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A New Sensitivity in Judaism and the Christian Message
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Source: *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Apr., 1968), pp. 107-127
Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Harvard Divinity School
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1509273
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HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW 61 (1968), 107–127

A NEW SENSITIVITY IN JUDAISM AND THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

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TO GERSHOM SCHOLEM

THE Judeo-Christian dialogue — be it conducted in the fashion of ordinary human contact or within the discipline of strict scholarly procedure — suffers often from a disturbing pattern: the two partners not only emphasize the elements and features common to both of them, but find themselves confronted in polarity. This emphasis of polarity may prove convenient for the colloquists. Each can assume a polite vantage ground overlooking the position of the opposite religion, yet feel quite content in the assured knowledge of one's own religion because it now bears none of the qualities which distinguish the polar opposite.

The effect of such a polar confrontation concerning Judaism and Christianity gives the impression that we are dealing here with a philosophic-theological clarification of opposite possibilities of the human spirit, which, in turn, seems to proclaim a profound, universal truth. I call into question, however, if this method can obtain validity, even when we decline to proceed merely along positivist-historical approaches.

Polarization as a method of clarification must lead to oversimplification, and this criticism certainly applies to elucidations concerning the complex relationship between Judaism and Christianity. The very fact that Christianity emerged from Judaism challenges such polarization. Since we have made it our task to confront the two religions and their aspects, I deem it preferable to discuss a problem central to both religions. This method of juxtaposition recommends itself for two reasons. It is apt to demonstrate how we ought to proceed in warranted comparison of the two. Secondly, we contend that such a comparison is meaningful only if we employ serene scrutiny in taking stock of the advantages and disadvantages concerning the problem in point within the context of either religion. Such a method obtains only

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if we prove capable of rising above the vantage ground of our own particular religion.

At his theophany to Israel, God revealed himself as the unique and just divinity. From this aspect, the revelation constitutes a revolution, the direct divine breakthrough to establish evident contact with the world. The message of justice is a central part of this phenomenon. Although it is true that, e.g., Zeus, as presented to us by Hesiod and Aeschylus, brought concepts of justice into the world when he took power, yet the God of Israel initiated a new era with his iconoclastic exclusiveness and his uncompromising moral will. Israel's religion introduced a new concept of justice, a novel law and an original social order conceived in this justice. This postulate of individual and social justice was not to be limited to Israel only. The creator of the universe postulates this justice of all his human creatures; it was incumbent on all peoples of the world.

The concept of justice which emerges from the Old Testament is not the just regimen of mighty men. It stresses that God cares for the poor and unprotected, for the orphan, the widow and the stranger. The basis of social justice was not to be external power and might, but the awe of God who postulates. We could say that this religion of the Old Testament is a plebeian religion.

Even with this restriction, the Jewish religion is and remains a moral religion, in which the principle of justice is indispensable. It is for this reason that the dichotomy of humanity into the just and the sinners assumes such major importance. The challenge of theodicy is recognized as a problem by Judaism. Not only is it so recognized in the book of Job and by the prophets; also later on it preoccupied the minds, as we learn from the "three sects" during the Second Commonwealth. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes differed, as is well known, on the ways of bringing into concord the ideas of divine goodness with divine providence or even predestination.[1] However, the usual formulation of theodicy bears this coinage: how come that we see at times the just suffering and the sinners successful?

In Christianity also the terms "just" and "sinner" rate sig-

[1] See D. Flusser, Pharisees and Stoa According to Josephus, in *Iyun* [Jerusalem] 14 (1964), 318–29 [Hebrew].

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nificantly, and the idea of attending compensation has not been eliminated. However, in the structure of Judaism this idea is located at the core: the concept that the just are rewarded and the sinners are meted out their desert constitutes the testimonial to its veracity. How else would divine justice manifestly rule in the world?

The latter-day Judaism as well as Christianity did not evolve from the religion of Israel in the Old Testament, but from the Jewish religiosity that flourished during the intertestamental period. This type of religiosity is no longer identical with the creed reflected in the Old Testament. The investigation of this new type of religiosity can lead us to warranted conclusions only if we pay due attention to the diverse trends and movements within the Judaism of the Second Commonwealth. By encompassing all these data we shall realize that in spite of all the respective shades of difference among the groups and sects, we can, on the one hand, formulate ideas and attitudes, trends and approaches common to them all which, on the other hand, distinguish them all clearly from the world of thought and belief that prevails in the Old Testament.

We cannot deal here with the entire complex of structural changes which the Judaism of the Second Commonwealth underwent. Nor shall we deem it our task now to attempt a historical exposition of this development, or to present chronological pegs for its various phases. We shall confine ourselves to only those points of clarification which bear directly on our topic.

We shall start our investigation with the logion of Antigonos of Sokho,[2] who flourished in the second century B.C.E., prior to the Maccabean uprising:

> Be not like servants
> who serve the master for condition of receiving a reward,
> but be like servants
> who serve the master not on condition of receiving a reward.

I contend that these words would have been rather incomprehensible to any one of the sons of Israel during the Davidic reign. Is there a compensation for good works, or is there none? If

[2] *Aboth* I. 3.

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there is divine compensation and retribution, and I know there is, how can I act and serve as if the just will not be rewarded by God?

However, even in the days of Antigonos of Sokho, this subtle dialectical introversion of the old simple idea of compensation was apparently not conceivable to many of his own generation or even contemporary students of the academy. It would probably have been considered a dangerous proposition, as we can see from information imparted to us in a legendary report,[3] according to which Antigonos had two disciples, Zadok and Boethos. These two had disciples to whom this doctrine was passed on, and so to the next generation of their disciples, who, in turn, asked themselves: "What did the former generations mean by this? Is it possible that a laborer would toil all day long and not receive his due recompense at the end of the day? Had the former generations been convinced that there is reward in a world-to-come, they would not have taught this way." Apparently there is no reward to be granted in the future world — and thus emerged the sects following Zadok (the Sadducees) and Boethos.

This legendary report indicates, at any event, that the factual modification of the compensatory idea, as reflected in the logion of Antigonos of Sokho, was not taken at face value. Yet we have to bear in mind that this logion is but *one* expression of a new, profound sensitivity that developed within Judaism, which later on was so much taken for granted that it became a second nature, a sensitivity that, in turn, Christianity took over from contemporary Judaism.

Tradition hands down this logion of Antigonos with the conclusion: "And let the fear (or awe) of Heaven be upon you!" In the days of Antigonos, the awe of God was synonymous with the love of God. This equation can be traced to the doctrines of Deuteronomy, and can be followed up through Ben Sira — who also lived prior to the Maccabean uprising and who writes interchangeably and indiscriminately about the love and the awe of God — up to Rabbi Meir of the second century C.E. However, already in the days of the Second Temple there were rabbis who

[3] *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, ed. S. SCHECHTER (New York, 1945), 26.

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differentiated; the Talmud[4] lists seven types of Pharisees: the two positive types are the Pharisee of awe (like Job) and the Pharisee of love (like Abraham). The latter typology is the more remarkable when we bear in mind the very significant passage during the "Binding of Isaac," in which Abraham is told (Gen. 22:12): "Now I do know that you are God-fearing."

If we now take into consideration the many references in rabbinic literature that compare the awe and the love of God as superior modes of worship,[5] and find that in the majority of these passages love is rated superior to awe in the service of God, then we must arrive at the following conclusion: the problematic conflict arose at some unknown juncture when an oppositional fraction among the Pharisees brought the charge against the veteran group that they were serving God, motivated merely by dread of punishment and retribution but failing to be devoted to him in unconditional love. This superior rating of love over awe prevailed and took hold upon all Jewish groups. The date of the oppositional fraction was approximately contemporary with the first controversies within the school of Hillel, more than a century after Antigonos. This novel discrimination and differentiation between love and awe, with preference for the former, finds its reflection in the early prayer texts, which contain a plea for divine assistance in serving him in awe, to which now "love" was specifically added and even put first.

In our investigation of the new religious sensitivity within the Judaism of the Second Commonwealth, the conflict between the oppositional fraction among the Pharisees, the love-Pharisees, and the veteran Pharisees who allegedly confined themselves to the compensatory idea, is of relevant importance. The new emphasis on love for love's own sake, irrespective of any compensation, would indicate a relaxation of the compensatory doctrine and perhaps render circumstantial evidence for a growing discontent and uneasiness over the black- and-white presentation of good and evil in the doctrines of the Old Testament. This was the new Jewish sensitivity concerning divine justice as manifested in the world.

[4] JBer. IX. 14b.
[5] See A. BÜCHLER, *Studies in Sin and Atonement* (London, 1928), 122–30.

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We have pointed out already that Ecclesiasticus did not discriminate between serving God in love or in awe. The same lack of discrimination applies to the book of Jubilees. There (ch. 36) Isaac is reported to have addressed his sons Jacob and Esau before his death:

And love one another, my sons, your brothers
even as a man who loves his own soul (himself),
and let each seek in what he may benefit his brother . . .
And I shall make you swear a great oath —
for there is no oath which is greater than it
by the glorious, honoured, great, splendid, wonderful and mighty
name of him who created heavens and earth and all therein —,
— that ye will fear him and worship (serve) him,
and that each will love his brother
with affection and righteousness (justice) . . .

Thus the book of Jubilees is the earliest document for the juxtaposition in Midrash fashion of two Torah commandments which start with the word *We'ahavta*, "you shall love": i.e., you shall love him, your God (Deut. 6:5); and you shall love your neighbor (or fellow man — Lev. 19:18). Since in the provenance of the book of Jubilees no discrimination was made with regard to serving God in awe or in love, the author of this testament of Isaac referred instead to the commandment of loving God (Deut. 6:5) to another, in his eyes synonymous commandment: you shall fear him, your God, serve him and swear by his name (Deut. 6:13).

Although the author in the book of Jubilees has equated or substituted the love to God by awe, he still is the first known proponent of juxtaposing the commandments of divine and altruistic love, the "great commandments" that were preached by Jesus. We have already pointed to the importance for certain Pharisaic circles of unconditional love in serving God, independent of any compensatory calculations; we shall attempt to demonstrate (see below) that altruistic, social love achieved the highest value index by being considered the very essence of Judaism during the days of the Second Temple.[6]

We can readily notice from New Testament passages (Mk.

[6] See, e.g., W. BACHER, *Die Aggada der Tannaiten*, I (Strassburg, 1903), 4f.

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12:28–34 and Lk. 10:25–28) that there was no controversy between Jesus and the rabbis concerning the dual commandment of love, divine and altruistic. Hence we deem it incidental that although this dual commandment is found in contemporary extra-rabbinical Jewish sources,[7] it is wanting in the rabbinic sources that have been preserved.

Just as it was remarkable that certain circles among the Pharisees should elevate loving God above the awe due him, so it was remarkable that during that era of the Second Commonwealth the commandment "Love your fellowman as yourself" should have been singled out of the Pentateuch to serve as matrix and foundation of the entire Mosaic law, particularly when we bear in mind that at that time the complex edifice of directive and restrictive commandments was successfully erected. Even if we should want to disregard these problems, we still would have to contend with a situation in which the biblical commandment of altruistic love could obtain comprehensive and fundamental meaning only if we are ready to view their interpretation of the gallant morality of Old Testament justice in the light of "love." This, in turn, is in itself an exceedingly important symptom of the new religious sensitivity of contemporary Judaism.

Much has been written about this commandment of altruistic love, and much material has been collected to bring evidence of rabbinic humanism; here we confine ourselves to the historical understanding of this concept. We see our task as one where we evaluate the situation in the light of the Old Testament and of nascent Christianity, and where we must explicate the structural pattern of divine justice as comprehended by the Jews.

In the book of Jubilees Isaac puts his twin sons Esau and Jacob under "the great oath" to swear in the glorious divine name that they fear God and love each other. This is predicated upon a verse in the Pentateuch to which Isaac is apparently alluding (Deut. 6:13): "You shall *fear him*, your God/and serve him/and *swear by his name*." On the other hand, the author of this testament of Isaac was evidently familiar with the concept that the

[7] In the "Two Ways" in the *Didache*, *Test. Dan* 5:3, *Test. Iss.* 5:2, 7:6, cf. *Test. Zeb.* 5:1. See also F. M. Braun, Les Testaments des XII Patriarches, *Revue Biblique* 67 (1960), 531–33.

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commandment of altruistic love was enforced by a divine oath (Lev. 19:18): "You shall love your fellow man as yourself — I — the Lord!" The words "I — the Lord" were understood to mean that God promulgated this law with the seal and oath of his divine name. This tradition has been transmitted by R. Shimeon ben Elazar (second century C.E.). "This word 'Love your fellow man as yourself' has been proclaimed with a 'great oath': I — the Lord, have created him (your fellow man). If you love him, I can be relied upon to reward you, but if you do not love him — I can be relied upon to visit my judgment on you." [8]

This concept (together with two other references to be cited below) is also significant for introverting the compensatory idea by connecting it with altruistic love. Expected compensation now is not inducive to awe of God, but to the love of fellow men. If you love him, you may rely on divine reward, but if you fail to do so, you will be certain of punishment. Similar teaching is reported of Jesus (Lk. 6:37–38): Judge not — and you will not be judged yourselves./Condemn not — and you will not be condemned./Pardon — and you will be pardoned yourselves/Give — and you will have ample measure given you: they pour into your lap measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over/ For the measure you drag out to others — will be dealt back to yourselves." This logion of Jesus may well be considered to illustrate and reflect the contemporary Jewish concept. The first part of the logion calls to our mind what Hillel used to say: "Judge not your fellow man until you yourself come in his place!" [9]

Let us return to Shimeon ben Elazar's interpretation that this commandment was proclaimed under divine oath of compensation and retribution. This is actually a transformation of a dictum of R. Ḥanina, the deputy of the priests: "The word (Love your fellow man as yourself), on which the entire world is depending, was proclaimed on Mount Sinai with an oath: If (you) dislike your fellow man whose deeds are evil as your own, I, your God, shall visit judgment upon him who dislikes; and if you love him

[8] *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, 64.
[9] *Aboth* II. 5.

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since his deeds are as right as your deeds, I can be relied upon to bestow my mercy upon you for loving my creatures." [10]

This deputy of the priests, Ḥanina (apparently an important Pharisee of the first century C.E., who was appointed to control the Sadducee high-priest), interprets the commandment (on which the whole world is depending) "Love your fellow man — like yourself" as being determined by your right and wrong deeds in solidarity with him; "like yourself" is taken to mean: he — the fellow man — is one like you.

This exegesis of the biblical passage is older yet than the last generation of the Second Temple, for it can be found already in Ben Sira (27:30 – 28:7):

> Wrath and anger, these also are abominations
> And a sinful man clingeth to them.
> He that taketh vengeance shall find vengeance from
> the Lord,
> And his sins (God) will surely keep (in memory).
> Forgive thy neighbour the injury (done to thee)
> And then, when thou prayest, the sins will be forgiven.
> Man cherisheth anger against another;
> And doth he seek healing from God?
> On a man like himself he hath no mercy;
> And doth he make supplication for his own sins?
> He, being flesh, nourisheth wrath;
> Who will make atonement for his own sins?
> Remember thy last end, and cease from enmity;
> (Remember) corruption and death, and abide in the
> commandments.
> Remember the commandments and be not wroth with
> thy neighbour;
> And (remember) the covenant of the Most High and
> overlook ignorance.

In this passage, which dates back to about 180 B.C.E., the motivating ideas which we have discussed earlier reappear. The doctrine of compensation teaches that if you are mean or callous to your fellow man, you cannot expect God to love you, for "he that taketh revenge, shall find vengeance from God" — measure for measure.

[10] *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, 53 (second version).

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This passage in Ben Sira alludes to the biblical commandment of altruistic love, in the light of R. Ḥanina's interpretation: your fellow man is someone just like yourself! This interpretation, which relates the Hebrew comparative pronoun *kamokha* to the subject rather than to the predicate — "your fellow man who is like yourself," instead of "love him like you love yourself" — is sound and legitimate exegesis that can be corroborated by a number of biblical texts, as Wessely has shown in his commentary on Mendelssohn's translation (with a personal objection to it by the translator). Two recent Jewish philosophers, Herman Cohen [11] and Martin Buber,[12] take this interpretation even as the original intent of this biblical verse. I see in this equation of subject and object — he is like yourself — an ingenious and brilliant heuristic boon for the new religious sensitivity of Judaism at that period of the Second Commonwealth. I deem it important to point out that in this passage of Ben Sira the equality of men (within this context of altruistic love) is demonstrated by reference to our being "flesh and blood (27:31)" and thus we all have our weaknesses and "incline towards evil." Hence it would be absurd to "nourish wrath" and bear a grudge against a fellow man who fails, since he too is only "flesh and blood," which makes us aware of our solidarity with all men.[13]

Besides this egalitarian interpretation "for your fellow man is someone like yourself," there was also prevalent during that era another understanding of this verse Lev. 19:18, which bears indirectly but relevantly on our present investigation. It reveals again this novel religious sensitivity of the age. Enquiring about a pithy summary of Judaism, a prospective proselyte was told by Hillel: "Whatever is hateful to you, do it not unto your fellow. This is the essence of the Torah, the rest being just its corollary; now go and study that!" (b. Shab. 31a).

[11] *Der Nächste* (Berlin, Schocken, 1935), 17. Cohen did not want to decide the philological implications.

[12] See now Hans Kosmala, Martin Buber, *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 4 (1965), 13–17. I learned from a personal talk with Buber that he also was aware of the passage from Ben Sira.

[13] See also Sir. 18:13a, although the author treats the problem from another aspect. To the text see R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt* (Berlin, 1906), 165.

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Bacher [14] sees correctly in this negative promulgation the biblical commandment: Love your fellow man as (you love) yourself, stressing the comparative pronoun *kamokha* as a regulative modifier of the predicate: love him in the mode and measure that you love yourself, which, then, in its negative or restrictive formula is known as the Golden Rule: Do not unto others, what you would not have done unto yourself. R. Akiba and, before him, Jesus call this directive for altruistic love the "essential" or "great commandment" (*kelal gadol*) principle of the Torah. [15]

Yet it seems remarkable that Jews of this age should interchangeably cite the great commandment of altruistic love as a direct exhortation as well as in the restrictive (negative) formulation of the Golden Rule, with a preference and prevalence in Jewish literature for the latter coinage. We may find the solution in the vernacular Aramaic paraphrase of the targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel (a disciple of Hillel, or at least of this provenance) on Lev. 19:18: "Love (be kind to) your fellow man: what you dislike, do it not unto him." The syntactical structure of this passage has been rendered in this vernacular by the verbatim translation of the imperative predicate and the indirect object, whereas the comparative pronoun *kamokha* has been paraphrased in a negative version: do not relate yourself to him with dislike, for you would not want him to treat you with dislike. This paraphrasing

[14] See above, note 6.

[15] According to Mt. 7:12, also Jesus says about the Golden Rule (in its positive form) that "this is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets." The love toward God is the greatest and chief command (i.e., principle), and "there is a second like it," the love toward the neighbor; "the whole Law and the Prophets hang upon these two commands" (Mt. 22:36–40). James (2:8) names the precept of mutual love "the royal law laid down by scripture," and Paul (Rom. 13:9) says, "You must not commit adultery, you must not kill, you must not steal, you must not covet — these and any other command are summed up in a single word, you must love your neighbor as yourself" (see also Gal. 5:14). In the Jewish "Two Ways" the biblical precept of mutual love is followed by the Golden Rule in its negative form (*Didache* 1:2). This negative form of the Golden Rule closes also the Apostolic Decree according to the Western text (Acts 15:20, 29). Thus it seems that the Golden Rule was the summary of the Law not only for the Jews but also for pious Gentiles. The Golden Rule in its negative form occurs also in the description of Christian life in ARISTIDES's *Apology* (15.4f.) The whole passage is very similar to the Apostolic Decree and, on the other side, to a passage from PLINY's famous epistle (and see also Mt. 19:18–19) about Christians. See further A. DIHLE, *Die goldene Regel. Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgärethik* (Göttingen, 1962). The negative form dominates in early Christian usage; see *ibid.*, 107.

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stresses the comparative pronoun as a restrictive modifier of the predicate, over and against the egalitarian stress of this modifier.[16]

Thus we find the concept of loving our fellow man for better or worse, with his only too human frailties, which we all share, since none of us is perfect, as well as the concept of loving our fellow man with the same interest at heart that we reserve for ourselves, and that whatever we are averse to, we should avoid doing to him. Both these concepts belong to the emerging religious sensitivity of the Second Commonwealth. The typological classification of humanity into the righteous and the sinners lingers on as an often repeated shopworn stereotype. In the egalitarian solidarity of the evolving sensitivity it would no longer be gainsaid that there are no perfect righteous and no completely wicked men — for in every human heart the noble and the base impulse are vying with each other.

The pessimistic doctrine of human nature is not only attested in the Thanksgiving Scroll of Essene provenance, but even the author of IV Ezra, who was close to the Pharisee circle of scribes, laments (3:19f.): "Thou didst bow down, . . . To give Law to Jacob's seed, and Commandment to the generation of Israel. Yet thou didst not remove the Evil from their heart that thy law might bring forth fruit in them."

If this is the spiritual tenor of the age, then it follows quite naturally that the awareness of one's own instability and one's own endeavour to combat the evil impulses evokes sympathy and solidarity with those who yielded to temptation and sin. Such insights into one's own complexity begets an evaluation of virtue and vice quite different from the robust black-and-white presentation of the Old Testament. This psychological sophistication and subtle differentiation leads to a refined sensitivity, which at times even appears paradoxical in the "Pharisee" tradition. A Christian will readily appreciate this Jewish anxiety over the ever-looming danger of sin from such tension in his own tradition. Thus we can understand why, for instance, the Jew from this age on, in contradistinction to the psalms of the Old Testament, does

[16] A proof for our assumption, that the Hebrew *kamocha* in Lev. 19:18 was understood as meaning the Golden Rule in its negative form, can be found in the Targum Jonathan of Lev. 19:34, where the Hebrew *kamocha* is explained in the same way.

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not refer in his prayers to the self-righteous distance between himself and "the wicked." Indeed, the prayers of this spiritual climate bear out that it was inconceivable to present oneself to God as meriting attention and consideration for being good, or righteous, or virtuous, or just — for these qualities are attributes that belong only to God.

The monolithic, unsophisticated doctrine of good and evil disintegrated and left many problems in its wake. These challenging questions have brought forth a prismatic variety of answers.

We ought to bear in mind, however, that the disintegration of the uniform doctrine has not proved to be effective for all time to come. The white-and-black image of humanity and the unsophisticated evaluation were merely kept in abeyance but never sank into oblivion. They resurge at later ages (as occurred simultaneously in the church). Nevertheless, the prevailing Jewish sensitivity came to stay, and it flourished at various levels during the long history of Israel, producing ever-new fruits.

On the one hand, the era under discussion saw the disintegration of the "gallant" simplicity of the Old Testament world image and its attending evaluation of human conduct, but gained, on the other hand, a more profound and complex understanding of human nature and religious rationale, a more sophisticated relationship between the divine and the human aspects. This development, on account of a "pietist" tendency in contemporary Jewry, produced — out of the Old Testament message of a God just and merciful — vectors towards a genuine humanism.

In summing up this discussion, we arrive at the conclusion that the last era of the Second Commonwealth saw a complex dialectic about righteousness and justice, about the pitfalls of sin and the actual, real human aspect of religious conduct which excludes practically the perfectly good person and the completely abandoned sinner; failure and straying from the godly way of life can be corrected by returning to God and the straight path. Virtue and vice are relative terms in the light of this humanism.

Moreover, we have cited the saying of Antigonos of Sokho, which is as early as the pre-Hasmonean Era. It postulates that one ought to serve God for God's sake without expecting compensation for these modes of worship. We have pointed out that

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this doctrine may have drawn much contemporary criticism and even charges of heresy. Yet we may assume that in wider circles a certain uneasiness was felt over the time-honored central doctrine of serving God for a compensatory consideration. After all, the message of Judaism seemed to be founded on the concept of a just God who meted out to each and everyone what he deserved for observing or disobeying the divine commandments. We have also demonstrated that the old image of human and social affairs no longer corresponded to the growing sophistication regarding God and man.

During the time of R. Abbahu, a contemporary of Origenes, a humanistic statement more radical than that of Antigonos had been accepted and reported in talmudic tradition (b.Taanith 7a):

> Greater is the day of rainfall
> than the day of resurrection
> for the latter benefits only the pious
> Whereas the former benefits pious and sinners alike.

Here we find that the time-honored doctrine of theodicy, or rather anthropodicy, has been exploded, just as in the Gospel (Mt. 5:44–47):

> But I say to you: Love your enemies, and pray for those that persecute you so that you may be (truly) sons of your father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those that love you, what reward have you?

R. Abbahu observes here in the natural phenomenon of providential rain a kind of temporary suspension with regard to the formalism of divine, compensatory justice; the resurrection of the end of days was to represent the spectacular rewarding of the just, whereas the reviving rain (a miniature resurrection) deals by egalitarian nonchalance with the just and the unjust. This must have been understood as a challenge to the old doctrine.

In any event, the dialectic reflected in these and similar statements demonstrates the intricate struggle within Jewish circles that provides the matrix for discussions in the days of Jesus.

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Most of the source material which we have cited and enlisted for the emerging new sensitivity regarding the evaluation of the righteous and the sinners were culled from "Pharisee" provenance. The theocentric philanthropism of certain scribal circles, mainly the disciples of Hillel (Beth Hillel), served Jesus as one of the two pillars for his doctrine of love. This theocentric philanthropism did not emerge in Pharisee circles out of some vague humanism, but, as we have demonstrated, it evolved in dialectical transformation out of the biblical doctrines and world image without exploding the boundaries of the Old Testament structure. However, we shall demonstrate that Jesus developed this fundamental attitude of theocentric philanthropism into a profound, paradoxical doctrine.

The second source of Jesus' teaching about the righteousness of God is the doctrine of the Essenes and related groups. It is well known that the Essene concepts of good and evil and of the reward of the just and the punishment of sinners are much more radical than those found in the Old Testament. A certain Persian influence upon these concepts is possible, but the doctrine of double predestination, according to which mankind is divided into the chosen sons of light and the accursed sons of darkness, is not of Persian origin. One cannot escape the impression that this rigorous Essene doctrine of hatred may be a radical reaction against the new sensitivity of the contemporary Judaism, which emphasized the solidarity of mankind both in virtues and in sins, and which saw in the commandment of love the real meaning of Judaism. But is not this new Jewish sensitivity also reflected in the puritanic approach of Essene theology? In the Thanksgiving scroll there is the concept that the flesh, the unredeemed human nature, is the sphere of sinfulness and that the elect can be saved only by the undeserved grace of God. The Essene concept of sin is not primitive and naive, but highly theological. The biblical command of mutual love is in the Scrolls restricted to the Sons of Light (1QS i. 9–11) and is paralleled by the sectarian command of hatred towards the Sons of Darkness. Thus it seems that the Essene theology of hatred is a perverted form of the new Jewish sensitivity. If so, it is not difficult to understand that the inhuman

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ethics of the Essenes could in certain conditions develop into its opposite, into a very specific humanistic approach.[17]

Essenes hoped that at the end of times the righteous would be rewarded and the wicked destroyed, but, according to the doctrine of predestination, the rule of wickedness in this world until the final time of its disappearance is preordained by God. Therefore one must hate the evil and the sinner, but not oppose them, until the preordained time of vengeance. ("There shall be) eternal hatred against the men of perdition, *in a spirit of concealment*, so as to leave to them property and the labor of hands, as a slave does to his master, subdued before him who lords it over him. So he (the member) shall be a man zealous for the ordinance and its (relation to the proper knowledge of God's) time, toward the Day of Vengeance so as to do what is (God's good) pleasure in all activities and in all his ruling as He (God) has commanded. And all that is done to him he accepts willingly" (1QS ix. 21ff.).[18] This is the strange ideology of peaceful coexistence according to the Essenes.

The same idea is expressed in another passage in the Scrolls: the member of the Sect asserts: "I will not return evil to anybody, with good will I pursue man, for with God rests the judgment of every living being, and he is the one to repay man for his deeds . . . And the trial of a man of perdition I will not handle until the Day of Vengeance. But my anger I will not turn away from the men of deceit, and I will not be content until He has established judgment" (1QS x. 17–20).[18a]

The passage contains a new ethical attitude that developed in the Sect from the command of peaceful coexistence until the Day of Vengeance. This fruitful idea is expressed in the words: "I will not return evil to anybody, with good will I pursue man." Nonretaliation itself is in fact a benefit for the wicked oppressor; thus the subsequent step, well-doing to the sinner, is very natural. If you do not oppose the evil and even "pursue man with good," you have found, so to say, a new method of fighting against wickedness in the present. Although this idea is originally rooted

[17] The following pages are based upon the important article of K. STENDAHL, Hate, Non-Retaliation, and Love, *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962), 343–55.

[18] Stendahl's translation.

[18a] Stendahl's translation.

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in Essene peaceful coexistence, which is an eschatological concept, the ethics of nonviolence and of goodness toward the enemy have their proper, noneschatological values.

If you pursue your neighbor with good, you need not love him and you can even hate him, because you can explain your behavior by assuming that by acting thus you do not diminish your wicked neighbor's portion of divine punishment. This is evidently the meaning of Rom. 12: 19f.[19] and very probably of the last passage quoted from the Scrolls, but this attitude is prone to develop into a more humanistic position. In the already quoted passage of the Epistle to the Romans we read also: "Bless the persecutors, bless them and do not curse them" (Rom. 12:14). There is a certain tension between these words and the end of the chapter, because if you bless the evil-doers, you cannot fail to hope that your blessings will be accepted by God. Thus Rom. 12:14 is not far from Mt. 5:44. When you pray for those who persecute you, you surely do not pray for divine vengeance.

But there is another, more important point: if you overwhelm the sinner by a human approach, you can make him better. This is not a strictly Essene idea, because it does not fit the concept of double predestination, which does not permit a moral improvement of the Sons of Darkness. Thus it is understandable that this idea is fully developed in a book which originates on the fringes of Essenism, namely in the Testaments of the Patriarchs, especially in the Testament of Benjamin. "If anyone does violence to a pious man, he repents; for the pious man is merciful to his reviler, and holds his peace. And if anyone betrays a righteous man, the righteous man prays; though for a little while he is humbled, yet not long after he appears more glorious, as was Joseph my brother" (Test. Benj. 5:4f.). By the undivided love toward the righteous and toward the sinners, the pious man overwhelms the evil in the sinner: "For the good man has not a dark eye; for he shows mercy to all men, even though they be sinners. And though they devise with evil intent concerning him, by doing good he overcomes evil, being shielded by God" (Test. Benj. 4:2f.). The consequence of this overcoming evil by doing good is that

[19] See STENDAHL, *op. cit.* The whole passage (Rom. 12:8–21) contains motifs known from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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the sinner will turn unto good: "And if you have a good mind, then both will the wicked man be at peace with you and the profligate will reverence you and turn unto good, and the covetous will not only cease from their inordinate desire, but even give the objects of their covetousness to them that are afflicted" (Test. Benj. 5:1).

So in the semi-Essene circles, in which the Testament of Benjamin was written, a "pietistic" approach to the neighbor developed from Essene premises. But not all the Testaments of the Patriachs are written from this attitude. The Testament of Asher is an outstanding example of the Essene doctrine of hatred toward the sinners. According to this document, "to hate the merciful and unjust man, this, too, has a twofold aspect, but the whole work is good, because he (this pious man) follows the Lord's example, in that he accepts not the seeming good as genuine good" (Test. Asher 4:3). You have to "follow the truth with singleness of face" and not be "double-faced" (6:1f.). A man who is undivided in his love for the righteous and in his hatred for the sinners follows God, who does not accept the seeming good as the genuine good. This is in accordance with the dualistic morality of the Essenes.

This attitude could not be accepted by the "pietistic" semi-Essenes, because these circles applied the Essene doctrine of love also to the sinners and understood the Essene idea that you have to overcome evil by doing good in the light of the precept of universal love. The opposition toward the doctrine of hatred is expressed in the following words of the Testament of Benjamin (6:5f.): "The good mind has not two tongues, of blessing and of cursing, of hypocrisy and truth, of poverty and of wealth; but it has one disposition, incorrupt and pure, concerning all men. It has no double sight, nor double hearing; for in everything which he does or speaks or sees, he knows that the Lord looks on his soul . . . And . . . the works of Beliar are twofold, and there is no singleness in them."

Here we have the Essene precept to be complete and undivided, used in an opposite sense to that in the Testament of Asher. According to this document you have to be single-faced both in your love and hatred, and if you act so, you imitate God. According to the Testament of Benjamin you have to be undivided in

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your all-embracing love toward all, righteous and sinners; in this you will be different from the works of Belial, because they "are twofold, and there is no singleness in them." A similar idea was also expressed by Jesus: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven: he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust . . . You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:44–48).

We have seen that in the semi-Essene circles there was an inner development from the Essene "peaceful coexistence" toward the teaching of undivided love, and it is therefore clear that those circles came very near to such Pharisees as saw in the precept of love toward the neighbor the essence of the Law and thought that to love God is better than to fear him. Thus, it is easy to understand why the semi-Essene circles were prepared to accept these two teachings. As we have tried to prove in this article, the Great Commandment of Jesus is according to the spirit of certain Pharisaic circles; therefore, as we have said, it is strange that the midrashic combination of the two biblical verses, speaking about the love of God and the love of neighbor, is not preserved in rabbinic literature. We know this sublime midrash only from the mouth of Jesus — and from the semi-Essene literature, namely from the Jewish "Two Ways,"[20] and from the Testaments of the Patriarchs.[21]

It is imperative to see the central importance of eschatology in Jesus' teaching, but if we analyze his moral doctrines from a noneschatological point of view, we can see similar ideas both in the semi-Essene trend of Judaism and in such trends of Rabbinism as are strongly imbued with the attitude of what we have called the new Jewish sensitivity. We mentioned the fact that the Essene theology of hatred developed in the semi-Essene circles into a theology of undivided love so that it could be influenced by the moral attitude of the "Pharisees of love." It is therefore possible that even these "rabbinic" elements were accepted by Jesus from the semi-Essene circles known to us from the "Two Ways" in the Didache and the Testaments of the Twelve Pa-

[20] *Didache* 1:2.
[21] *Test. Dan* 5:3; *Test. Iss.* 5:2; 7:6; cf. *Test Zeb.* 5:1 and *Jub.* 36:7f.

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triarchs. Although this possibility exists, we have to be cautious, not only because the "rabbinic" elements in Jesus' preaching are so strong and typical for him that a secondary influence seems less likely, but also because religious movements are of a complex nature.

But even if it seems probable that the moral doctrine of Jesus is influenced both by the semi-Essene "pietism" and the "rabbinic" sensitivity, it is clear that Jesus' moral approach to God and man, even in points which are possibly influenced by others, is unique and incomparable. Let me mention only one aspect of Jesus' sublime teaching. The old Jewish theodicy — or anthropodicy — is weakened both in "rabbinic" and in semi-Essene thinking: your approach to the righteous and to the sinners shall not be dictated by your love and hatred. According to the teaching of Jesus you have to love the sinners, while according to Judaism you have not to hate the wicked. It is important to note that the positive love even toward the enemies is Jesus' personal message. We do not find this doctrine in the New Testament outside of the words of Jesus himself. But later in Christianity Jesus' doctrine of love became important and cannot be forgotten even by those who do not live according to it. The consequence of the doctrine is today that a Christian knows that you must not make a difference in treating your neighbor according to his moral qualities or his good or bad attitude toward you. In Judaism hatred is practically forbidden but love to the enemy is not prescribed.

Jesus' precept of love is both historically and theologically connected with the fact that the Judaism of the Second Temple period abandoned the gallant idea of righteousness of the Old Testament. It is therefore interesting that with the exception of Matthew — and one verse in Luke (1:75) — the very word righteousness is not found in the synoptic gospels, and in Paul's teaching righteousness and justification means mainly God's undeserved grace toward man. This contributed to the fact that in early Christianity, as it seems, the original concept of Jewish righteousness both of God and of men is even more weakened than in the Judaism of the same period. It is also true that Christianity did not develop a specific Christian concept of social

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righteousness. It did not need it, at least until Christianity became a state religion, because it possessed its attitude of love and the deep theology (or theologies) of sin, sinfulness, and divine grace. But, from the time of Constantine until today, when Christianity became the established religion of states and societies which themselves did not originate from basic Christian concepts, a Christian answer to problems of justice, crime and punishment, and forensic morality were badly needed. Thus, Christianity always turned in such situations for help to Old Testament or Greco-Roman solutions.

As has already been said, Christianity surpasses Judaism, at least theoretically, in its approach of love to all men, but its only genuine answer to the powerful wicked forces of this world is, as it seems, martyrdom. There is both human greatness and human weakness in our religions, but there is also the common hope for the Kingdom of Heaven.

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