

I find that Judaism stands for one of the grandest principles of which we have knowledge—the supremacy of Reason. There is nothing in it that is not absolutely simple, that claims credulity. In this it differs from Orthodox Christianity, Protestant and Catholic. We have no authoritative creed in Judaism. Our teachers have recognized the fact, that all attempts to formulate such an authoritative creed must end unsuccessfully. Maimonides, it is true, formulated his "Thirteen Principles," but in so doing he merely gave expression to his personal opinion, and he was dreadfully abused for arrogating to himself the right of limiting Judaism. Albo reduced the "Essentials of Judaism" to three. Judaism accords us the same right to *our* opinion on the matter. Judaism is a *growing* and therefore a *living* religion; it frankly acknowledges that the truth of to-day may be the error of to-morrow, and declares that it must ever adapt itself to the newer light. Can any religion be more reasonable than this?

But I hear someone object: "Judaism has its externals as well as its essentials, and many identify the former with the latter." Judaism is not responsible for this abuse—the result of over-zeal—and which feature it has in common with other religions. Ceremonies, though not essential, are, if properly used, powerful aids to the religious life. I plead for them, for the sake of those weaker souls who are not strong enough to dispense with external helps.

Relying on Reason as its supreme arbiter, it has come to a number of definite and clear-cut conceptions as to those things necessary to my everlasting welfare, which conceptions, as a body, commend themselves to me. What are these?

1. *Its Conception of God.* It teaches me that there is a Deity pervading all space and upholding all worlds. Viewed morally, the Jewish conception of God consists in the belief in His Eternal Goodness, in his Fatherhood over all mankind.

2. *Its Conception of Duty.* Holiness is the keynote of its philosophy of life, the golden thread running through all its teachings. Can there be any noble ideal than this?

3. *Its Conception of Personal Responsibility.* Man is accountable directly for his deeds—"the soul that sinneth it shall die." There is no escape through the merit of any "Savior" save that of good deeds and character.

4. *Its Estimate of Humanity.* Judaism has always stood for human dignity. The Bible proclaims the truth in its very opening pages, when it declares that all men are descended from one pair of ancestors, and thus teaches that all men alike have an equal claim upon our sympathy and love. Judaism proclaims the *rise*, and not the *fall*, of man.

5. Its view of other religions we have already seen. For its very toleration and naturalness it is an exalted faith.

6. *Its View of the Bible.* It does not claim inspiration for everything that

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