

The hundredth anniversary of the death of Samuel David Luzzatto has witnessed a resurgence of interest in the pioneering achievements of this celebrated scholar. TRADITION's Summer issue contained a selection from his writings as well as a brief resumé of his major contributions to Jewish scholarship. In this essay, Professor Rudavsky presents in historic perspective a detailed account of Luzzatto's life and work. The author is Associate Professor of Hebrew Culture and Education at New York University and Chairman of the National Education Committee of the Zionist Organization of America. The following article forms a chapter of Dr. Rudavsky's forthcoming book, "Emancipation and Adjustment," scheduled for publication this winter.

SAMUEL DAVID LUZZATTO AND NEO-ORTHODOXY

I. *The Emancipation and Religious Judaism*

Brands of Judaism

As is commonly known, there was only one brand of Judaism in Europe before the struggle for Emancipation started in earnest in Germany during the turbulent early decades of the nineteenth century. This, of course, was traditional Judaism, described as "Orthodoxy" since the final years of the eighteenth century. This term, it should be observed, is a misnomer when applied to Judaism, for it is derived from the Greek and means correct belief or opinion. It may be a suitable adjective when used in connection with Christianity, in which creed and dogma play an important role; but not so in Judaism which is essentially a *praxis*, consisting of *mitzvot* and stressing action and conduct. The idiom "Orthodox Judaism" appeared for the first time, it seems, in a Berlin periodical in 1795,¹ as a pejorative term alluding to the majority

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of Jews adhering to traditionalism, whom the liberals regarded as backward and obscurantist.

Reform Judaism was an outcome of the clash between so-called Orthodoxy and *Haskalah* or Enlightenment. Reform represented a rebellion against what it charged was staid Orthodoxy. The latter ideology, too, did not emerge unscathed and unaltered from the conflict. Several types of Orthodoxy resulted, their differences revolving primarily about the pivot of secular culture. The ultra-pietist wing insisted that true Judaism was opposed to the *Haskalah*, which advocated the blending of Judaism with secular culture; the more liberal elements, however, believed that Judaism could be harmonized with it.

The staunch, extreme Orthodox segment in German Jewry that opposed the intrusion of modernism and worldly ideas was also dubbed by the Reformers as the *Altgläubigen* or "Old Believers." The latter continued to live as they did in the ghetto, in a milieu dominated entirely by Talmudic concepts and precepts, refusing to make any concession to the *Zeitgeist*, the rationalistic spirit of the times. They regarded the culture of the outside world as hostile to Judaism and inconsistent with it, and, therefore, to be rejected and shunned. This fundamentalist view was shared by like-minded Jewish pietists in other countries, particularly in Eastern Europe.

A leading protagonist of the rigorous outlook was Moses Sofer (1763-1839), who in his *Tzavoat Mosheh* forbade his children to read the works of "Moses of Dessau", i.e., Moses Mendelssohn, the progenitor of the Enlightenment in Germany. He also exhorted them not to acquire a general education, attend the theater, or engage in worldly pursuits. "Nor may you contend" the eminent sage declared, "that times have changed, for we have an Ancient Father, Blessed be His Name, who has not and will not change."² Yet among the devout there were also more moderate attitudes towards secular culture.

Neo-Orthodoxy

The faction in Orthodox Judaism opposing the ultra-pietist viewpoint was initiated in Germany by a younger contemporary

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of Moses Sofer, the Chacham³ Isaac Bernays (1792-1849), who adopted a conciliatory attitude toward the Enlightenment. The fact that Bernays was a graduate of the University of Würzburg prompted the Hamburg Jewish community to elect him as its rabbi in 1821, in the hope that a man of his progressive temperament and education would succeed in winning back to orthodoxy the errant youth that had been straying away to the Reform Temples. It was left, however, to Samson Raphael Hirsch, an ardent disciple of Isaac Bernays, to formulate the basic rationale for the neo-Orthodox sector which deviated from old Orthodoxy in that it accepted secular culture. Actually, neo-Orthodoxy was not a new phenomenon in Jewish life, but merely a reversion to the pattern of Judaism prevailing in Arab and Christian Spain, where Jews participated actively in secular life and affairs. The supporters of this new trend in traditional Judaism in nineteenth century Germany did not, of course, capitulate to the Enlightenment; they merely came to terms with it.⁴

Luzzatto and Hirsch

Neo-Orthodoxy in Judaism thus implies acceptance of the totality of Jewish law and practice within a framework of modernism. In Italy, its chief exponent was the brilliant and versatile Jewish scholar, Samuel David Luzzatto (1800-1865), who, with the other ideologues of the movement, shared an *a priori* belief in the divine character of the Pentateuch. According to them, the basic doctrines of Judaism fall outside the realm of reason, which is the product of human perception alone and not as reliable a guide as divine revelation. On this account, too, no one can question the miracles or supernatural events related in the Mosaic books, for they are beyond nature and experience. In general, the neo-Orthodox, like the Orthodox, followed the teachings of Judah Halevi (1085-1140), who extolled religion and faith over philosophy and logic.⁵ Luzzatto warned that anyone who does not subscribe to the Sinaitic revelation and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch undermines Judaism.⁶

Italian Orthodoxy, unlike that of Germany and other parts of Europe, did not have to wrestle with the problem of secular

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education, for among Italian Jewry worldly knowledge was taken for granted. Moreover, Luzzatto, unlike Hirsch, was closely associated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* or Jewish Science movement, with which he came in contact by reason of the fact that his native Trieste was a part of Austria, where that tendency had gained a foothold. Luzzatto, who regarded the Pentateuch as sacrosanct, employed the critical method of Jewish Science in the investigation of only some of the externals surrounding its text. But, in the analysis of other Biblical books, he applied critical procedures. Hirsch, however, denounced the evolutionary approach of Jewish Science as doing violence to the basic principles of Judaism. He adopted a policy of *noli me tangere* toward the whole religious tradition, maintaining that the method of Jewish Science "pretends that the later authorities (in Judaism) did not understand the earlier, nor the latest, the later . . . and so insinuating that the basis on which living Judaism rests at the present day . . . is nothing but one deception built on another by guides stricken with blindness and ignorance."⁷

Luzzatto also differed from Hirsch on the question of Jewish nationalism, the mission theory, and related issues. Luzzatto, though not a Zionist in the modern sense of the term, may be said to have been a forerunner of Zionism. He was an ardent Jewish nationalist who regarded the survival of the Jewish people as an end in itself. Hirsch believed that the chief aspect of Jewish distinctiveness was religious in character and motivation, while Luzzatto regarded the Jewish people as a nationalistic entity and their survival as such, a prime and vital objective. He, therefore, advocated an intensification not only of the religious but also of the nationalistic consciousness.

II. *Life and Works*

Biography

Samuel David Luzzatto (1800-1865) was born in Trieste, when that city was still under Austrian rule, to an old Italian Jewish family that descended from the noted Jewish scholar, poet, and mystic, Moses Chayim Luzzatto of Padua (1707-47), who, with

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his dramas and other works, is often considered to have been the founder of modern Hebrew literature. Samuel was also descended from Ephraim Luzzatto (1739-93), a Hebrew poet and physician, who, in 1768, published in London a volume of Hebrew songs and poetry. Chezekiah, Samuel's father, was a deeply religious man, inclined toward mysticism, and though only a wood turner by trade, possessed considerable Jewish and general learning. A *Luftmensch* by temperament, Chezekiah was continually preoccupied with grandiose plans and schemes for constructing a perpetual motion machine and similar contrivances. As a result of these distractions, he found it difficult to concentrate on earning a livelihood for his family. Because of his poverty and also in keeping with numerous rabbinic injunctions, Chezekiah taught his son a trade,⁸ but the latter from his early youth preferred a scholarly career.

Samuel was a precocious and gifted lad. He received his basic education at the Trieste Talmud Torah, a liberal institution organized along the progressive principles laid down by Mendelssohn's disciple, Naphtali Wessely (1725-1805), which called for a combined program of Jewish and general studies. After completing his formal schooling in Bible, Talmud, general science, ancient and modern languages at the local school, young Luzzatto continued to acquire further learning through his own efforts and also with the aid of his father. He earned his livelihood as a tutor. In 1829, Luzzatto left his native city to accept a professorship in the newly-established Collegio Rabbinico in Padua, the first modern rabbinical seminary in the world — a post he occupied for the rest of his days. His academic career gave him an opportunity and motivation for study and writing.

Luzzatto managed to exhume numerous dust-covered manuscripts from archives and libraries, thereby saving them from oblivion. One of his most important works was the publication, with an introduction, annotations, and corrections, of some eighty-six religious poems of Judah Halevi, in the *Divan* (1864), a work which helped to open the portals of medieval Hebrew poetry to the Jewish scholarly world. Some years earlier, he prepared his *Mavo* (1856), a historical and critical introduction to the *Machzor*, or festival liturgy, according to the "Roman" version. He com-

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posed the first Jewish critical commentaries on a number of Biblical books and translated into Italian the Pentateuch, the *Haftarot*, and the Hebrew daily prayer book. His vast literary activity, which covered a period of five decades, contributed much to the revival of Hebrew belle lettres. He was not only the author of Hebrew grammatical and philological treatises and of theological studies, in Italian as well as in Hebrew, but his articles are found in practically every Jewish scholarly periodical of the period, in Hebrew, German, French or Italian.

Chief among his prolific writings are his "*Iggrot Shadal*", consisting of some 700 letters written to a large circle of scholars on a wide range of subjects. Published posthumously (1822-1894) in nine volumes, they attest to the extensive erudition and great encyclopedic learning of its author. Luzzatto's sons selected some 90 of these letters and compiled them in a collection called *Peninei Shadal*.⁹ Luzzatto's thought is not organized in any volume or group of volumes, but is scattered throughout his books, essays, and letters.

III. *Faith and Reason*

Romantic Influences

Luzzatto was influenced by the Romantic spirit that engulfed nineteenth century Europe, especially Germany, France, England, and Italy. The new trend marked a shift from the rationalistic currents of the earlier era, which brought on the French Revolution. While rationalism reverted to classical pagan thought, Romanticism was based on the Christian world view of later centuries. In the case of the Jewish scholars and literati of that age, including Luzzatto, the Romantic tendency was evinced in the return to Jewish tradition, the regeneration of Jewish learning, the Hebrew language, literature, and poetry. It stimulated the study of the evolution of Judaism which lay the foundation of the Jewish Science movement. Not only the European but also the Italian Romantic movement affected Luzzatto. He specifically refers in one of his letters to the impact which the outstanding Italian Romantic writer, Alesandro Manzoni (1785-1873), had upon him.

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Two centuries before Shadal,* Blaise Pascal (1628-62) espoused the emotional approach to religion, declaring that "the heart has its own thoughts, which reason does not know." Several of Shadal's contemporaries influenced his attitude toward religion, especially Rousseau (1712-1778), whom Luzzatto mentions frequently and who, like Luzzatto, gave expression to conflicting rationalistic and Romantic viewpoints. Rousseau had started out as a rationalist, a disciple of Voltaire and the French Enlightenment, but in his later years he became its most violent opponent; accordingly, he at first challenged tradition and later defied the Enlightenment. Luzzatto did not evince both tendencies at successive periods, but he did so simultaneously, disapproving, for example, of the critical investigation of the Pentateuch on the ground that the sacred text was too carefully guarded to permit errors to creep in, yet unhesitatingly assailing the traditional view that the Hebrew diacritical signs are of Mosaic origin, and contending — as did Elijah Levita (1469-1549) almost four centuries earlier — that they were devised during the Gaonic period. Because of his contradictory tendencies, Luzzatto was regarded as a *Maskil* (an adherent of the Enlightenment) by the ultra-Orthodox, and as a fundamentalist by the *Maskilim*.

The Intellect and Emotions

Actually, one could easily attack the notion that because reason is an essential criterion in many aspects of life, it must be the sole test in all. We are equipped with sentiments and emotions that we should at times exploit in preference to logic. In the area of religion and conduct, as Rousseau already pointed out, it may be better to rely on sentiment and feelings rather than on syllogisms. In a similar vein, Luzzatto held that religion should direct man's emotions towards the good and the right. If philosophy should presume to guide religion, both would perish.¹¹

Another philosopher who exerted considerable influence on Shadal was Etienne Condillac (1715-1780), whom Luzzatto called his master and teacher.¹² A disciple of John Locke, Con-

* Shadal is an abbreviation which stands for the Hebrew initials of his name, Samuel David Luzzatto.

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dillac held that all conscious mental activities derive from sense perception. The mind is a *tabula rasa*¹³ (clean slate) on which sense impressions are recorded. Both Condillac and Locke regarded personality as an aggregate of sensations.

These inferences, however, lead logically to atheism and determinism. To forestall them, Condillac appended a treatise to his main psychological work, *Tracte des Sensations*, in which he repudiated anti-religious conclusions and upheld the doctrine of free will, as well as the substantive reality of the soul, as a sort of sixth human sense. Luzzatto not only accepted the religious principles outlined by Condillac, but in line with the latter's Sensualism asserted that what cannot be attained through sense perception cannot be investigated.¹⁴ Consequently, abstract questions, such as the existence of the Deity or the soul or immortality, or even the problem of Biblical miracles, fall outside the realm of human inquiry. Nevertheless, Shadal, in one of his Italian works, attempted to prove on the basis of the rationalistic argument from order, harmony, and the laws in nature that there is a divine guiding force in the universe.¹⁵

Luzzatto was a strange combination of critical and Romantic ideas — a sort of Janus head, each of whose two faces looked in an opposite direction. This accounts for his numerous inconsistencies and for his failure to develop a systematic philosophy. On the one hand, he follows a rationalistic course when he rejects mysticism as a current of thought foreign to Judaism; he does so again when he declares that the Zohar could not have been a creation of Simeon Bar Yochai, the second century sage, since it discusses the Hebrew diacritical marks and accents¹⁶ which, as previously observed, he regarded as representing the product of a considerably later age.* Despite this attitude toward mysticism and the Zohar, he nevertheless believed that the dead appearing in dreams confirm the existence of another world.¹⁷ We discern another logical incongruity in his stance on the Book of Isaiah. Though Shadal did not insist on the absolute incorruptibility of the texts of the Hebrew prophetic books, he, like other Traditionalists, found sufficient reason to uphold the unity of the book of Isaiah, includ-

* Luzzatto's view, however, runs counter to the Talmudic position. Cf. *Nedarim* 37a, *Berakhot* 62a and *Eruvin* 53a. — Ed.

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ing the latter portion beginning with chapter 40, which Krochmal and most Bible critics since the nineteenth century had attributed to one or more later prophets; in fact, he broke with his friend, Solomon Judah Rapoport, a noted Hebrew scholar, on this issue. Luzzatto simply maintained that the same author could employ various styles of writing; moreover, that it would be an insult to earlier generations to charge that they did not accurately transmit so important a work as the Book of Isaiah. This opinion, however, did not deter him from making corrections in its text, as he did in non-Mosaic books of the Bible.

Shadal adopted the critical approach when he attributed the Book of Ecclesiastes to a much later date than the traditional one. Moreover, notwithstanding the fact that the Book of Ecclesiastes is part of the Sacred Scriptures, he opposed its pessimistic outlook. However, he upheld in the main the traditional view that the Psalms were the work of King David, though he admitted that there were some later Psalms. He believed, too, that the Book of Job was of Mosaic authorship and not a product of the post-Biblical period as Biblical scholars generally held.¹⁸ Though he regarded the Torah as being letter perfect and insisted that it "does not dread the light nor does it fear true criticism," he nevertheless maintained that it should not be exposed to question and scrutiny.

Scriptural Truth

The Jew, Luzzatto urges, must accept on faith the fundamental doctrine of the divine origin of the Torah and its corollary, the existence of One God, as the sole binding dogma in Judaism. From this belief the sanction for all religious laws and observances is derived. There may be other principles in the Torah, but they are not considered as primary in Judaism. For this reason, Luzzatto points out, as did Mendelssohn before him, Jews could differ among themselves on a host of religious matters without being considered heretics, as illustrated by the case of Hasdai Crescas (1340-1410), or his disciple, Joseph Albo (1380-1440), who took issue with Maimonides for failing to distinguish in his Thirteen Articles of Faith between fundamental and derivative doc-

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trines. Crescas even questioned the doctrine of free will, while Gersonides (1288-1344) subscribed to the theory of creation from primordial matter and not creation *ex nihilo*; yet the piety of these men was not impugned, for Judaism does not lay stress on man's beliefs and opinions, its major emphasis being placed on practice. The Torah aims to lead man into paths of righteousness; to improve his ethics through obedience to its laws, rather than to insure a correct and uniform faith.

Luzzatto is firmly convinced of the truth of the miracles recounted in the Bible, as well as of prophecy, for he declares that all natural laws are of necessity the consequences of God's will,¹⁹ since the natural forces are not self-propelling. Man knows only the laws of cause and effect, which are merely a matter of the sensations and experience — but supernatural events are beyond these domains. It is not impossible that something may take place outside the area of sense perception or experience. Prophecy, too, falls in this category; it contradicts experience and experience cannot, therefore, be invoked to confirm it. Like Judah Halevi, Shadal regarded the miracles associated with the Exodus as historical,²⁰ since they were confirmed by 600,000 living witnesses on their way from Egypt.

Though he is firmly convinced of the truth of the Bible, Luzzatto asserts, nevertheless, that the main function of the Torah is to foster better human behavior. The search for pure truth is the domain of philosophy; the purpose of religion is to teach virtue and direct people in the righteous path.²⁴ The Deity cannot always employ perfect truth in His communication with man, for it is beyond the latter's power to grasp it. Accordingly, society cannot be sustained on the basis of genuine truth; it depends on the kind of illusion that nature itself occasionally resorts to in performing God's will. Nature, for example, conceals the underlying biological purpose of marriage and wedlock, procreation and its attendant responsibilities and burdens of parenthood, behind the overpowering emotion of romantic and parental love. Similarly, the Bible hides the true reason for sacrifice and worship behind the simple notion that the Lord is concerned with these rituals, when their prime purpose is actually the psychological effect on the worshipper who is to be impressed by the ritual with a sense of hu-

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mility and reverence.

Ethics of Judaism

Luzzatto regarded Judaism in this light, as a religion of the heart rather than of the intellect; its doctrines, he observed, give evidence of the spirit of compassion with which man is naturally endowed,²² and which impels him to do good for its own sake. This sense of pity is an outgrowth of the normal human tendency of self-love projected to another being. This impulse animates, Luzzatto indicates, many of the Scriptural and rabbinic precepts, exemplified by the Biblical provision for the return at night of the pledged garment (Ex. 22:25), or the institution of the Sabbatical year (Deut. 15:9) which cancels all debts and relieves the poor man of a paramount financial burden. Characteristic of this trait, too, is the rabbinic law prohibiting an employer from depriving the porters of their wages, because they accidentally broke the barrel of wine they carried, (*Bava Metzia* 83a). The attitude toward the widow, orphan, and stranger, so often stressed, exemplified the quality of mercy in the Mosaic and Talmudic laws. It is for this reason that even the pagan people, in ancient times, acknowledged the high morality of Israel, for even the royal sinners among them, like Ahab, extended forbearance and kindness (I Kings 20:31).

The Bible, of course, also includes precepts which may appear to us as brutal — for example, the commandment, “thou shalt not suffer any soul to live” (Deut. 20:16) from among the Canaanites condemned to annihilation. But Shadal draws a parallel between this kind of Biblical injunction and various natural catastrophes.²³ Both nature and Torah are manifestations of God. There is no point in questioning inevitable natural disasters. Shadal’s unshakeable faith in divine mercy, kindness and justice is especially moving in view of the many tragedies he experienced. His first wife died in 1841 following a protracted siege of melancholia which continued for eight years after the death of a young child, and his other children were constantly ailing. His eldest son, Oheb Ger (Philoxenus),²⁴ a highly gifted and promising young scholar, died at twenty-five; his only daughter, Miriam,

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who was very talented linguistically, passed away unexpectedly at the age of eighteen. Yet Luzzatto remained steadfast in his faith despite his numerous adversities.

Abrahamism and Atticism

Western civilization, Luzzatto explains, is composed of two antithetical forces: Atticism, the culture of ancient Greece or Athens, and Abrahamism, the religious thought of the Jews, which originated with Abraham, chosen of God, because he rejected polytheism. God had charged Abraham and his descendants with the duty of preserving both Judaism and universal ethics for posterity. As a means of setting them apart from other peoples, the Jews were given special precepts regarding diet, circumcision, laws of purity and sacrifice. It is only in the distinctive rites essential to Jewish group coherence and survival that Judaism differentiates between Jew and Gentile. Unlike other faiths, Judaism promises salvation to the righteous of *all* people. Accordingly, all men are God's children, but the Jews are His Chosen People, for they are a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6) and as such must bear special ethical and ritual responsibilities and obligations. Their selection is thus merely the application of the idea of "noblesse oblige."

According to Luzzatto, mankind is indebted to Israel for morality. Such notions as justice and uprightness were received as divine gifts at Sinai.²⁵ On the other hand, Greece gave to the world philosophy, science and art. Our predilection for the beautiful and pleasant over the good and beneficial, our preference for delightful rhetoric over genuine truth, for theoretic abstraction over integrity and honesty, and generally, the pursuit of pleasure, pride, and wealth, Luzzatto attributes to Athens. He sees no virtue in technocracy; he points up the moral lag in our culture to which Rousseau and others made reference; and this, too, he charges to Athens and its rationalistic doctrines. "When were there as many great inventions as in this generation, yet have these new discoveries eliminated war, murder, robbery, poverty, disease, envy, hate, oppression, and untimely death?" Shadal challenges. He reproaches man for having improved his machines

but not himself.

The Greek elements in our civilization, Luzzatto complains, have produced a meaningless intellectuality, suitable for philosophers but not for the masses who require the vitamins of morality.²⁶ The exaltation of reason, according to Luzzatto, is foreign to Judaism. He therefore criticizes Maimonides and Ibn Ezra for their rationalistic inclinations, which were prone to divert Judaism from its true course into alien channels of thought. Maimonides is attacked for not citing the Rabbinic sources for the decisions in his Code; but even more so for having advocated Aristotle's Golden Mean instead of the uncompromising path of the deity. Ibn Ezra is assailed for his leanings toward Hellenistic rationalism which leads to speculation and not to concrete action toward the goal of human betterment. After centuries of contemplation philosophers have as yet failed to agree on any one system of thought; they have, however, made pessimists of people. On the other hand, Judaism demands of an individual that he follow the divine precepts, in order to attain the lofty heights of the righteous, who, according to the Talmud, are even greater than the heavenly angels. To achieve true progress, civilization must strengthen its religious and ethical moorings, while combatting and countering its immoral, atheistic Greek foundations. This attitude prompts Luzzatto to proclaim feelingly, "My God is not the God of Kant, but the God of the *Tanakh*."²⁷

Luzzatto and Spinoza

Luzzatto regarded Baruch Spinoza as the epitome of the philosopher. A son of Marrano parents, Spinoza received a good Jewish education, on which he later drew for some of his philosophical theories.

Spinoza, the Jew steeped in monotheistic thought, diverges from the dualism of his master, Descartes. For Spinoza there is only one single substance — God, Who is not a separate independent Being, but *Deus sive natura*: God is nature; the natural order and God are one. Everything that exists or occurs in the world is an aspect of one of the two attributes of God—thought and extension. The spiritual or mental life of man is as much a part of God as the sands and the waters of the sea.

This view of God led the German mystic and Romanticist Novalis to describe Spinoza as "God intoxicated," while others like Shadal branded Spinoza an atheist. Spinoza's God is not Luzzatto's Creator of the universe, the ethical God of Judaism or its daughter religions, which are predicated on a belief in a living, loving, moral Deity who is concerned with the conduct and welfare of His creatures. Spinoza's God lacks a moral purpose in the universe. Spinoza, too, is a rigid determinist, in the tradition of the ancient Stoics. He maintained that "all things which happen, happen according to the fixed law of nature." One's selection of a course of action or behavior is, it follows, the product of pre-conditions, psychological, or other natural factors; there is then no free choice or free will. Nothing is inherently good or bad in the world; good and bad is always relative to a given situation. The two qualities are, therefore, not opposing concepts. Man must learn to surrender to the natural sequence of events, not to react to them emotionally but rather free himself from the shackles of his normal sentiments and live as *sub specie aeternitatis* (under the aspect of eternity). The highest goal of man should be the intellectual love of God, which one can achieve through a better knowledge of the world, which will endow him with greater power and control over his environment.

Without attempting to scrutinize the fallacies in the reasoning or assumptions of Spinoza, we shall touch merely on some of their implications. Spinoza's God is too detached from humanity to have any moral influence upon it. He is not the God of Revelation or the God who inspired the Hebrew prophets to protest against iniquity and injustice and who, when catastrophe struck their people, brought them solace and comfort. Spinoza's doctrine of resignation would make the sacrifices of the Jewish martyrs—in fact, the entire struggle that is Jewish history—meaningless. His attitude, too, toward good and evil deprives men of the motivation and clarity of choice that religion offers; moreover, it nullifies the message and purpose of the teachers and sages in Judaism and their lofty ideals. With his beliefs, Spinoza had read himself out of Judaism; by his own admission, he did so even before his formal excommunication in 1656.

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Spinoza's fundamental philosophy and metaphysical outlook were thoroughly repugnant to Luzzatto. His extreme rationalism clashed sharply with Luzzatto's Romanticism. It is logically pointless for anyone to assume an attitude of piety or worship of a Divinity that represents merely the fixed and immutable order of nature or a mechanical process. Luzzatto, moreover, extolled the human emotions, which Spinoza claimed merely enslaved man and from which man had to liberate himself, in order to achieve true happiness, for one who does not love or hate, Luzzatto maintained, is not human, but a flint of rock.²⁸ Luzzatto assumed further that compassion was the source of Judaism while Spinoza regarded this emotion as a weak, feminine virtue. Luzzatto, too, cherished the Jewish precepts and rituals, while Spinoza failed to see any intrinsic sanctity in them. The doctrines of the Torah which Luzzatto considered eternal, Spinoza saw only as having been designed for the government and survival of the ancient Jewish State.

These differences in viewpoint led Luzzatto to denounce Spinoza and to carry on a polemic war with the latter's disciples. Luzzatto regarded Spinozism as the confirmed enemy of Judaism. "Only he whose heart is stone can see merely determinism in the miracles of nature,"²⁹ Luzzatto wrote. He further declared that one who believed as Spinoza did was bound to be an immoral person, for a doctrine that there is no moral law or moral judge in the world, leads to ethical chaos. Luzzatto's opinions were thus entirely irreconcilable with those of the seventeenth century philosopher.

IV. Jewish Nationalism

Nationalistic Influences

To the extent that Romanticism focused on the history of a people, it gave further impulse to the growth of its nationalistic spirit. Romanticism concentrated on the early centuries and the primitive stages of the group, when it was relatively free from the shackles of law, custom, and conventions of later ages. It held the tribal or ethnic unit in high esteem and sought out its dis-

