees of the field; the faith in the time when 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea'. The key-note of

¹ *Eth.* iv, 50 sch.

² 'Tam nobis impossibile est concipere Deum non agere quam Deum non esse' (*Eth.* ii, 3 sch.).

the practical philosophy is the same revulsion against other-worldliness. Life is for life. 'No deity', runs a famous passage,¹ 'nor any one save the envious, is pleased by my want of power or inconvenience, nor counts as virtuous our tears, sobs, fear, and other signs of weakness; on the contrary, the more we enjoy, the more we pass to a greater perfection, that is, the more we necessarily participate in the divine nature.' Or again we have the direct challenge to Augustinian Platonism: 'The free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life.'² Again, it is the very essence of the revolt of the new age, but the thought is far older than Spinoza: 'The heavens are the heavens of the Lord; but *the earth hath he given to the children of men.*' 'He created it not in vain; he formed it *to be inhabited.*' 'Behold, I set before you this day life and good and death and evil . . . and *thou shalt choose life . . . that thou mayest live.*' The 'living God' created in his own image, and his 'glory' is the 'fullness of the whole earth'.³ (Cf. Fig. 74, opp. p. 472.)

IV. Some Later Thinkers

So far we have been dealing with a fairly simple and coherent story. The older Hebraism presents certain definite characteristics which achieve their full implication in the medieval Jewish thinkers. These characteristics so developed form the permanent background of Spinoza's system, which therefore may be considered to be the principal channel of the entry of philosophical Hebraism into the modern world.⁴ From now

¹ *Eth.* iv. 45, 2 sch.

² *Eth.* iv. 67.

³ This joy in universal life, expressed so vividly in the creation hymn of Job xxxviii-ix, is strikingly symbolized in Blake's well-known 'invention'.

⁴ For the later history of Spinozism see Pollock, *Spinoza*, cap. xii; Grunwald, *Spinoza in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1897); Altkirch, *Maledictus*

on our task becomes more complicated. On the one hand we have individual Jewish thinkers, on the other the old tradition of Jewish thought; and it is often as difficult to specify Jewish characteristics in the former as it is impossible exactly to determine the bounds of the influence of the latter. Instead therefore of pretending to offer a complete account either of every modern Jewish thinker or of every ramification in the modern world of old Jewish thought, I propose to conclude the historical side of this survey with a brief note on two well-known men who in themselves combine both interests.

The first, MOSES MENDELSSOHN (1729-1786, Fig. 79, facing p. 502), was too much the popular philosopher of his day to be of especial significance to posterity, and although he holds an important place in the development of the science of aesthetic, his work in metaphysics is by now only the concern of the historian. In one great problem of more general interest, however, his contribution to thought was both permanently valuable and Jewish.

Forced into theological controversy by Lavater, Mendelssohn was compelled to declare publicly his views on religion in general and on Judaism in particular. He defined his position in the course of the original correspondence (1769-1770), his introduction to the German translation by Herz (1782) of Menasseh ben Israel's *Vindication of the Jews* to Cromwell, and finally in his *Jerusalem* (1783).¹ He maintained first, so far as the particular question of Judaism as a religious system is concerned, that it is a religion for the Jew. He proposed therefore to follow his conviction and remain a Jew, only asking from his non-Jewish friends the tolerance which he himself extended

und *Benedictus* (Leipzig, 1924); and various notices and essays in the *Chronicon Spinozanum* (Hague, 1921 ff.) and *Het Spinozabuis* (1900 ff.).

¹ All available to the English reader in the two volumes of the translation of the *Jerusalem* by M. Samuels (1838). A summary account of Mendelssohn's views is to be found in the posthumous *An die Freunde Lessings* (1788), pp. 28 ff.

to them. Secondly, and here he attacked the wider issue, he laid it down that the requirement of religion is not speculative theory but moral practice. 'There is not, amongst all the precepts and tenets of the Mosaic law, a single one which says, "Thou shalt believe this", or "Thou shalt not believe it"; but they all say "Thou shalt do" or "Thou shalt forbear". Faith is not commanded; for that takes no commands.'¹ In this appeal for a uniform standard not of creed but of conduct, Mendelssohn gave expression to what we have seen throughout to be one of the fundamentals of Hebraism. Creeds and theologies may vary in accordance with the varying tempers of peoples (this point was driven home by Mendelssohn's friend Lessing in his *Nathan the Wise*); but 'what *the Lord* requireth of thee' is 'to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God'.² The position³ was so strange to eighteenth-century enlightenment as to arouse the wonder and admiration even of Kant, who, in a congratulatory letter (of 16 August 1783), was moved to express the wish, yet unfulfilled, that the lessons of the *Jerusalem* might be taken to heart by the religions of all the world.

The second of the two Jewish thinkers to whom special

¹ *Jerusalem* (Samuels's translation), vol. ii, p. 106.

² Mic. vi. 8.

³ It is essentially the same as that held by Spinoza. See in particular the important chapter (xiii) of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, in which 'it is shown that Scripture teaches only the most simple things, and intends nothing but obedience; nor teaches anything concerning the divine nature except that which men can imitate by a certain way of living' (again the old Rabbinic notion of imitation of the ethical attributes of God, above, p. 446, n. 3). It is worthy of remark that, according to a well-known anecdote of Colerus, Spinoza's practice was in agreement with his theory: 'It happened one day that his landlady asked him whether he believed she could be saved in the religion she professed. He answered: "Your religion is a good one; you need not look for another, nor doubt that you may be saved in it, provided, whilst you apply yourself to piety, you live at the same time a peaceable and quiet life."'

attention should be directed is the great protagonist of Kantian studies in recent times, HERMANN COHEN (1842-1918). This thinker, the founder of the so-called 'Marburg school', sought to establish a theory on the basis of the Kantian which should yet dispense with the 'twofold root' of the Kantian account. In this he followed the path originally traced by another Jew, SOLOMON MAIMON (1754-1800, Fig. 72), who was the first to point out the dualism inherent in the Critical Philosophy and owes his very high place in the history of modern Idealism¹ to his attempt to rectify it. It is an interesting question whether we are justified in seeing in Maimon's reaction against dualism a new form of the old monotheistic protest.² But whatever may have been the case with Maimon there is no doubt at all about Cohen. He most certainly saw in his own reconstruction of Kant the workings of the monotheistic idea, and spared no pains to show the general affiliations of his thought with that of Biblical monotheism and its philosophical presentation in post-Biblical Jewish thinkers, particularly Maimonides. To link Kant with Maimonides is not so absurd as appears at first sight. The scholastic synthesis lived on till Kant, some would say after Kant, too; and in the making of that synthesis Maimonides, through the Latin version of the *Guide*, took a direct and leading part.³ It is not then a matter for surprise that the material and arrangement of the 'transcendental dialectic' should reflect the structure of the *Guide*; the Kantian 'ideal of reason', the Maimonidean God of whom

¹ See Léon, *Fichte et son Temps* (Paris, 1922), i, pp. 226 ff.

² Maimon, like Mendelssohn and Cohen himself, was a great student of Maimonides. He named himself after him, and wrote a commentary in Hebrew on the *Guide*.

³ See Kaufmann's essay *Der 'Führer' Maimûn's in der Weltliteratur* in Stein's *Archiv* for 1898 (reprinted in his *Ges. Schrift.*, Frankfurt, 1910, vol. ii, pp. 152-189); Guttman's *Der Einfluss der maimonidischen Philosophie auf das christliche Abendland* (Moses ben Maimon, Leipzig, 1908, pp. 134-230); and Gilson's *Le Thomisme*, Paris, 1923.

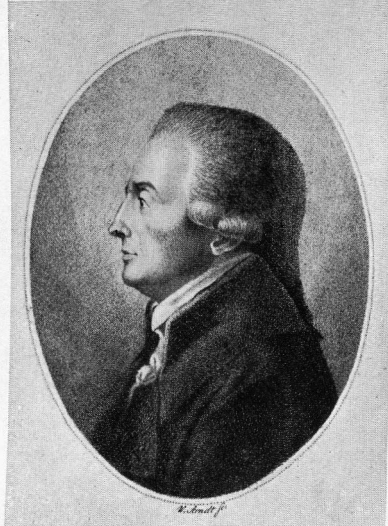


FIG. 72. SOLOMON MAIMON, 1754-1800



FIG. 73. IMMANUEL KANT, 1724-1804

even the attribute of existence is predicated only *per analogiam*; the 'critical' inquiry itself, the discussion by Maimonides of the nature and instruments of knowledge. Whatever one may think, however, of the relation between the logic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and that of philosophical monotheism,¹ it must be agreed that it needs no Philonian ingenuity to see in the Kant of the *Critique of Practical Reason* only a Moses speaking German. The kernel of Kant's doctrine, its ethical orientation, has seemed to many directly reminiscent of the (Hebraizing) Pietist movement in which he was brought up. The thunders from Sinai are only repeated in Kant's majestic formulation of the 'categorical imperative'. The Kantian 'ethical monotheism' (it has wittily been called 'ethical monatheism') which creates God as a pattern for morality, can take as its motto the precept 'Ye shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy'.² The twofold appeal to 'the moral law within' and 'the starry heavens without' recalls the bringing together in the same apostrophe³ of 'the heavens which declare the glory of God' and the 'Torah which restoreth the soul'. Kant's principle of universality is the first implication of a monotheistic code;⁴ and the 'practical maxim' is Hillel's negative interpretation of the command⁵ to love one's neighbour as oneself: 'Do not unto him what thou wouldst not have him do unto thee'. The ceremonial of Judaism exhibits an ethical significance valid for all time and all human societies. The institution of the Sabbath, for example, already singled out by Philo⁶ as a unique contribution to the

¹ The point is taken up by DAVID NEUMARK (1866-1924) in his profoundly acute and suggestive, but unfortunately unfinished work on the History of Jewish Philosophy. See in particular his *Geschichte der jüdischen Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1907, vol. i, Book I, cap. 3; *Toldoth Hapilussophiab Beyisrael* (1921), i, 3; and essays in *Hatekufah* xi and xiv and in various periodicals.

² Lev. xix. 2.

³ Ps. xix.

⁴ Above, p. 434 f.

⁵ Lev. xix. 18, 34.

⁶ *De Vita Mosis* II, 4, § 17.

well-being of society, means the limitation of the hours of labour which lifts the labourer from the sphere of 'things', and restores to him the 'dignity' of a 'person'. The dogmas of Judaism (reduced in a passage of the Talmud¹ to one, the rejection of polytheism, and fundamentally no more than three: the belief in one God, in future 'reward and punishment', and in the coming of the Messianic age) express the essence of the moral life in its threefold aspect of ideal end, permanent striving, and assured attainment. In this stress on the moral life of reason Cohen saw the 'significance of Judaism for the religious progress of mankind',² and it is his great achievement forcibly to have turned men's minds back to the ethical aspect of the God of Israel. In him the struggle against mythology, which is of the essence of Hebraism, found a doughty protagonist over the widest fields of thought, and, the peculiar difficulties of his position both in general philosophy and his interpretation of Judaism³ apart, it is remarkable with what sublimity he

¹ T. B. *Megil.* 13 a; cf. *Midr. Rab. Est.*, § 6.

² The title of a paper read by him before the World Congress of Religions in 1910, reprinted in *Jüd. Schrift.* i, pp. 18 ff. His fullest treatment of the whole subject is in his massive *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (Leipzig, 1919).

³ Kant's thought seems to have exercised a fascination over Jews (one need only recall the work of Marcus Herz and Lazarus Bendavid in its popularization, and Schleiermacher's remark that of every three educated Jews at least one was a Kantian), and Hermann Cohen was only the greatest representative of what may be called the Kantianizing movement in the interpretation of Judaism. The best introduction to this for English readers is Lazarus's *Ethics of Judaism* (English translation by Miss Szold, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1900-1901). [Cohen's onslaught on this work, now reprinted in his *Jüdische Schriften*, iii, pp. 1 ff., deserves to be kept in mind, as it would seem that much of what Cohen has to say against Lazarus is valid against Cohen himself.]

MORITZ LAZARUS (1824-1903) is famous as an introspective psychologist, and as the founder, together with his brother-in-law HEYMANN STEINTHAL (1823-1899), of the science of 'Völkerpsychologie' (racial psychology).

invested the age-worn wisdom of his people and with what subtlety he read its universal significance.

The historical side of our survey must now cease, and that for two reasons. In the first place, the number of contemporary Jewish thinkers is so large as to defy dismissal in a concluding paragraph ; and secondly, in most cases their connexion, either explicit or implicit, with Judaism or Jewish thought is by no means clear. The attempt has been made, for example, to exhibit the philosophy of M. Bergson as a re-emergence of that side of Jewish thought which is represented in its history by Philo, Ibn Gabirol, and the Kabbala ; and Mr. Alexander has been held to show atavistic leanings in his partiality for Spinoza. Again, much has been written about the source of the doctrine of Prof. Freud and other masters in the sphere of modern psychology, and it is certainly notable that the opening of the wider boundaries of the subject as a whole owed so much to men of Jewish origin such as Steinthal, Durkheim, and Münsterberg. In the same way, what is perhaps the most remarkable of modern intellectual movements, the development in mathematical physics, is largely the result of the labours of the Jews Michelson, Minkowski, Einstein, and Weyl, while its philosophical interpretation (as a part of a vast body of other fruitful work in the general history and evaluation of the sciences) is being furthered by the insight of Cassirer, Brunschvicg, and Meyerson. Yet truth is its own witness and its own judge, and it is absurd to discuss it in terms of its discoverers. Like many other pioneers these men are of Israel, but their work is for the whole world.

V. *The significance of Hebraism for modern thought*§ 1. *Hebraism and Ethics*

Leaving history, we may now take a wider survey of the ground. Hebraism in all its manifestations has shown itself essentially concrete. We have already seen how the genius of the prophets actually defined the 'knowing of God' as 'judging the cause of the poor and needy'.¹ In the same way legislator and moralist alike offer, not a theory about the nature of justice, but the practical rule: 'Thou shalt not have divers weights.'² By the side of ancient and modern theosophy or the fifth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, such texts seem banal; yet they contain in sum and in the simplest language lessons for society which the analytic mind never managed to evolve. The same note may be seen in the pictures of the golden age, visualized consistently by the whole Hebraic tradition as being an age for the future, not one which has had its day in the past.³ The contemplative mind looks back; the active, forward. The will for right is not satisfied by the present state of society and seeks to realize (not dream about) better things. Hence, as prophet and philosopher clearly see, the Messianic age is not in another world; it is the improved state of this. Morality is not a matter of abstractions.

This realism may be taken as a second and cognate note of Hebraism. It accepts the facts and, after its first great flight, does not indulge in the transcendental. 'It is not in Heaven.'⁴ In religion it has always laid stress on the discipline of 'works' in the everyday grind of matter-of-fact existence. In ethics it

¹ Above, p. 435. Cf. Spinoza in *Theol.-Pol.*, xiii, § 21.

² Deut. xxv. 13-15; Prov. xx. 10.

³ It is perhaps worth remarking that in the Hebrew Bible the 'Garden of Eden' of the early chapters of Genesis only reappears in a few obscure passages. In any case the conception never coloured later thought.

⁴ Deut. xxx. 12.

gives us practical codes—the Pentateuch; the Talmud (it is a great loss to Europe that this complete system of civil and criminal legislation is not better known); Maimonides' digest of Rabbinic law; the hard sense of Spinoza's work on politics, with its endeavour 'not to laugh or to weep at human actions, but to understand them' in the light of the 'common nature and condition of men'.¹

To the notes of concreteness and realism we may add that of objectivity.² The message is given under the formula: 'Thus saith the Lord'; and the Lord of all, as the Psalmist reminds us,³ just because He is Lord of all, takes no bribes. He is, in the better sense of a much misused word, impersonal, and man is expected to be the same. The demands of justice are absolute. Geiger⁴ asked whether any other book of laws had achieved the moral sublimity of the precept 'not to favour a *poor* man in his cause'. Yet from the point of view of practical conduct it is not so fruitful as the repeated warning attached to 'all matters

¹ *Tract. Pol.*, i, §§ 4, 7. It is noteworthy that the very latest effort in constitution-making comes from the Jew Hugo Preuss.

² See the remarkable essay *Judaism and the Gospels* of Achad Ha-Am (*Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, translated by Leon Simon, London, 1922).

'ACHAD HA-AM' ('One of the people') = ASHER GINZBERG (1856-1927), the greatest modern Hebrew-writing Jewish thinker, exemplifies the practical tendencies of the Jewish mind in his contact with the social philosophy of Mill and the psychology of Tarde. In him, as in other Jewish thinkers, the note of ethical idealism is dominant, and though his concern is primarily with the specific problems of his own people, he has sought for their solution in the light of premisses which are of the widest applicability. In particular his re-statement of the prophetic synthesis between nationalism and ethical universalism deserves to rank as a permanent contribution to modern thought (see his *Selected Essays*, translated by Mr. Simon, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1912, and the translator's *Studies in Jewish Nationalism*, London, 1920).

³ Ps. l. 9-12.

⁴ *Judaism and its History* (English version by Newburgh, Bloch Publishing Co.), 1911, p. 37. The reference is to Exod. xxiii. 3 (= Lev. xix. 15), already remarked on by Philo (*De Spec. Leg.*, iv, § 72 = *De Judice*, 5).

given over to the heart' (that is, the individual conscience)¹: 'but thou shalt fear thy God'.² God is omnipresent and ever-present, and, omniscient witness, is sole judge. We may well contrast the ethical consequences of polytheism expressed, in however satirical a manner, in the verses of Euripides:

'Twas the will
Of Cypris that these evil things should be,
Sating her wrath. And this immutably
Hath Zeus ordained in Heaven: *no god may thwart
A god's fixed will*; we grieve but stand apart.
Else, but for fear of the great father's blame,
Never had I to such extreme of shame
Bowed me, be sure, as here to stand and see
Slain him I loved best of mortality.³

Thus the polytheism of Hellas, tried in the acid test of human conduct, stands in persistent contrast to the monotheism of Israel. It remains fixed in pluralism. This is shown strikingly in its great positive contribution of art, for art is essentially individualistic.⁴ Contemplative in essence, its interest lay not in conduct but in speculation; hence the legacy it left to the religion of Europe, the belief in the saving power of *opinion*.⁵ Hebraism has chosen consistently a different standard. The Hebrew Bible, as we have seen, demands not thinking but doing, not creed but a moral way of life. In the medieval period again, one of the few storms in the history of

¹ The idea of conscience only entered Hellenic thought with the Jew Philo. For this 'solemn moment in the history of European ideas' see Bréhier, *Idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (ed. 2, Paris, 1925), p. 296 f.

² Lev. xix. 14, &c., with Rabbinic comments.

³ *Hippolytus*, 1325 ff. (Murray's translation). The same criticism of polytheistic ethics is found in Plato, e.g. the *Euthyphro*.

⁴ Cf. Collingwood, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (Oxford, 1925), p. 23 f.

⁵ See Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*. As he well remarks (ed. 6, p. 138), it has proved a *damnosa hereditas*.

Jewish theology was roused by the attempt to confine Judaism within the bounds of a number of theoretic dogmas.¹ The point is significant in view of its analogue in the avowed philosophers. Spinoza² refused to sunder intellect and will, therein, as often, generalizing from his Jewish predecessors' doctrine of God. Maimonides reacts with amazing vigour against the Platonic doctrine that 'God first contemplated the ideas and then created the world'.³ Ibn Gabirol, the medieval thinker who rose so far above his age and environment as to be able to be mistaken for a Christian Moor (his work is completely free from any references to authorities, apart from a few mentions of Plato and 'the wise'), yet betrays the native bent of his mind when he insists that knowledge must be accompanied by action before the mind can be 'freed from the captivity of nature',⁴ and deviates most profoundly from his Neoplatonic sources in his peculiar stress on the divine will. Even Philo knows that the 'words' of God are 'not merely words but deeds'.⁵ Thought and action in all these great Jewish thinkers of the past (as in so many others of the present, as well as in Judaism as a religious system) are indissolubly connected. Consciously or unconsciously, it is the ultimate protest of Hebraic stress on conduct against Hellenic stress on opinion, *orthopraxy* against *orthodoxy*.

In the light of what has been said, the living interest of Hebraism in social problems is readily explained. Renan may have been over-emphatic in treating the prophets solely as sublime forerunners of Saint-Simon; but a great part of their burden was undoubtedly a protest against practical wrong, 'the

¹ Above, p. 452, note 3, end.

² *Eth.* ii. 49, with corollary and appendix; and constantly.

³ *Guide*, II, vi.

⁴ *Auencebrolis Fons Vitae* (Münster, 1895), p. 4, ll. 27 ff. For the Hebraic points in Ibn Gabirol's system see now Prof. J. Klausner's Introduction to the new Hebrew translation (Jerusalem, 1926).

⁵ οὐ ῥήματα ἀλλὰ ἔργα (*De Dec.* II, § 47).

joining of house to house and of field to field', 'the grinding of the face of the poor'. The same spirit lies behind the part played by individual Jews in more modern movements towards the embodying of justice in human institutions. So far as special theories of economics and politics are concerned, whether of the Left or of the Right, Hebraism has of course nothing to say, and as a matter of fact individual Jews are to be found on either side of most causes. Yet the determination not to abandon Justice to the realm of the abstract is independent of the machinery suggested for its establishment, and in so far as any movement sets before itself the task of bringing the good things of life within the reach of the masses it is carrying on the work of the prophets. This side of Hebraism, the passion for Justice in the concrete, far from being dead, is one of the living influences of our time. Indeed, some have thought that it is not living enough. 'It is one of the curiosities of our civilization', remarks Dr. Moulton,¹ 'that we are content to go for our liberal education to literatures which, morally, are at an opposite pole from ourselves: literatures in which the most exalted tone is often an apotheosis of the sensuous, which degrade divinity, not only to the human level, but to the lowest level of humanity. . . . It is surely good that our youth, during the formative period, should have displayed to them, in a literary dress as brilliant as that of Greek literature—in lyrics which Pindar cannot surpass, in rhetoric as forcible as that of Demosthenes, or contemplative prose not inferior to Plato's—a people dominated by an utter passion for righteousness, a people whom ideas of purity, of infinite good, of universal order, of faith in the irresistible downfall of all moral evil, moved to a poetic passion as fervid, and speech as musical, as when Sappho sang of love or Aeschylus thundered his deep notes of destiny.'

¹ *Literary Study of the Bible*, ed. 2, Pref., pp. xii-xiii.

§ 2. *Hebraism and Science*

The place of Hebraism in ethics is generally acknowledged. It remains to consider its significance for science. The point to be noted is not only that that significance exists,¹ but that it is of precisely the same order, and arises from precisely the same source, as in ethics. Monotheism means not only the positive search for unity but also, negatively, the refusal to set man in the throne of God. Hence, as we have seen, its concreteness, its realism, its objectivity. Now the spirit of science is definable in terms of these very characteristics, and it is the great function of the second movement of Jewish thought, the movement of medieval Hebraism, explicitly to have deduced them in the study of nature from the monotheistic principle. We have seen that herein lies its principal importance for the modern world, since that part at least of its doctrine lives again in the thinker who has been called the 'philosopher of men of science'—Spinoza. Attention must now be drawn to the fact that the same spirit reappears, consciously or unconsciously, in the most recent work of thinkers of Jewish origin.

The theory of relativity, for example, which is in considerable part the work of Jews, is, according to the best of its interpreters,² and in spite of its unfortunate and misleading name, an attempt to get beyond the limited point of view of the individual observer, and hence is only a further step towards the depersonalization of our fundamental ideas which is the aim of all scientific thought. As such, however, it is clearly akin also to what we have seen to be so integral a part of the Hebraic tradition in metaphysics.³ The affirmation that 'God's thoughts

¹ Above, pp. 436, 438 f.

² Russell, *The A B C of Relativity* (1925), caps. ii and xv; Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (1926), p. 167 f.

³ It appears prominently in Mr. Alexander's philosophy, which itself has been declared, although not by way of compliment, to be a 'philosophy

are not ours' ¹ throws emphasis not on human error but on God's truth. An ultimate standard is thus set up, equally valid from every and any point of view; or rather the standard set up is of such a character that before it individual points of view disappear. In the theory of relativity this anti-anthropomorphic tendency seems to have found its mathematical expression, and in it we have an important contribution to the store of modern thought not only coming from Jews but also unconsciously reflecting the familiar characteristics of the older Hebraism.

To take another example, it is remarkable that the three determined efforts of modern times to set the human intellect 'in its place' come from Bergson, Alexander, and Freud. Again, whether explicitly or implicitly, this effort is clearly linked with the Hebraic revulsion against anthropomorphism. Human thought is only one element in the universe. 'Minds', in Mr. Alexander's phrase, ² 'are but the most gifted members known to us in a democracy of things.' It is the essence of Hebraism to *widen* the boundaries. In the vastness of creation we dare not claim for any one thing precedence over any other.

The significance of this point of view appears forcibly in the treatment offered by many Jewish thinkers, classical as well as modern, of one of the ultimate problems, that of the relationship between ethics and metaphysics. It is often proposed to elevate the requirements of the kingdom of human ends into a legislation controlling the cosmos, and thus to interpret the universe as a whole in the light of the moral ideals of humankind. Whence these ideals arose is a question upon which varying opinions have been held. But, except in the interests

for science' (*Proc. Arist. Soc.*, 1924-1925, pp. 59-60). 'It is not our human conceptions of things which metaphysics seeks to exhibit,' he remarks (*Space, Time and Deity*, i, p. 196), 'but the constitution of the world itself.'

¹ Isa. lv. 8.

² *Op. cit.*, i, p. 6.

of a special theory, it is difficult to maintain that man, or 'spirits' akin to him, comprise the whole of reality. It is hence an exaggeration of man's importance to look for the interpretation of reality solely in his aspirations. In the same way Hebraism has always looked with suspicion on any doctrine of 'final causes'. We cannot offer reasons *why* things are what they are. We can only, with all care and humility, note the fact of their existence and classify them as best we can. 'God made everything for its own end.'¹ Each thing merits scrutiny for its own sake, not with reference to the needs or imaginings of humankind.

VII. *Summary and Prospect*

Looking back on the ground so roughly surveyed and remembering the points which seem to be common to the whole, we may perhaps single out two primary tendencies which would appear to be fundamental. These are the sense for unity and the stress on the concrete. From the former comes the ethical doctrine of the unity of mankind and the scientific doctrine of the unity of nature; from the latter the determination not to suffer these doctrines to remain merely theoretic, but to work them out in the framing of ways of life for human societies and methods of investigation for natural facts. Whether or no we have herein traces of a 'national' ethos, is a question which will always arouse interest and controversy. It is curious, however, that, quite unwittingly, no doubt, some of the work of the most modern Jewish thinkers should recall peculiarities of the ancient Hebraic outlook, and that the message should often be voiced with an intensity reminiscent of the prophets

¹ Prov. xvi. 4, used pretty much in this sense, although in the alternative version, by Maimonides in *Guide*, III, xiii. The suggestion of empiricism is all the more remarkable in view of his clear realization of the nature and status of scientific hypothesis (II, xi; followed by Spinoza in *D. I. E.* § 57, n. 2, and *Ep.* ix).

of old. As has been well said of M. Bergson,¹ and as we saw earlier to be particularly true of Spinoza, they provide us 'not only with a theory but with a vision'.

Yet the debt of the world to Jewish thought is not exhausted by the contributions of the professed philosophers. A wider factor must be taken into account. Whatever idea of the spiritual has reached the masses of the European peoples is due to the Jewish view of the character of supreme reality. In the light of this achievement all else pales.

One last remark. It must be emphasized that we have been dealing throughout neither with one determinate system nor with one definite 'school' of thought.² However persistent mental tendencies may be, the matter and manner of their application are infinitely various. There have been, and still are, Jewish philosophers, men whose whole being is consumed with a passion to understand; but the link which binds them together is not one philosophical belief, but a belief in the value of philosophy. They are men of the spirit, but the spirit bloweth where it listeth. 'It is not a system but a habit of mind.' Jewish thinkers may yet create a fresh synthesis which is beyond and distinct from the old. Or, if we prefer to speak in more doubtful terms, the Jewish mind may well open up new paths. In any case, the future must be safeguarded from crippling preconceptions. The belief in unity is the supreme liberating influence, and a liberating influence must be left free.

LEON ROTH.

¹ *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, 1925-1926, p. 298.

² There is a certain continuity among the Hebrew-writing philosophers, of whom every age, including our own, has had a goodly number. But a discussion of their work is precluded by the limits of our subject.

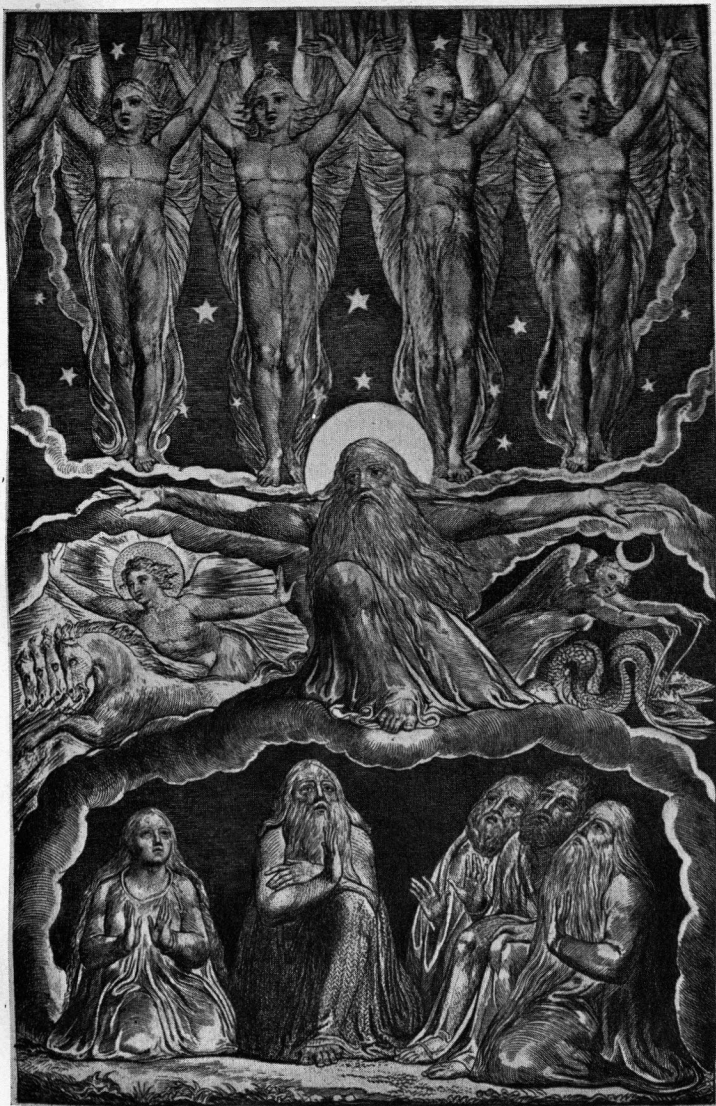


FIG. 74. FROM BLAKE'S *JOB* (1825)

‘When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God
shouted for joy’

For description see p. xxxi and p. 457



PALIMPSEST OF AQUILA'S GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Description of this plate will be found on pp. xi-xii



The Legacy of ISRAEL

Essays by SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, EDWYN BEVAN
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