

THE MYSTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A JEW

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Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard, D.H.L.

WHEN COMPARED TO MOST OTHER RELIGIONS, JUDAISM WOULD HAVE TO BE SINGLED OUT AS THE RELIGION OF THE MIND, PAR EXCELLENCE. IT IS INDEED "THE THINKING MAN'S RELIGION", OR, IF YOU WILL, "THE THINKING WOMAN'S RELIGION"; BUT JUDAISM ALSO HAS ITS MYSTICAL SIDE, A SIDE WHICH IS VITAL TO IT'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

IT WOULD SEEM TO ME THAT ROSH HA'SHANAH IS AN ESPECIALLY GOOD TIME TO SEEK THIS EMOTIONAL CENTER OF OUR RELIGION, WHICH GIVES IT ITS PRIMARY FUEL AND ENERGY. WITHOUT THE MYSTICAL HEART, THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL ASPECTS OF JUDAISM WOULD LOSE THEIR COMPELLING THRUST.

LET US PROJECT THE HYPOTHESIS THAT TO BE A JEW IN THE MYSTICAL SENSE, ONE MUST BE CAPABLE OF THREE THINGS: ONE MUST ENTER INTO THE COVENANT ABRAHAM MADE WITH GOD, ONE MUST STAND WITH MOSES AT SINAI, AND ONE MUST BELIEVE IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH. LET US CONSIDER THESE THREE THINGS TONIGHT.

ABRAHAM IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE FIRST JEW, BECAUSE THE BIBLE TELLS US HE REVOLTED AGAINST THE IDOLATROUS RELIGION OF HIS FATHERS, AND HE ENTERED INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LIVING GOD. THE BIBLE USES A TECHNICAL WORD FOR THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND GOD. THE WORD IS "BRIS" OR "BRIT". EVERY JEW, MALE OR FEMALE, WHETHER BORN INTO THE RELIGION OR CONVERTED INTO THE FAITH, IS CONSIDERED TO BE BOUND BY THE TERMS OF THIS BRIT OR CONTRACT. TO ACCEPT THIS FACT IN A MYSTICAL SENSE IS TO ACCEPT IN ONE'S HEART THE IDEA THAT WHAT ABRAHAM PROMISED TO GOD FOUR THOUSAND YEARS AGO IS BINDING ON US AS ABRAHAM'S SPIRITUAL DESCENDANTS. IF YOU READ THE BIBLICAL STORY CLOSELY, YOU WILL FIND THAT GOD DID NOT GIVE ABRAHAM A LONG LIST OF LAWS TO FOLLOW. ON THE CONTRARY, GOD COMMANDED ABRAHAM TO DO JUST TWO THINGS. HE SAID TO ABRAHAM, "IF YOU WISH TO BE MY SERVANT, YOU MUST HEARKEN TO MY VOICE, AND YOU MUST BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS". * "HEARKEN TO MY VOICE", GOD SAID, "AND BE THOU A BLESSING (A B'RACHAH)". CAN WE TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHY ABRAHAM IS NOT GIVEN A SPECIFIC LIST OF LAWS AND WHY

* A paraphrase of Genesis 12: 1-3

THE MYSTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A JEW - P. 2

GOD SAID ONLY, "HEarken UNTO MY VOICE"? SURELY THIS MEANS THAT IN EACH AGE THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE BRIT OF ABRAHAM MUST SEEK TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE AS IT SPEAKS UNIQUELY TO THEM. BEING A JEW IS NOT JUST A ROUTINE MATTER OF FOLLOWING OLD LAWS ROOTED IN THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AN ANCIENT TIME. BEING A JEW INVOLVES MUCH MORE THAN THAT. IT INVOLVES A SEARCH, A CONTINUING AND EXPANSIVE SEARCH FOR WHAT GOD COMMANDS IN THE PRESENT, IN THE MIDST OF OUR NEW PROBLEMS AND IN THE PREVAILING CRISIS. TO ENTER INTO THE COVENANT OF ABRAHAM, THEN, IN THE MYSTICAL SENSE, IS TO BECOME A SEEKER, A SEEKER OF GOD, THAT ONE MIGHT HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO COMMAND IN THE LIVING PRESENT.

THE SECOND COMMAND TO ABRAHAM, "BE THOU A BLESSING (A B'RACHAH)", IS FURTHER EXPLAINED, "THROUGH THEE SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED". WHAT AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY IT IS TO ACCEPT THIS AS ONE'S PERSONAL CHARGE! IF A JEW TAKES THIS COMMAND SERIOUSLY, HE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT HE CANNOT BE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, FOR HE HAS A UNIQUE MISSION. HE HAS TO BE A "B'RACHAH", A BLESSING.

TO BECOME A JEW, ABRAHAM HAD TO RENOUNCE HIS LIFE AS A PAGAN. THE PAGAN RELIGION JUSTIFIED WAR BETWEEN THE CITY-STATES. ABRAHAM HEARD HIS GOD CALLING FOR PEACE AND TRIED TO BRING THIS MESSAGE TO THOSE WHO WOULD LISTEN. THE PAGAN RELIGION ASSUMED THAT MIGHT MAKES RIGHT, AND THAT THE MANIPULATION OF THE WEAK BY THE STRONG WAS AN ACCEPTED PROCEDURE. ABRAHAM HEARD HIS GOD CALLING FOR MERCY AND SUPPORT OF THE WEAK. THE PAGANS DELIGHTED IN THE KIND OF SEXUAL ABANDON THAT SOME MODERNISTS THINK IS THE NEW SALVATION OF THE WORLD. ABRAHAM HEARD HIS GOD SPEAKING OF THE JOY OF SEX WITHIN THE CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY. THE PAGAN SOUGHT LITTLE ELSE IN LIFE EXCEPT PERSONAL PLEASURE, BUT ABRAHAM DREAMED DREAMS ABOUT A CREATIVE AND PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY. THE COMMUNITY TO ABRAHAM WAS BOTH SMALL AND LARGE. WHAT HE HAD LEARNED AND WHAT HE ENVISIONED HE TRIED TO TEACH HIS FAMILY AND KINSMEN FIRST. OUT OF THEM HE HOPED TO DEVELOP A CONSECRATED PEOPLE SO PASSIONATE IN ITS PURPOSE THAT IT COULD INFLUENCE ALL MANKIND. ABRAHAM WAS A UNIVERSALIST WHO UNDERSTOOD THAT ONE MUST WORK WITH THOSE CLOSE AT HAND BEFORE ONE TRIES TO CHANGE THE WORLD. HE KNEW THAT BEFORE ONE COULD BE A BLESSING TO THOSE FAR AWAY, ONE HAD TO BE A BLESSING TO ONE'S OWN FAMILY AND PEOPLE.

WHEN WE ACCEPT A CONVERT INTO JUDAISM HERE AT BETH AM, WE TELL HIM (OR HER) THAT HE MUST CONSIDER HIMSELF AS A CHILD OF ABRAHAM, BOUND BY THE AGREEMENT HE MADE

THE MYSTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A JEW - P. 3

WITH GOD. IN ACCEPTING JUDAISM, A CONVERT IS ASKED TO ACCEPT MYSTICALLY THIS BRIT, TO ENTER INTO IT, AND TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS DUAL PROVISIONS. TONIGHT, I ASK EACH OF YOU THE SAME QUESTION. DO YOU, INDEED, FEEL THAT YOU ARE PART OF THIS COVENANT? FOR ONLY IF YOU ACCEPT IT IN YOUR HEART AS YOUR OWN DOES IT TRULY BECOME YOURS, AND ONLY THEN DO YOU TRULY BELONG TO IT. OTHERWISE, YOU STAND OUTSIDE OF THE MYSTICAL ONENESS WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE. OTHERWISE, YOU CAN BE FORMALLY AND CULTURALLY A JEW, BUT YOU ARE NOT JEWISH IN HEART AND SOUL.

THE SECOND MYSTICAL STEP REQUIRED OF A JEW IS THAT HE STAND WITH MOSES AT MT. SINAI. THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT ALL JEWS STOOD AT THE HOLY MOUNTAIN WITH MOSES. THOSE WHO WERE PRESENT IN THE FLESH WERE JOINED, WE ARE TOLD, BY THOSE WHO WERE DEAD AND BY THOSE JEWS YET TO BE BORN. THE BRIT ABRAHAM MADE WITH GOD ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS WAS OFFERED TO ALL OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE AT MT. SINAI. THEY WERE ASKED IF THEY WOULD ACCEPT IT AS THEIR OWN OR REJECT IT, FOR THEY HAD THAT PRIVILEGE. THE ABRAHAMIC BRIT WAS A BRIEF ONE. MOSES ADDED DOZENS OF MORAL LAWS TO THE COVENANT BEFORE HE PRESENTED IT TO THE PEOPLE, FOR THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERSONAL RELIGION AND SOCIETAL RELIGION. ABRAHAM TAUGHT US HOW TO ACT IN A ONE-ON-ONE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. MOSES TAUGHT US HOW TO ACT AS MEMBERS OF A DEDICATED SOCIETY, AS AN "AM KADOSH", AS A "HOLY PEOPLE".

WHEN A CONVERT IS ACCEPTED INTO THE FAITH AT BETH AM, WE ALWAYS ASK HIM OR HER, DID YOU INDEED STAND AT MT. SINAI? WERE YOU THERE IN SPIRIT? DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF WITH THE EFFORTS OF THIS SLAVE PEOPLE TO FASHION A NEW KIND OF HUMAN SOCIETY DEDICATED TO JUSTICE AND COMPASSION? DO YOU ACCEPT THEIR SUFFERING AND SACRIFICES AS YOUR OWN?, WE ASK OF THE CONVERT. DO YOU ACCEPT THEIR GOALS AND TEACHINGS? DO YOU JOIN YOURSELF TO THIS PEOPLE, TO ITS EXPERIENCE AND TO ITS FATE? TONIGHT, I ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION WE ASK OF A CONVERT. DID YOU, INDEED, STAND AT MT. SINAI? DID YOU HEAR THE DEAFENING THUNDER AND SEE THE PANAMORIC LIGHTNING? DID YOU SEE THE MOUNTAIN BELCHING FIRE AND SMOKE, AND DID YOU COWER WITH THE OTHERS IN TREMBLING AND AWE? DID YOU STAND THERE, INDEED, ALONGSIDE MOSES AND MIRIAM? DID YOU SEE THE SOULS THAT ONCE BORE THE NAMES OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC? DID YOU SEE THE UNFORMED SOULS OF THOSE YET TO BE BORN, THOSE WHO WERE TO CARRY THE BANNER OF JUDAISM THROUGH POGROMS AND HOLOCAUST YET TO COME? DID YOU SEE THE SOLDIERS THERE, JOSHUA IN THE FLESH AND THOSE SOULS OF BODIES YET TO BE SLAIN, THE MACCABEES AT MODIN, THE HEROES OF THE WARSAW GHETTO, AND THE ISRAELIS AT THE SUEZ CANAL, ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, AND IN MAALOT AND MUNICH? DID YOU STAND THERE WITH THE GREAT PROPHETS LIKE ISAIAH AND JEREMIAH AND WITH THE GRANDMOTHERS WHO WOULD TAKE SUCH JOY IN BLESSING CANDLES? WERE YOU AWARE THAT FREUD AND EINSTEIN WERE THERE TOO, STANDING SIDE BY SIDE WITH

THE MYSTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A JEW - P. 4

OTHER GENIUSES WHO WOULD BE BURIED IN NAMELESS GRAVES, AND WHO WOULD NEVER BE PERMITTED TO GIVE WHAT THEY HAD TO GIVE IN SUCH ABUNDANT MEASURE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU PLACE YOURSELF AT SINAI, FOR ONLY WHEN WE ARE ALL TOGETHER IN THAT HISTORIC MOMENT DOES JUDAISM SEEM TO TAKE ON ITS MORE DYNAMIC FORM. ONLY WHEN WE ARE ALL AT SINAI TOGETHER DOES THE JEWISH PEOPLE ATTAIN TO THE REMARKABLE ETERNAL STRENGTH GOD MEANT FOR IT TO HAVE.

TO BE A JEW IN THE MYSTICAL SENSE, ONE MUST BE CAPABLE OF THREE THINGS. ONE MUST ENTER INTO THE COVENANT ABRAHAM MADE WITH GOD, ONE MUST STAND WITH MOSES AND WITH ALL THE OTHER JEWS AT SINAI, AND ONE MUST BELIEVE IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH. LET US SPEAK NOW OF THIS LAST MATTER. TRADITION HAS IT THAT IN GOD'S CHOSEN TIME, A DESCENDANT OF KING DAVID, A HUMAN BEING, WILL ASCEND THE THRONE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AND BRING TO THAT NATION, AS WELL AS TO THE WORLD, AN ERA OF PEACE AND JUSTICE. THIS FLESH AND BLOOD PERSON, THE PROPHETS CALLED THE "MESSIACH", OR THE MESSIAH. * TRADITION ALSO TELLS US THAT JUST BEFORE THE MESSIAH COMES, THE VERY COLORFUL FOLK HERO, THE PROPHET ELIJAH, WILL RETURN TO EARTH TO ANNOUNCE THE COMING OF THIS GREAT KING. TO KEEP ALIVE THE BELIEF IN THE MESSIAH, OUR TRADITION HAS WOVEN THE FIGURE OF ELIJAH INTO SOME OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT RITUALS. THE TRADITION SAYS THAT AT THE BRIT CEREMONY, WHEN A BOY CHILD IS INDUCTED INTO THE COVENANT OF ABRAHAM, THE PROPHET ELIJAH IS ALWAYS PRESENT. THE SUGGESTION IS THAT PERHAPS THIS VERY BABY WHO IS BEING CIRCUMCISED IS THE MESSIAH HIMSELF; THEREFORE, IT IS FITTING THAT ELIJAH BE PRESENT. I THINK THAT THIS IS A MARVELOUS LEGEND, AND I SUGGEST TO YOU, RATIONALIST THAT I AM, THAT ELIJAH IS A LIVING SYMBOL WORTH PRESERVING.

WHEN WE OBSERVE THE PASSOVER SEDER, WE FILL AN EXTRA CUP OF WINE FOR ELIJAH. WE SEND SOMEONE TO OPEN THE DOOR AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, AND WE INVITE THE PROPHET TO ENTER. WE THINK TO OURSELVES, "AS OUR FATHERS WERE FREED FROM EGYPT AT THIS SPRING SEASON, SO MAY ELIJAH AND THE MESSIAH COME NOW AND HELP US TO USHER IN THE KIND OF FREEDOM THE WORLD NEEDS SO DESPERATELY NOW." I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE ELIJAH CUP AT YOUR SEDER, BUT THE CUP AT MY SEDER IS ALWAYS DRAINED BY SOME MYSTERIOUS GUEST. ELIJAH ALWAYS COMES TO MY SEDER, NOT BECAUSE I AM A RABBI, I AM SURE, BUT BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN ELIJAH AND IN THE MESSIAH, SYMBOLICALLY, YET MYSTICALLY.

THE IDEAL OF THE MESSIANIC DAY, AS DESCRIBED IN OUR BIBLE, IS ONE OF THE GRAND VISIONS THAT THE JEWS HAVE GIVEN TO THE WORLD. TRUE, IT BEGINS WITH THE SUCCESS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, WHO ARE, IN THE VISION, LIBERATED FROM THEIR ENEMIES AND WHO FINALLY GAIN THAT ERA OF SERENITY AND HAPPINESS SO LONG DENIED THEM; BUT THE

* The Biblical concept of the righteous King has no supra-natural overtones. The King is simply to be more righteous than the existing leaders of Israel (and Judea). See now Isa 11: 1-4, 32: 1. In the Exile, the concept endures (Isa 42: 1-4). Sometimes, the whole people seem to be this righteous servant (Isa 42: 5-7).

THE MYSTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A JEW - P. 5

VISION, BEING A JEWISH VISION, DOES NOT END THERE. IT GOES ON TO INCLUDE ALL NATIONS. THE PROPHET ISAIAH PROCLAIMS THAT NOT ONLY WILL ISRAEL KNOW THE JOY OF PEACE, BUT ALL NATIONS WILL CEASE TO MAKE WAR ON ONE ANOTHER. FURTHER, THE CREATURES OF NATURE WILL JOIN IN WITH MANKIND'S VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT. THE WOLF WILL BE LIBERATED FROM HIS VICIOUS NATURE, AND HE WILL PLAY WITH THE GENTLE LAMB. THE POISONOUS SNAKE WILL LOSE ITS VENOM AND PLAY HARMLESSLY WITH THE INNOCENT CHILD. THE PROPHET CONCLUDES, "THEY SHALL NOT HURT OR DESTROY IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN", SAITH THE LORD. *

TO BELIEVE IN THIS VISION OF A PERFECTED WORLD IS A TEST OF ONE'S MYSTICAL POTENTIAL, FOR EXPERIENCE AND REASON WOULD ARGUE AGAINST SUCH A POSSIBILITY. TO BE A JEW IN THE MYSTICAL SENSE, HOWEVER, ONE NEED NOT BELIEVE IN MAGIC. THE PROPHETIC CONCEPT OF THE KING WHO WOULD REVOLUTIONIZE SOCIETY CAME OUT OF A TIME WHEN THE JEWISH NATION WAS STILL POWERFUL AND WHEN IT WAS RULED BY KINGS. AFTER THE JEWS HAD BEEN DEPORTED FROM ISRAEL AND HAD LIVED IN EXILE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS AS AN OPPRESSED MINORITY, IT BECAME NECESSARY TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE MESSIANIC CONCEPT IN ORDER TO KEEP IT ALIVE. THE JEWS HAVE NEVER HESITATED TO PUT NEW MEANING IN THEIR ANCIENT CONCEPTS WHILE PRESERVING THEIR ORIGINAL DYNAMISM. WHEN IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT THE MESSIANIC KING COULD NOT DELIVER THE JEWS, THE RABBIS BEGAN TO TEACH AN AMAZING DOCTRINE. THEY DECLARED THAT THE MESSIAH DID NOT COME BECAUSE HE HIMSELF WAS HELD IN CHAINS. HE WAS IMPRISONED, THEY SAID, BY MAN'S DISPOSITION TO VIOLENCE AND DECEIT. TO A PEOPLE WHICH HAD PRAYED AND WAITED FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS FOR A MIRACULOUS DELIVERER, THE RABBIS TAUGHT, "HE HAS NOT COME NOR WILL HE COME SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU HAVE HELPED ENSLAVE HIM. YOU HAVE NOT FOLLOWED THE MORAL LAWS OF THE TORAH. GOD WILL NOT RELEASE THE MESSIAH UNTIL YOU HAVE BECOME WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO BECOME." IN THIS BRILLIANT MANEUVER, THE RABBIS REVERSED THE WHOLE PROGRESSION OF THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY. NOW THE PEOPLE COULD NO LONGER PASSIVELY AWAIT THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH TO DELIVER THEM. THEY HAD TO DELIVER HIM.! THEY HAD TO FREE HIM FROM HIS CHAINS, SO THAT HE COULD ASSUME THE LEADERSHIP OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. THE MESSIAH AS SYMBOL AND REALITY WAS NOW A SYMBOL OF THE JEWISH CONDITION. HE WAS HIMSELF OPPRESSED AND VICTIMIZED. WHAT THE RABBIS HAD ACCOMPLISHED WAS A HUMANIZING OF THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY. THE HOPE FOR AN IDEAL FUTURE WAS RETAINED, BUT THE PEOPLE REALLY BECAME THE MESSIAH. THEY HAD TO WORK THE MIRACLES. THEY HAD TO TRANSFORM THEIR HOME, THEIR VILLAGE, AND THE WORLD INTO THAT IDEAL OF JUSTICE AND PEACE THAT WOULD BREAK THE CHAINS OF THE MESSIAH.

* See Isa 11: 1-9 and the call to international peace, 2: 1-4. There is an obvious blending of the success of the Israelites and the peace of the world; c.f. Isaiah 35: 5-10.

THE MYSTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A JEW - P. 6

REFORM JUDAISM HAS ABSORBED THIS REVISED AND DYNAMIC CONCEPT. WE SPEAK, THEN, NOT SO MUCH OF THE MESSIAH AS OF A MESSIANIC AGE, THE TIME OF THE TRANSFORMED WORLD. WE TEACH THAT THERE IS A LITTLE OF THE MESSIAH IN ALL HUMAN BEINGS, AND IT IS UP TO US TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER. REFORM JUDAISM HOLDS THAT THE MESSIANIC AGE WILL BE REALIZED ON EARTH WHEN ENOUGH HUMAN BEINGS, JEWS AND NON-JEWS, WHITE, BLACK, RED AND YELLOW, AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS, ARABS AND VIETNAMESE AND ALL THE REST, GET TOGETHER TO CREATE A WORLD SOCIETY BASED ON RESPECT AND LOVE. WE TEACH IN REFORM JUDAISM THAT WE ARE ALL GOD'S AGENTS, BUT THAT IT IS THE SPECIAL DUTY OF THE JEW TO BE IN THE VANGUARD, IN THE LEADERSHIP ROLE, IN PURSUING THIS JEWISH CONCEPT OF THE MESSIANIC DAY.*

WHEN I SAY THAT I BELIEVE IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH, I AM, OF COURSE, USING THE WORD "MESSIAH" AS A SYMBOL. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY SYMBOL, FOR THE USE OF THE TRADITIONAL WORD "MESSIAH" ROOTS THE STRUGGLE FOR A BETTER WORLD IN THE DREAMS AND STRUGGLES OF OUR PEOPLE EVER SINCE THE TIME OF THE BIBLE. I SHARE, THROUGH THIS SYMBOL, THE RELIGIOUS FERVOR OF ISAIAH, AND THE VISIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN LONG SINCE DEAD, BUT TO WHOM I AM LINKED BY A NOBLE TRADITION. WHEN I SAY THAT I BELIEVE IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH, IN A MYSTICAL SENSE, I AM SAYING THAT I CANNOT AND WILL NOT ACCEPT THE CURRENT TRAGIC PICTURE OF THE WORLD, EVEN THOUGH ALL REASON SAYS I MUST ACCEPT IT. AS A JEW, I CANNOT ACCEPT THE PREVAILING UGLINESS I SEE ABOUT ME, BECAUSE SUCH AN ACCEPTANCE IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH A BELIEF IN A PURPOSEFUL GOD. I ACCEPT THE ROLE OF CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE MESSIAH, WHO I CAN VISUALIZE TO BE HELD IN CHAINS BY MAN'S VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY. IT IS MY HEART, NOT MY MIND, THAT LEADS ME IN THIS DIRECTION. AS SHAKESPEARE HAS DECLARED, "THE HEART HAS A MIND, THE MIND KNOWS NOT OF". I ACCEPT THE ROLE AS AGENT OF THE MESSIAH, NOT MERELY AS A MORAL DUTY, BUT AS A MYSTICAL CHARGE, GIVEN TO ME THROUGH MY FATHER ABRAHAM AND REINFORCED BY MOSES AT SINAI AND LATER BY THE PROPHETS AND THE RABBIS. I ACCEPT THIS RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE THROUGH ALL THE DIN AND VIOLENCE OF OUR TIME, I HEAR THE GENTLE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MESSIAH. HE IS COMING TO DELIVER ME WITH ALL MANKIND, BECAUSE I AM GOING TO DELIVER HIM! DO YOU ALSO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FREEING THE MESSIAH? I SUGGEST THAT YOU HAVE NO CHOICE - IF YOU SERIOUSLY CONSIDER YOURSELF A JEW.

* St. Paul and certain Christian teachers have reinterpreted the Jewish concept of the Messiah for their own purposes. This is their privilege, but it is important to note that the Jews have never understood their Messiah concept in the way the New Testament treats it. G.F. Moore ("Judaism") contends the New Testament writers were influenced by Persian and Greek thought.