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Introduction

Judaism as we know it took shape in the first seven centuries of the Common Era. Labeled "rabbinic" after the title of its principal authority, the rabbi, or "talmudic" on the basis of one of its authoritative books, the Babylonian Talmud, or "classical" or "normative" because of its authoritative status in later times, the Judaism studied here succeeded all others of antiquity and defined all to come. Its myth and rite governed the religion of Judaism from late antiquity to our own day. "Formative Judaism" is the Judaism that is known to us in authoritative works of Torah, that is, the canon of law and of biblical explanation and theology, that have defined matters ever since their formulation.

The works of law begin with the Mishnah, a law code of deep philosophical interest, completed around A.D. 200, and extend through the Tosefta, a collection of supplements to the Mishnah that was closed some time before A.D. 400. Next comes the Talmud of the Land of Israel, a systematic amplification of the Mishnah, concluded about 400, and the Talmud of Babylonia, an equivalent treatment of the Mishnah, completed about 600. Together, as Judaism has always taught, they comprise the principal parts of the oral, or memorized, Torah revealed by God to Moses at Mount Sinai. The works of theology and biblical explanation, or exegesis – Mekhilta to Exodus, Sifra to Leviticus, Sifré to Numbers, another Sifré to Deuteronomy, Genesis Rabbah, and Leviticus Rabbah – as well as works devoted to Lamentations, Esther, and some other biblical books, form the other part of the same oral, or memorized, Torah that was given written form in late antiquity. These words of exegesis of the Mishnah and of Scripture constitute the definitive canon, or authoritative writings, of Judaism as it emerged from its formative age in late antiquity. If, therefore, we want to know how Judaism defines the virtues of the heart, these are the books to which we turn for the first definitive answer.

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Ancient philosophers attended to the topic of "virtue," a complex of attitudes encompassing feelings, emotions, and behavior. Virtue embodied one's attitude toward others, one's inner feelings, as well as aspects of public action and individual belief. Hence, virtue constituted not only a personal, but a public and political dimension of individual life. How one showed virtue, what one felt at a critical moment – these exterior and interior expressions of virtue were matters of intense political interest. Merely by invoking the name of a philosophical school, that of the Stoics, we recognize how critical a role attitude played in philosophy. Right attitude – stoic acceptance, in this case – constituted a public expression of inner virtue. The ancient sages of Judaism, in many ways philosophers, taught a doctrine of virtue. Exemplars of civic virtue – right attitude, right emotion, right conduct within the heart – they addressed their nation with a concrete message. The details of the doctrine of virtue, both interior and exterior, would not have surprised other philosophers of their age. What we want to know, in exploring their view of virtue in attitude and action, feeling and relationship, is how their doctrine of virtue was related to their context and circumstance, for as I have stressed, attitudes governing affections (emotions) and actions constituted political factors, not merely private and adventitious whim. And when we understand the interplay between private feeling and public policy, we shall attain our goal: to grasp how sages mended the broken heart of the defeated nation and prepared the people for a long history of hope despite the dire circumstances of their political world. Israel never despaired but always kept the faith, and that attitude of faithfulness and hope, which sustained the Jewish people, was derived, in part, from the sages' doctrine for the virtuous heart.

In this book I trace the unfolding of the sages' doctrine of right attitude, encompassing as much sentiment as sensibility, behavior, and belief: the shape and structure of the heart. But matters of the heart are a fact of society and politics. Therefore, I propose to trace the emergence of teachings about the virtue of the heart in the successive documents of the canon of Judaism, "the one whole Torah of Moses, our rabbi," and to explain how those doctrines are related to the society and politics of Israel, the Jewish nation, in the Land of Israel as well as in Babylonia. As we shall see, a single doctrine of inner virtue predominates over a very long period of time. Here I shall delineate the system and attempt to explain why it endured for as long as it did.

If we wish to know the Torah's definition of a good Jew, we shall find it here. And since, in rabbinic Judaism, to be a good Jew meant to form oneself in God's image and after God's likeness, we realize that, in studying virtue, we enter the heart of God. Thus, the issues of this book are in no way trivial.

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What, then, is the Torah's vision of the educated heart? And how will Jews serve God by disciplining affection, as much as intellect and action? These are the questions that define our inquiry in this book. As we shall see, the repertoire of approved and disapproved feelings remains constant through the half-millennium of the unfolding of the canon of Judaism from the Mishnah through the Talmud of Babylonia. I want to know why. The question becomes even more relevant in light of important changes in the treatment of other critical questions in the same books of formative Judaism. In Chapter IX questions of exegetical method, of teleological focus and definition, and of doctrinal and symbolic substance are shown to elicit diverse answers as the literature unfolds. Why should so much have changed while the Torah's message about virtue remained the same? And how, in the formative history of Judaism, shall we account for the distinctive and limited character of the heart's vocabulary taught by our sages as the language of the faith? These two questions flow together into my fundamental theory about why in the history of Judaism some things change and others do not.

In the sages' doctrine the ideal Jew exhibits these virtues: accommodation, congeniality, humility, forbearance, and a spirit of conciliation. Were we to claim that these virtues are the province of emotion alone, we should err, for these matters of deliberation are given expression in our deeds. Thus, a sharp distinction between interior attitude and public action is misleading. If we ignore the emotional foundation of attitudes that lead to actions, pretending that virtue comes to expression only in deed and not in deliberation – right feeling and right action alike – we impose distinctions on what truly forms a union. Accordingly, when we speak of the heart and its virtues we deal with emotions but also with aspects of behavior and demeanor. We address attitude, belief, and behavior as much as feeling and deep sentiment. Sages prescribe not only how Jews are to behave but also how they are to tame and teach the heart to want to behave in the right way: right attitude, right action, resting on the educated heart – virtue. Now, as we shall see, the emotions encouraged by Judaism in its formative age, such as humility, forbearance, accommodation, and a spirit of conciliation, exactly correspond to the political and social requirements of the Jews' condition in that time. The reason that the same repertoire of emotions persisted through the unfolding of the writings of the sages of that formative age was the constancy of the Jews' political and social condition.

To the contemporary debate, in anthropology, philosophy, and psychology, on whether emotions are related to culture and so form social constructions or whether feelings speak for the private individual and so characterize what is particular about the individual, the sages make a modest contribution. They present a suggestive example of how, in their

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view, emotions fit together with the encompassing patterns of society and culture, theology, and the religious life. Thus, the affective rules are an integral part of the way of life and world view put forward to make sense of the existence of a social group.

My thesis of virtue, accordingly, is that how I am supposed to feel in ethos matches what I am expected to think. In this way, as an individual, I link my deepest personal emotions to the cosmic fate and transcendent faith of that social group of which I am a part. Emotions lay down judgments. They are derived from rational cognition. The individual Israelite's innermost feelings, the microcosm, correspond to the public and historic condition of Israel, the macrocosm. What Judaism teaches the private person to feel links his or her heart to what Judaism states about the condition of Israel in history and of God in the cosmos.

Why? All form one reality, in supernatural world and in nature, in time and in eternity wholly consubstantial (so to speak). In the innermost chambers of deep feelings, the Israelite therefore lives out the public history and destiny of the people, Israel. The genius of Judaism, the reason for its resilience and endurance, lies in its power to teach Jews in private to feel what in public they also must think about the condition of both self and nation. The world within, the world without, are so bonded that one is never alone. The individual's life is always lived with the people. Virtue encompasses the whole of the matter.

In the texts we shall examine here, in the literature of feeling as much as in that of philosophy, virtue remains the same. The canon of Judaism, the Torah, refers not only to principles of metaphysics and laws of philosophical weight. It also speaks of attitudes, for example, intention; of feelings, for example, joy and sorrow; of virtues of the heart and hearth, for instance, humility, loyalty, and integrity. The canon confers on those actions and attitudes, feelings and emotions, a religious status, a place in the larger system.

Therefore, how Jews feel, as much as what they think, may fall within the realm of the Torah. In some contexts, approval extends to feelings, in others, disapproval. Despair, for example, contrasts with hope, treachery with loyalty, steadfastness and loyal love with betrayal. All of these aspects of virtue, though ultimately expressed in concrete actions, are important by themselves. Each of them, whole and real, consequential but important on its own, demands description, analysis, and interpretation.

In invoking the correct theological term, "religious affections," therefore, I mean to speak of the phenomenon of emotion in its public aspect, as a matter of philosophical or theological consequence, hence susceptible to sustained analysis, not something individual and principally psycho-

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logical, lacking systemic standing in the public discourse of philosophy or theology.

Where was one to find the law of love, the rule of despair, in the system of regularity and order? The answer is clear. One found it in the interstices of singular emotions, private feelings, unpredictable attitudes. In the private person, these converged with the rules, beliefs, and regular patterns of public behavior. Those private and public matters together constituted virtue. To both inner feeling and exterior attitude rules applied. The canon and its system granted full cognizance to each by legislating for the affective life of virtue. The regular and the routine, the individual and the spontaneous affection together formed the whole. The one defined the system. The other made it work. Since the formula of faith hinged on love of God ("You will love the Lord your God"), the system had no choice but to define affections and find the correct place for them.

What in particular I want to know is where and when documents in the canon of formative Judaism invoke feelings and emotions, virtuous attitudes and demeanor, in a systemic (thus consequential) setting – hence, religious affections. I seek evidence on the role a person's virtue plays in the religious life. I make special reference to such feelings as humility versus arrogance, love versus hate, attitudes of anger or acceptance, demeanor of loyalty or treachery, hope or fear. When do the sages of a given document invoke, not principles of law or theology, rules of order, form, and proportion, but issues of virtue, of heart and soul? Whose feelings matter, when do they matter, and what are the consequences of systemically significant emotions? What is the range of affections recognized by a given document and by the system as a whole, and (in a phenomenological framework) what range of omitted or ignored affections can we in theory propose? Finally, what this-worldly expression of emotion or affection or virtue do we find in the literature, with special attention to where and how feelings rise to the surface of religious texture and context? These are the questions to be explored in Chapters III through VIII.

One critical component of my argument is that the program of approved and disapproved emotions and attitudes remains constant from the beginning to the end. Let me explain precisely what I mean. Otherwise the historical claim on which all else rests, involving Chapters II and IX, will be a puzzle to the reader. In order to understand the method of this book, reading the canon in order, document by document, we must recognize the character of the evidence presented. The sources constitute collective, and therefore official, literature. I claim to expound the collective and official account of a principal idea contained in that literature. All of the documents took shape in succession and attained a place in the

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canon of the rabbinical movement as a whole. None of them was written by an individual in such a way as to testify to personal choice or decision. Accordingly, we cannot provide an account of the theory of a given individual at a particular time. We have numerous references to what a given individual said about the topics at hand, but these references do not reach us through the authorship of that person, or even in his (never her) language. They come to us only in the setting of a *collection* of sayings and statements, some associated with names, others unattributed or anonymous. The collections by definition were composed under the auspices of rabbinical authority, a school or a circle. They tell us what a group of people wished to preserve and hand down as authoritative doctrine about the meaning of the Mishnah and Scripture. The compositions have reached us because the larger rabbinical estate chose to copy and hand them down. Accordingly, what in fact *do* we know? We know only the state of doctrine at the stages marked by the formation and closure of the several documents.

An alternative to the method of this book, as just described, is to assume that, if a given document ascribes an opinion to a named authority, the opinion was actually stated in that language by that sage. On this assumption, the history of an idea as individuals shaped it, and not merely of the literary evidences of that idea, may be described. Within this theory of evidence, we have the history of what individuals thought about a common topic, because the text contains the record of his exact words.

It is obvious why I cannot outline the sequence of ideas solely on the basis of the sequence of sages to whom ideas are attributed: I cannot demonstrate that a given authority really said what has been attributed to him in a given document. What I cannot show I do not know. We *do* know, however, that the Mishnah predates the Tosefta and that the Talmud of the Land of Israel follows it; the earliest compilations of scriptural exegeses come somewhat after the closure of the Talmud of the Land of Israel, and the Babylonian Talmud still later. Hence, we can trace, as the sequence of ideas, not their history but their canonical unfolding.

Let me lay out the range of uncertainty that necessitates this canonical approach. First, we do not know whether the canonical history corresponds to the actual history of the relevant ideas in sages' circles. Second, if we could demonstrate that a rabbi really spoke the words attributed to him, then, as I explained, a given idea would be shown to have reached expression within Judaism before the redaction of the document. By dividing ideas up by documents we give a later date, thus a different context for interpretation, to opinions that might have been held earlier than we now are able to demonstrate.

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Third, we focus on the literature produced by a particular group, so we have no clear notion of what people were thinking outside that group. We do not know how the opinions of other groups or of the Jewish people in general came to shape the vision of rabbis.

Accordingly, I here trace the history of a particular doctrine of virtue as it unfolds in a sequence of documents – that alone, nothing more. I do not claim that the documents represent the opinion of the sages, the people, or the synagogue. I do not know whether the history of the idea in the unfolding official texts even corresponds to the history of the idea among the people who framed those documents. Still less do I claim to speak about the history of the program of accepted feelings outside rabbinical circles, among the Jewish nation at large. All of those larger dimensions lie beyond the perspective of this book. The reason is that the evidence at hand is of a particular sort. It permits us to investigate one category of questions and not another. That category, as I have stressed, is defined by established and universal conventions about the order in which the canonical writings reached completion.

We therefore trace the way in which approved feelings and associated matters emerge in the sequence of writings followed here: first the Mishnah, then the exegesis of the Mishnah written down in the Talmud of the Land of Israel, then, more or less in the same period, the exegesis of Scripture. The last was generated by the exegesis of the Mishnah, shaped in the model of that exegesis, and written down in the earliest collections of scriptural exegeses, called *midrashim,* alongside exegesis of the Mishnah as written down in the Talmud of Babylonia. When we follow this procedure, we discover how, within the formation of the rabbinical canon of writings, the repertoire of affections, with its associated conceptions, came to literary expression and how it was then shaped to serve the larger purposes of the canonical system as a whole.

The outline of the book is simple. In the first chapter, I briefly review the anthropological, philosophical, and psychological context in which I propose to frame and answer my questions. In the second chapter, I lay out the historical, literary, and religious context of the study. Then, in Chapters III through VIII, I survey the canon of formative Judaism and present the relevant facts. In the last chapter, I offer the conclusions that seem to me to follow from those facts. Thus, in the simplest structure, I present (1) a theoretical or methodological proposal, (2) the context of the documents, (3) the relevant facts, and (4) the results.

We Jews have always understood that we are what we do. But we have also hoped, or sometimes feared, that we are also what we feel. To bring these deep and conflicting convictions into balance is the task for those of us who aim to build a Judaism both to sustain us and to call on us to

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surpass ourselves. If we are what we do, we do not have to be merely what we are. With all humanity, we are "in the image, after the likeness" of God, and this not alone in mind and soul, but also in heart. In how we feel, too, we are meant to be like God. And what can that mean?

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CHAPTER I

Emotion, the Individual, and Society

The Affective Aspect of Virtue

The religious life takes shape in the personal life of the individual in the emotions or affections – so Protestant theologians have maintained, in the tradition of Jonathan Edwards, for two hundred years. Schleiermacher, for example, saw the individual as (in Niebuhr's words) "an integral and independent being, standing over against the community in a genuine polarity." The selfhood of the individual attains expression in feeling. As Niebuhr wrote, "Feeling is the vehicle of this special quality of existence, of this given, irreducible individuality, this inner unity of the self that underlies all the temporal moments of the self's existence but that never issues into a direct and complete outward manifestation in any one of them."[1] According to one important stream of contemporary theological thought, therefore, the emotions are what mark a person as an individual. Theology sees in affections a critical expression of religion.

For a long time, long before the Protestant position was known, for the purposes of psychology and of philosophy emotions bore the burden of characterizing the individual. Emotions fell into the category of passions, not actions; they were private, therefore personal and individual. Emotions are, according to Darwin, James, and Freud, derived from the life of the biological organism. To be sure, though spontaneous and personal, they may find concrete definition in social transactions, as Dewey, Gerth, and Mills maintain. But at the heart of matters, in theology, philosophy, and psychology alike, emotions are a measure of the individual. The life of religious affections, in particular, testifies to the inner being – "the heart," in metaphorical language – of the private person. The introspective conscience of the West, the celebration of the individual and the individual's freedom to make distinctive choices – these define the religious as much as the philosophical and psychological dimensions of our reading of emotions.

Thus, it is commonplace for religion, psychology, and theology to

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maintain that what makes the individual distinctive are the emotions, which are private and personal, rather than reason, which is public and social. Feelings, isolated from objects, testify to the person. Grace under stress or fierce temper, capacity to relate and to love, suspicion and anger are emotions that define, that *characterize* in the exact sense, the individual. If, then, in the Protestant tradition, we wish to study the religious life, we seek evidences of hope, joy, fear, zeal, compassion, and love. And these evidences will come to the surface in the personal life of the individual. Thus, religious affections are derived from the lives of individuals. The authentic dimension of true religion will find its measure in the undivided heart, rich in love, hope, joy, fear, zeal, and compassion.

The position that what defines the dimensions of religion is the life of the individual, the condition of the heart, with emphasis on the individual's private emotions, does not characterize theology alone. From the beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece, almost to the present day, and through most of the history of psychology as well, some thinkers have generally concurred. To know what a person really is, to know that person's virtue, one must look at those things that are truly personal and unmediated by social norms or intellectual considerations. These turn out to focus on individual emotion, which is, I stress, what is taken to mark the person as an individual. In the long history of philosophy, psychology, and theology alike, essentially a single theme has been repeated: The inner life, the part of the person separate from society and remote from history, kept private from the shared markings of common culture, is where the true individual lives, alone, introspective, unique.

In the recent past psychologists and philosophers have called into question the certainty that private emotions define the individual. Deep speculative thought on the part of philosophers concerning the definition and nature of emotions corresponding to systematic psychological experimentation and inquiry produces a fresh perspective. From this new viewpoint emotions, like values and beliefs, cultural preferences and social rules, attitudes and other aspects of virtue, come to us from the world outside ourselves. They form aspects of cognition and judgment, society and culture. They are learned. Hope, joy, anger, love, zeal – these as much as believing in one God, preferring one kind of food over another, or voting for a candidate of the Republican party constitute expressions of social life rather than radically isolated individual life. Emotions are acquired. Feelings represent judgments and intentionalities. Thus, they form part of a shared and continuous life, an aspect of culture, something learned, handed down, and therefore constructed, not private, not personal, not individual. Emotions are traditions, defined by rules, just as much as are food preferences.

Let us pay closer attention to the position that emotions constitute