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WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN BIBLICAL AND TALMUDIC THOUGHT

I.

The ideal of *Imitatio Dei* occupies a central place in the religious and ethical thought of Judaism.¹ Man, who is created in the image of God,² is enjoined to pattern his life after the attributes of God.

And thou shalt walk in His ways.³

After the Lord your God ye shall walk.⁴

Be like unto Him; just as He is merciful and gracious, so be thou likewise merciful and gracious.⁵

The doctrine of *Imitatio Dei* is found, in one form or another, in other religions as well as in the writings of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers.⁶ Thus we read in Plato's *Thaetetus* the words of Socrates:

Evils, Theodorus, can never pass away; for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good. Having no place among the gods in heaven, of necessity they hover around the mortal nature, and the earthly sphere. Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like Him is to become holy, just and wise.⁷

Aristotle rejects the ethical character of the gods or God. They are not engaged in acts of justice since they do not make contracts nor return deposits. Do they perform acts of bravery?

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They do not confront dangers nor run risks. Do they perform liberal acts? What money or articles do they have to hand out? They cannot be temperate since they have no vices. Now taking away action and production, what is left but contemplation?

Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness must be contemplative . . . for if the Gods have any care for human affairs, as they are thought to have, it would be reasonable both that they should delight in that which was best and most akin to them (i.e., reason) and that they should reward those who love and honor this most, as caring for the things that are dear to them and acting both rightly and nobly. And that all of these attributes belong most of all to the philosopher is manifest. He therefore is dearest to the gods.⁸

The Platonic ideal of *Imitatio Dei* includes ethical as well as noetic values. To be like God is to become holy, just, and wise. In Aristotle the concept of *Imitatio Dei* is almost devoid of ethical content, being primarily intellectualistic in character.⁹ In Judaism, however, *Imitatio Dei* possesses an exclusively ethical character. While the children of Israel are commanded to be *holy* like God,¹⁰ nowhere are they enjoined to strive to become *wise* like God, as is suggested in the *Thaetetus*. Since a primary attribute of the Deity is wisdom,¹¹ the question arises: Why is man not bidden to become wise like God? Is it because it would be futile for man to seek to emulate the infinite wisdom of God? But are not Divine mercy and goodness which extend over all His works ("The Lord is good to all and His mercies extend over all His works"¹²) equally unattainable by man? Ought not man to strive for the achievement of wisdom to the best of his ability, just as he strives to emulate the ethical attributes as far as he is capable?¹³ Is it that the ethical attributes are transitive while the intellectual ones are essential?

God's wisdom served as His instrument in the creation of the world, just as His goodness and mercy maintain it.¹⁴ The Divine wisdom of the Bible is not the passive contemplation of Aristotle's Prime Mover; it is not Thought thinking itself.¹⁵

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It is thought outwardly directed, wherewith a world outside of God is brought into being. Why is Biblical man not commanded to seek that wisdom whereby he emulates the creative powers of God? Was not man from the very beginning given the mandate to rule over the earth and subdue it?¹⁶ The answer is not that all men are not equally endowed with intelligence to pursue wisdom, while all normal men are regarded as capable of achieving moral excellency.^{16a} For again, what is expected of man is to do the best he can in whatever sphere of activity he is engaged, and to accept whatever responsibilities the occasion calls for as far as he is able.

This writer has suggested elsewhere that the wisdom Biblical man is commanded to seek is that which directs him to *Imitatio Dei*.¹⁷ That wisdom is synonymous with the knowledge of God which leads to mercy and righteousness. This conception of wisdom is promulgated by Jeremiah in his declaration:¹⁸

Thus saith the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord Who exercise mercy, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

We cannot then be asked to imitate God's wisdom, because for us wisdom is the means of achieving *Imitatio Dei*.

That Divine wisdom in the Bible is related to the creation of the world may also explain the absence of wisdom in the register of virtues to be pursued in aiming for *Imitatio Dei*.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths were broken up, and the skies drop down the dew.¹⁹

How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.²⁰

As a creative attribute, wisdom applies to God and not to man. By His grace, love, and compassion God maintains the world.²¹ These are the attributes that man is to follow.

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In the light of the above, the sequence of prayers in the supplication section of the *Amidah*²² becomes clearer. The section opens up with a plea for the Divine grant of wisdom and understanding. This plea is followed by entreaties that God help us to return to the Torah, that we be enabled to achieve repentance and forgiveness, that we be privileged to attain redemption, as well as prayers for other individual and national needs. The prayer for wisdom and understanding is tied up with the observance of the Torah and our restoration to God's grace. Wisdom is thus the search for the *knowledge of God*. It is the tool for the achievement of *Imitatio Dei*. The wisdom of God cannot serve as a model for imitation, for man is not a creator of worlds.²³ The wisdom and understanding which man should endeavor to possess is defined in the soul-stirring conclusion of the 28th chapter of Job: "And unto man He said: 'Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil that is understanding'." Man must pray for the acquisition of this wisdom, and by God's grace may achieve it. Having attained the wisdom of *Imitatio Dei*, other pathways of wisdom may be opened before man.²⁴

II.

The knowledge of God, according to the Bible, is the fruit of wisdom and the unfailing guide towards the achievement of *Imitatio Dei*. The concept of the *knowledge of God* is implicit in the Pentateuch, although the term itself is not found there. The Pentateuch constantly refers to *knowing God* in the sense of a recognition of certain specific truths concerning God and His relationship to mankind and Israel. God wants to be known as the One to Whom the earth belongs, as the Lord in its midst to Whom none is like, as the One besides Whom there is none else. He wants to be known as the Redeemer of Israel, as the One Who has performed all the wonders for Israel and as the Sanctifier of Israel.²⁵ In the early historical writings the phrase "they knew not the Lord"²⁶ may simply mean an unawareness or ignorance of the will of the Lord.

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But it may here already have the significance contained in the use of the term by the literary prophets, viz., the knowledge of the attributes of God which are to serve as the pattern for walking in His ways. Thus Hosea protests that "there is no truth, no mercy, and no *knowledge of God* in the land" (4:1, 6). Jeremiah declares, in the passage cited above, that the *knowledge of God* is the understanding that He exercises mercy, justice, and righteousness in the earth (9:23). Elsewhere he states that taking up the cause of the poor and needy—this is the *knowledge of God* (22:16). Isaiah inveighs against Israel's lack of knowledge and understanding: "Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider" (1:3). Israel's failure to know its God is contrasted with the ox's knowledge of its master. It was this ignorance that brought about Israel's expulsion from its land:²⁷ "Therefore My people are gone into captivity for want of knowledge." The ignorance of Israel is, of course, its total disregard of the ways which God revealed to Moses and the children of Israel, the *thirteen attributes of mercy* spoken of so often in Jewish tradition.²⁸ The *knowledge of God* will inspire the future scion of the house of David who will with righteousness judge the poor and will decide with equity for the meek of the land. In his reign the earth will be filled with the *knowledge of the Lord* as the waters cover the sea.

The *knowledge of God* which enables man to fulfill God's hopes that justice and righteousness will be implanted in the midst of the earth²⁹ is a derivative and mundane application of the wisdom which was God's medium in the creation of the world. While there can be no mimesis of Divine wisdom, there is a human wisdom which God grants to those that seek it and who are thereby led to *Imitatio Dei*.³⁰ The wisdom extolled in the sapiential literature of the Bible (disregarding at this time the wisdom sought for by Ecclesiastes³¹) may have its universal reference, may even be grounded to some degree in human experience,³² but is above all a gift freely granted by God to direct man not merely to prudential living or humble submission to God's will, but also as a guide to the achievement of his God-likeness. That the goal of this wisdom is to

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lead to *Imitatio Dei* is clearly brought out in the Book of Proverbs:

So that thou make thine ear to attend unto wisdom, and thy heart incline to discernment . . . then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the *knowledge of the Lord*, for the Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and discernment.^{32a}

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the *knowledge of the All-holy* is understanding.^{32b}

True wisdom is thus the pursuit of the *knowledge of God*. Wisdom sought for other objectives only renders one wise in his own eyes.³³ It appears to this writer that the *motif* of search for wisdom in order to attain *Imitatio Dei* is altogether lacking in the Wisdom Literature of the ancient Near East, whereas it constitutes a component *sui generis* of Biblical Wisdom Literature. The basic unity of prophetic and sapiential literature in the Bible is thereby confirmed.

The Torah, which in Jewish tradition is regarded as the earthly embodiment of Divine wisdom,³⁴ contains the knowledge of God whereby man is guided towards *Imitatio Dei*. The people that observes the Divine commandments will achieve recognition by other nations as "a wise and understanding people."³⁵ The wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations are nothing other than the righteousness of Israel's statutes and ordinances. As it is written:³⁶

For what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

At this juncture, from the vantage-point of the Book of Proverbs, another answer suggests itself to the original question: Why is man not enjoined to imitate the wisdom of God? Actually, picking up the clue from the Proverbs, he is. The wisdom which man is instructed to seek is a reflection of the wisdom of God, and in striving to pursue it, he is practicing *Imitatio Dei*. The Torah is Divine wisdom translated into human terms and the study of the Torah is an act of *Imitatio*

*Dei.*³⁷ *Mutatis mutandis*, God Himself is represented as engaged in the study of the Torah,³⁸ whereby the status of this study as a phase of the mimesis of the Divine is underscored, and the role of this study as a counterpart on a human level of Divine creativity is affirmed.³⁹

III.

It is, however, noteworthy that the quality of wisdom is, in the above-cited passage from Deuteronomy attributed to Israel by non-Israelite nations. The Torah is Israel's wisdom before the eyes of the nations, who admire the *wisdom* of its laws. For Israel, the laws are significant because they are righteous. While wisdom, particularly Divine wisdom, is glorified, there is a shying away from using the adjective *chakham* (the wise one) in reference to God, just as there is an apparent hesitation to include wisdom among the Divine attributes that are to be imitated. Is it because in the non-Jewish world wisdom was regarded as the peculiar province of gods or demigods and anyone endowed with wisdom was regarded as a divine being?⁴⁰ Was Israel's hesitancy to use the appellations "wise" and "understanding" (*nabon*) for the Deity and its substitution of the moral attributes "good" (*tov*), "gracious" (*chasid*), "merciful" (*chanun*), or even "impassioned" (*kanna*) and "retributive" (*nokem*), in any sense, a deliberate protest against pagan ideas? Relevant to this problem is also the question as to the reason for the disappearance of the concept of the creation of man in the image of God, a cornerstone of the Biblical outlook on man, from the entire Bible, after its last mention in the ninth chapter of Genesis 9.6.⁴¹

The answer to the second question perhaps provides us with a clue to the first. In the third chapter of Genesis man is enticed to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The serpent assures man that once he has eaten from this tree he will be like God, knowing good and evil. The term "knowledge of good and evil" probably signifies a comprehension of total reality. Man is misled into believing that he can attain a comprehensive knowledge of the universe, and consequently an unlimited con-

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trol over it.⁴² The concept of man's creation in the image of God undoubtedly refers to human intelligence whereby man exercises dominion over the world.⁴³ Man who is persuaded into believing himself a superhuman being, omniscient and omnipotent, distorts the doctrine of the image of God into self-apotheosis. It is particularly noteworthy that following the last Biblical reference to the image of God in man we read about the efforts of man to scale the heavens, an effort that Jewish tradition associates with an attempt to dethrone God.⁴⁴ After this episode, there is no mention of the image of God in man, although there is no implication that after the *dor haflagah*⁴⁵ (the generation of dispersion) man was deprived of this unique endowment.⁴⁶

The distortion of the concept of the image of God in man, whereby man elevates himself to the status of a god, may also be responsible for the Biblical ambivalence towards wisdom. As mentioned earlier, there is an obvious aversion to apply the adjective "wise" to God. In the Book of Job where God is described as *wise*, his wisdom and power are associated with his apparent unconcern for His creatures:⁴⁷

He is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against Him and prospered? Who removeth the mountains and they know it not, when He overturneth them in His anger, Who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

The only other instance where the adjective is used is also in an ironic context:⁴⁸ "Yet He also is wise and bringeth evil." The wisdom of God is stressed by Isaiah as though under protest in order to assure Israel that the wisdom of Egypt will not prevail against God. He *also* is wise.⁴⁹

Most remarkable is the fact that the terms *wisdom* and *understanding*, as well as the verb *hitchakhem*, derived from the substantive *chokmah* (wisdom) do not appear in the Bible prior to the Joseph story and then in an Egyptian context. These words first emerge from the mouth of Joseph when he stands in the presence of Pharaoh:⁵⁰ "Let Pharaoh seek out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt." Pharaoh uses similar phraseology:⁵¹ "For as much as God hath shown

thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou." Wisdom was apparently regarded as a special domain of the Egyptians. The first "wise men" (*chakhamim*) mentioned in the Bible are Egyptians, but always in conjunction with magicians and wizards.⁵² These "wise men" apparently are regarded as possessing an occult, black wisdom which they used to keep Pharaoh ensconced on his throne.⁵³ Egyptian "wisdom" is also sinister in other respects. It is Pharaoh, who in plotting his evil designs against the children of Israel, says:⁵⁴ "Come and let us deal *wisely* (*nitchakhmah*) with them." Could it be that the perversion of wisdom by the Egyptians has rendered the term *chakham* of questionable value in reference to God?

The paradoxical character of wisdom is emphasized throughout the Bible. The Egyptians boasted of their wisdom:⁵⁵ "How can ye say unto Pharaoh: I am the son of the wise, the son of the ancient kings? Where are they then thy wise men?" Tyre and Sidon were noted for their wisdom. To Tyre, Ezekiel remonstrates:⁵⁶ "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that they can hide from thee." Sennacherib attributed his victories not only to his strength, but also to his wisdom:⁵⁷ "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." The Edomites belonged to the children of the East who had a reputation for wisdom:⁵⁸ "Shall I not in that day, said the Lord, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and discernment out of the mount of Esau?" (Ob. 1:8). Of the Babylonians, who were deeply versed in the movements of the heavenly bodies and specialized in what was then regarded as the queen of the sciences, astrology, the prophet says:⁵⁹ "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverteth thee." God had endowed all families of the earth with wisdom in various departments of life. But they had betrayed God's gift. They employed it for a multitude of sorceries and an abundance of enchantments, for wizardry and magic,⁶⁰ and the achievement of riches whereby their heart was lifted up.⁶¹ Wisdom used by nations to achieve power, wealth and dominion for self-aggrandizement was responsible for their downfall.⁶²

While pagan man was puffed up with pride because of his intellectual attainments, the Bible emphasized the limitations

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of man's knowledge and the unattainability of Divine wisdom. Man stands at the mere threshold of knowledge. In God's answer to Job from the whirlwind, man's inability to comprehend the ultimate mysteries of the universe is underscored. No man has entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep. The gates of death have not been revealed to him, nor the portals of the netherworld.⁶³ Not merely the mysteries of the macrocosm are beyond the grasp of man. He knows so little about the environment he lives in. In the glorious twenty-eighth chapter of Job the problem is brought out in all its starkness. Man's technological abilities are overwhelming. He puts forth his hand upon the flinty rock and overturns the mountains by the roots. He cuts out channels among the rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing. He binds the streams so that they do not trickle, and he brings forth hidden things to light.⁶⁴ Man's knowledge remains limited and fragmentary. It does not reach the abyss and the depths of the sea; it cannot enter into the realms of the netherworld.⁶⁵ Man's scientific attainments and his control over the world are but a dim reflection of Divine wisdom and power. What then can man hope for in his striving after wisdom? The answer is given, as stated above, in the awe-inspiring conclusion of the great chapter: "And unto man he said: 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding'."

The Biblical despair at the attainment of wisdom, expressed so poignantly by Job and Ecclesiastes⁶⁶ is grounded in the very depths of the Biblical outlook on the creatureliness of man. This despair is not to be equated with a denigration of knowledge and learning in all their ramifications. An understanding of the world in all its aspects, within human limits, is indispensable for the application of the laws of the Torah to the conditions of daily life.⁶⁷ It is only out of a world with a profound respect for wisdom in the broadest sense that there could have emerged a formula of gratitude to God, to be recited in the presence of a sage, regardless of origin or religious adherence, for having granted of His wisdom to human beings, and the inclusion in the daily service of an expression of thankfulness

to God for the rudimentary intelligence implanted in other creatures.⁶⁸ In Israel, there were youths "who were skilful in all wisdom, and skilful in knowledge, and discerning in thought."⁶⁹ The traditional Jewish love of learning, which was never so restricted as to exclude an understanding of the world in which man lived, and which gave birth to the celebrated Jewish intellectuality, could not have originated in a vacuum. The despair at achieving a full and comprehensive knowledge of the universe finds its compensation in the emphasis on the attainability of wisdom, knowledge and understanding leading to moral excellence.

IV.

In the countries surrounding Israel, men gloried in their wisdom and set their heart as the heart of God. In Israel wisdom was primarily the instrument of judgment. Moses sought wise and understanding men to judge his people and help him bear the burdens of leadership. The wisdom that Solomon requested from God is the understanding heart to judge His people. The scion of the house of David who will arise at the end of days will be gifted with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding . . . to judge the poor with righteousness and decide with equity for the meek of the land."⁷⁰

The significance of wisdom in other disciplines is, nevertheless, not ignored in Israel. Special recognition is given to artistic and architectural skills. The builders of the Tabernacle in the wilderness were filled by the Lord with "the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, in silver, in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship."⁷¹ The architect of Solomon's Temple was similarly endowed:⁷² "He was filled with wisdom and understanding and knowledge, to work in brass." While on the surface it appears that these passages refer simply to unusual artistic ability, another level of wisdom may be intimated which is of a mystical or metaphysical character. So it was understood by some of the Tal-

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mudic sages.⁷³ The Tabernacle, as well as the Temple, were to serve as an *Imago Mundi*.⁷⁴ Its architects, designers and artisans were to be not merely men of skill, like the wise-hearted women who spun with their hands,^{74a} but were to have an understanding of the inner symbolism of the structures. The wisdom and understanding which were the instruments of creation are also the media for the construction of a dwelling-place for God upon the earth,⁷⁵ as well as for the achievement of the eschatological goals of history. The establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth will be accomplished by the Messianic King who will be endowed with the spirit of wisdom and understanding. The wisdom of Solomon, whose reign was of a Messianic character,⁷⁶ may also have had its metaphysical levels. Wisdom and understanding, which are God's gift granted to man to achieve *Imitatio Dei*, constitute a special blessing given to the most worthy for the conversion of the tools of creation into instruments for universal redemption.

V.

Biblical wisdom is the medium in man's struggle to achieve his God-likeness. Obversely, Biblical folly is not primarily synonymous with intellectual stupidity. It is the rejection of *Imitatio Dei* as the great goal of human existence, and the exploitation of knowledge for unethical ends.⁷⁷ The scoffer (*letz*) who is the target of many Biblical barbs is likewise not an ignorant rascal, but the articulate cynic who mocks at the knowledge of God.⁷⁸ The Biblical "brutish man" and the "fool," as well as the one who lacks "an understanding heart" are those who are "wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight."⁷⁹ They call good evil and evil good, they change light into darkness and darkness into light, and change the bitter into sweet and the sweet into bitter.⁸⁰

VI.

In the Talmud, the goal of wisdom is succinctly defined by

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Raba, the great Babylonian *Amora* and one of the fathers of Jewish rationalism,⁸¹ in the following words:⁸²

The purpose of wisdom is *repentance and good deeds*,⁸³ so that one shall not occupy himself with the study of the Scriptures and the Mishnah and hold in contempt his father and mother, as well as his teachers, and those who are greater than him in wisdom and in years.

Knowledge in all its ramifications and its standard-bearers are held in great reverence by the sages of the Talmud.⁸⁴

Whoever maintains there is no wisdom in Edom is certainly mistaken.⁸⁵

Whoever makes a wise declaration, even among the heathens, is regarded as a sage.⁸⁶

A condition for the attainment of prophecy is proficiency in all manner of wisdom.⁸⁷ Yet true wisdom is knowledge of the Torah.⁸⁸ But even the study and knowledge of the Torah, when pursued or used for improper ends is destructive and leads to a desecration of the Name of God.⁸⁹ The study of the Torah must be for its own sake (*lishmah*), i.e., for the fulfillment of the Torah in one's life, so that thereby he achieve Torah-likeness which is God-likeness. The pursuit of learning, even in Torah, is arid if it does not lead to fulfillment. The study of Torah that is divorced from acts of love and kindness is Godless. The God of truth demands the implementation of His truth in life.⁹⁰ Study is great because it leads to action.⁹¹ Where there is an excess of knowledge over good deeds we have a dry land where no tree can flourish.⁹²

Through wisdom, which is the product of human reason, great things can be accomplished. Rationality, itself a gift of God, can determine valid criteria of right and wrong.⁹³ Were the Torah to be forgotten it could be restored by the sheer power of reason.⁹⁴ The Patriarchs observed the entire Torah before it was revealed to Israel, because, by the light of reason they had independently arrived at its truths,⁹⁵ as Israel will in the future.⁹⁶ Human reason oftentimes renders the need for Revela-

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tion superfluous.⁹⁷ Yet, whatever form wisdom takes, it can be revered only if it leads to love, and if its truth is a guide to peace.⁹⁸

Therefore love ye truth and peace.⁹⁹

Whatever causes injury belongs neither to the category of truth nor the category of peace.¹⁰⁰

Obviously, truth cannot always coexist with peace.¹⁰¹ "My soul hath long had her dwelling with him that hateth peace." Truth may sometimes have to battle for its rights. But it is not truth if it does not aspire for peace.

Returning once again to the mystery of man's fall as recounted in the third chapter of Genesis, its meaning may perhaps be more transparent on the basis of the foregoing. Man is warned to eschew the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As suggested above,¹⁰² "knowledge of good and evil" is synonymous with a comprehension of the totality of things. Man was warned against striving for knowledge as an end *per se*. He was to pursue knowledge for the purpose of implementing its love-bearing qualities (*chesed*). However, man yielded to the temptation of engaging in a fruitless accumulation of knowledge, satisfied to lead a life of pure contemplation in which the outside world is reduced to sheer illusion, unworthy of man's attention.¹⁰³

Needless to say, the great problem of our age is the direction of wisdom to the goals of love and the orientation of truth towards peace. In an era when the knowledge explosion has enriched man's comprehension of all departments of human experience to an unanticipated degree the great *desideratum* is not the curbing of the thirst for ever-increasing knowledge, but channeling it towards the proper goals, so that knowledge be converted into the wisdom of *Imitatio Dei*. That the achievement of this transformation is beset with agonizing difficulties is evident to every thoughtful person. But no one is free from aspiring towards this goal in the best way we can in whatever work one is engaged. Would that one of us could echo the words of the Jewish writer of the eleventh century:

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I am the son of a people to whom all the sciences and arts that bring harm to humanity are forbidden territory.¹⁰⁵

NOTES

1. See my paper *The Image of God and Imitatio Dei* in *Judaism*, Volume 12, No. 1, 57-77. Cf. also my paper in *TRADITION*, Vol. 9, No. 1-2, pp. 114-5.

2. Gen. 1:27, 9:6.

3. Deut. 28:9.

4. Deut. 13:5.

5. *Shabbat* 133b. Cf. other references in *Judaism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 ff., notes 18 ff.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 67 ff. and notes. To the sources there cited, an additional reference should be made to the presence in Zoroastrianism of the doctrine of *Imitatio Dei*. See *Zoroastrianism* by Sir Rustom Masani (Collier Books, 1962), pp. 88-89.

7. 176. This quotation is from Jowett's translation. Cf. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 19. The Greek quotation lends itself to another translation. While the rendering of the *Loeb Classical Library* translation is identical with that of Jowett, the German translation of (Platon, *Sämtliche Dialoge*, ed. Apelt, Band IV, *Theaetet*, S. 85) is different: "ihm ähnlich werden heisst aber gerecht und fromm werden *auf dem Grunde richtiger Einsicht*." The French translation corresponds to the latter (*juste, saint, dans la clarté de l'esprit*), while the Latin corresponds with that of Jowett (*cum prudentia, iustitia, simul et sanctitas*). According to Liddel-Scott, s.v. *méta* either translation is possible. It is to be noted that the Jowett (as well as the Latin) have altered the original order of the virtues. I am indebted to Prof. Frank Talmage of the University of Toronto for the French and Latin references. I cannot, unfortunately, cite where they appear. Nevertheless, regardless how the Platonic passage is to be translated, the problem discussed here is not irrelevant even though it was aroused by Jowett's translation.

8. *Nich. Eth.* 1178b.

9. I say *almost* because of Aristotle's inclusion of the phrase "and acting both rightly and nobly" which implies that moral behavior is pleasing to the gods. Aristotle is also aware of god-like virtue, but he attributes the idea of man becoming god-like or divine to the Spartans. He himself maintains that the gods are beyond virtue (*Nich. Eth.* 1145a). My statement in *Judaism*, *op. cit.*, note 75 thus requires modification.

10. Lev. 14:2.

11. See A. Altman, *The Divine Attributes*, in *Judaism*, Volume 15, No. 1, pp. 40-60, *passim*. On Biblical references see below.

12. Ps. 145:9. Cf. II Samuel 24:14; I Chr. 21:13.

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13. Cf. *Judaism*, "The Image of God and Imitatio Dei" (see above note 1), n. 116, on the duty of man to strive as far as he can. According to Jewish sources, man can attain wisdom, whereby he achieves God-likeness, just as he can achieve the fulfillment of other attributes (needless to say, not on the same level as God). Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 63, and note 68. However, the imperative to strive for wisdom seems to be lacking.
14. Jer. 10:12; Pr. 3:19; Ps. 104:24; 136:5. God's love is also involved in creation (Ps. *ib.*). It is God's love (*Chesed*) that maintains the world. Cf. Ps. 136; *ib.* 119:64; *et passim*. Cf. *Daily Prayer Book in Yotzer*: "He renews in His goodness every day the work of creation." See, however, in *Daily Prayer Book, Evening Service*: "With wisdom He opens the gates and with understanding He alters times and changes the seasons."
15. See the discussion in W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (Meridian Books, New York, 1960), 178 ff.
16. Gen. 1:26; 28.
- 16a. Cf. *Niddah* 16b; Maimonides *Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah*, v. 5; 2.
17. *Judaism, op. cit.*, note 104. It has come to my attention through Wolfson's *Philo*, I, 148, that Philo offers a definition of wisdom that is close to the one presented in this paper. See *Quod Deus Immutabilis Sit*, 142-3.
18. Jeremiah 9:22-23.
19. Prov. 3:19-20.
20. Psalms 104:24.
21. See above, note 14.
22. See Maim. *Mishneh Torah, Tefillah*, 1, 4.
23. See, however, *Sanhedrin* 65b, 67b; *Gen. Rabbah* 98, 3; *Zohar* I, 4b. The possibility of man to create worlds or creatures is variously interpreted. See commentaries to above passages. On all accounts it certainly is not a *creatio ex nihilo*. The reference is probably to the maintenance and perfection of already existing worlds. According to one opinion, demons are endowed with the power to create macroscopic objects (*Sanhedrin* 67b). Undoubtedly, it is assumed they do so out of already existent materials. They certainly were not believed to have the power of creating worlds in any sense. Evil creates illusory worlds (*Zohar* I, 5a).
24. *Berakhot* 55a, based on Exodus 31:6 and Daniel 2:21; Cf. *Rosh Hashanah* 21b.
25. Cf. my work *Torath Moshe ve-ha-Neviim* (Jerusalem, Mossad Harav Kook, 1961), 52-53.
26. I Samuel, 2:12.
27. Isaiah 5:13; Cf. 27:11; 29:24; see also Deut. 32:6; 28.
28. See *Judaism, op. cit.*, 59, 61, and notes.
- 28a. Isaiah 11:2, 4, 9.
29. Gen. 18:19; Is. 5:7; *et passim*.
30. Proverbs 2:1-12.
31. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes, is, in the years of his quest, apparently a type of philosophic wisdom, without particular religious significance. See

