

## Morris Lichtenstein on Jewish Science

## HEALING THROUGH JUDAISM

Judaism is essentially a practical religion. Study the Old Testament carefully and you will see that it contains a code of laws for application to daily life. It takes into consideration human frailties as well as human potencies; it examines man's tendencies to virtue and his temptations to wrongdoing, and then seeks to encourage his virtuous nature and bar the road to evil. Judaism is a practical religion, because it lays down concrete laws of demeanor, showing man how to conduct himself in every relation of life. There is no superstition or irrational theory of life in the Old Testament. There is no theory of salvation, nor an exposition of the life hereafter. Every law, every injunction refers to man's conduct in this tangible, comprehensible, convincing world.

Being the religion of daily life, Judaism also offers man laws of health and healing. And it treats of the two aspects of healing, first, of preventive measures, and second, of curative

applications. Medical science today is endeavoring more and more to develop and perfect preventive medicine; hence it is laboring on many tests for the prevention of the more perilous diseases. The child of today is given inoculations and injections to fortify him against the ravages of the so-called diseases of childhood. Similarly, measures both of prevention and cure are laid down in the Sacred Scriptures. Preventive measures are indicated in the Mosaic Laws; curative methods were practiced by the prophets, and especially by the Psalmist. The Mosaic Law insists on stringent cleanliness, on the use of uncontaminated, undiluted food, on the use of clean water, on personal cleanliness and purity, on the application of sanitation in every place and in every environment. The dietary laws have, in fact, no other purpose than that of preventing disease. Eat not the flesh of the swine, for the swine is an unclean animal; it is fed on unclean food, and is therefore the carrier of disease. Abstain from eating the flesh of the wild beasts and the rapacious fowls, for there are poisonous substances in their composition, and these injurious elements, entering your

body, may breed disease. Abstain from consuming the blood of animals, for the blood is often charged with impurities, and these may become transfused into your blood, there to generate disease. Do not touch an unclean object, for uncleanliness is the origin of disease. Be sure to wash your body and particularly your hands as often as possible. All these injunctions, laid down in the Bible and in the Talmud with scrupulous rigidity, have no other object than that of preventing disease.

Where ailment has already made its entrance the prophets point the way to relief. Help must be sought from God. As God is the source of life, as He is the spring of existence, as He is the very fountain of health, so is He the One to be invoked for the restoration of that which has been impaired. That which man himself creates, man himself can restore. If a piece of machinery or mechanism, built by human hand, ceases to function properly, it needs but a human hand to restore it to efficiency. But man himself is the creation of God, and if, therefore, a human function or organ is impaired, it is not man but God who is able to restore it.

The creation of man is analagous to the creation of the world. God unfolded this world from a formless nebula; He built it from apparently insignificant substances. He rolled out the planets from immaterial vapors, He constructed the sun of trivial substances. But all these He invested with power from His own inexhaustible Fountain of power, with energy from His own infinite storehouse of energy, and with His own wisdom and direction. This very same process He employed in the creating of man. From an insignificant cell does God form man; out of trivial substances does He build his bones and knit his veins, and weave his skin; but in this substance He has stored Wisdom and Intelligence, pouring it fourth from His own infinite Wisdom; He has endowed man with Health and Vigor, out of His own infinite storehouse of strength and power. When man, through ignorance or wilfulness, becomes ill, it is for him to turn to his Builder, to his Creator, for restoration. And this he may do through prayer. The prophets and sages therefore propose prayer as the curative, as the restorative measure. Offer prayer to Him who has built you and He will restore you

to health, for He is good and merciful, He seeks the happiness of those whom He called into existence. Seek His help earnestly, wholeheartedly, and your prayer will be answered, your health and strength will be restored.

The Mosaic Law, we see, emphasizes, preventive measures, and the prophets and Psalmist show us how to regain our health when it has become impaired.

In Jewish Science, too, we accentuate the two aspects of healing, the preventive and the curative. But in Jewish Science we go one step further in our search for the causes of ailment. In the Old Testament, the causes of illness were found to be mainly of physical origin, and therefore the dietary laws and the laws of sanitation were strongly impressed upon the people; in addition to physical sources of disease, we learn, in Jewish Science, that ailment may also have its origin in the mind. Worry is as fertile a cause of sickness as contaminated water and adulterated food. Fear and anger are as likely to bring on disease as uncleanness and impurity. We therefore, in Jewish Science, eliminate from our lives these mental obstacles; for we know that,

just as an unclean body is one of the direct causes of disease, so too is an unclean mind. The mind like the body must be cleansed of unwholesomeness and impurities.

In Jewish Science, we follow the method of the prophets and the Psalmist in our restorative methods; we seek help from God, the Giver of life and health, the Sustainer of all. But here, too, we make one addition in the method of invocation. While many of the prophets and sages still beheld God as seated on a lofty throne, and to this High Throne they addressed their prayer for help, we find that prayer is even more efficacious when it is offered to the Divine Mind in man. The same God that dwells in heaven also fills the earth with His Presence; the same Divinity dwells in the star and also makes His abode in man. Man is a shrine for God, just as heaven itself is. In our prayer for help, therefore, we pray to the God in us; we say: "The God consciousness in us expresses itself in health." And this form of prayer is more readily answered, because when we offer a prayer to the Divine Mind within us, we offer it with the consciousness of His nearness, with the realization of

His immediate presence; our prayer is then offered earnestly and devoutly, and such prayers are always answered.

Judaism, thus, is the religion of life. Its laws, its commandments, exist for the purpose of guiding and directing and preserving man. Judaism, through its various stages of development, ancient as well as modern, has evolved definite ways and measures by which man may save himself from the attacks of disease and suffering. Cleanliness of body and mind, purity and optimism will prevent disease; scientific prayer and earnest devotion will heal disease, if it has already found lodgment. Prayer will restore to health and strength, for the Giver of life is also the supplier of strength, the Sustainer of all.

### WHAT IS MAN?

We can observe man from two view-points. First, from the view-point of man's own world; that is, the world which he himself builds and plans and creates, the world which he himself has cultivated and developed, which he has improved and advanced with his intellect and energy. Here we find man powerful and dominant, heroic and masterful. Here, in his world, he has conquered the beast and the brute; he has changed the face of the earth to satisfy his needs and his tastes; he has built cities and united continents and explored the ends of the earth. Here, in his own world, he is delving and searching; he is soaring among the clouds and diving into the very depths of the sea. Here he is forming philosophies and scientific systems, and he is rising and advancing in his various enterprises. Here he is indeed a master and a creator.

We can, however, behold man from another angle: from the viewpoint of the universe, from his relation to existence at large. Here

## 3. OBSERVANCES

11. The spirit of a people is greatly preserved through its national and religious ceremonies. The more these are observed, the more sacred they grow and the deeper does the unity and the solidarity of the people become. These ceremonies may trace their origin to ancient customs, or they may spring from some unknown and insignificant beginning; but no matter what the inception of the ceremonies be, they become so intertwined with the soul of the people that they form its traditions and influence its history. It is therefore essential that they be maintained and preserved; and he who practices them, finds himself bound closer and closer to the origin from which he springs, which in itself is a source of profound joy.

12. It is particularly essential for the Jewish people to preserve their traditional observances; for our race in exile has no greater basis of solidarity than this. A people that inhabits its own land, that speaks its own tongue, that has its own educational institutions, may, even without the practice of its traditional ceremonies, preserve its unity. It cannot, in fact, be other than a unified whole. But the members of the House of Israel, who make their homes in many lands, speak many tongues, are ruled by many governments, and are imbued with the culture and habits of the many nations among which they sojourn, have chiefly their traditions and ceremonies in common to keep them united and kin. If these be undermined or weakened, the unity of the race will suffer.

13. Again, while ceremonies, as the prophets pointed out, are not divine requisitions, yet they are the poetry of religion and are capable of creating an atmosphere in which the religious emotions are awakened. Ceremonies fail in their function only if man misunderstands their purpose and misuses them—if he identifies them with religion itself. Ceremonies are the by-paths, not the highway, of religion; they are the embellishments, not the substance of religion. Religion is man's realization of the Divine Presence, and his communion with this Presence. Man communes with the Divine Mind in silence only; but ceremonies often have the power of consecrating the atmosphere and enabling man to reflect more earnestly upon God. If man, however, should find his sole religious satisfaction in the practice of traditional ceremonies, worshipping only the vestures and losing sight of the essence of faith, ceremonies then would fail of their purpose and become even detrimental to religion.

14. How stringently religious ceremonies should be observed has been the subject of dispute among leaders and teachers of many generations. The Talmudic sages made the ceremonial law as strong and binding as the moral law. "Ceremonial laws must be obeyed as divine ordinances with unhesitating and unreflective obedience," they say. "Be as careful in the observance of the smallest commandment as in that of the greatest," is another firm injunction. The reformers in religion, on the other hand, have constantly insisted upon changes in the ceremonial law, seeking to strip religion of customs which have become obsolete and which do not harmonize with

the spirit of the times. Jewish Science maintains that traditional ceremonies are essentially of racial or national significance, and therefore cannot be as impellent as the moral law, which is a divine behest. On the other hand, while they are indeed mutable, they should not be cast aside lightly, but changed only where the will of the majority of the race requests it. Then the very change is the fulfillment of the national desire. We say to the individual in Jewish Science, follow the traditional practices of our religion to the best of your ability, in order to create a sacred atmosphere in your hours of worship and communion with God, and in order to draw closer to your people with whom you are indelibly bound. But do not identify observance with religion itself, for religion itself is the realization of your closeness to God.

#### 4. FUNDAMENTALS

15. Judaism is fundamentally a religion of deeds, not of creeds. It is for this very reason that there are no articles of faith in Judaism. Belief cannot be imposed, it must grow spontaneously with the acquisition of knowledge and experience. We have no commandment in Judaism which says: "Thou shalt believe." The sacred Scriptures contain commandments and instructions only of what man should do, and what man should eschew, not what man should believe. The belief in God is given in the Bible not as a creed, but as an impelling conclusion based on experience and observation. "Know ye not?

Hear ye not? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth above the circle of the earth . . . that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." The belief in God's presence, the realization of His existence is arrived at through the observation of creation itself. It is arrived at also through the experiences of the race, particularly the emancipation from Egypt and the revelation at Mt. Sinai. Such experiences are proof of the existence of a supreme benevolent Power. "Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know, that the Lord, He is God; there is none else beside Him. Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee. And because He loved thy fathers and chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with His presence, with His great power, out of Egypt." But no belief was given as an imperative dogma, without appealing first to the human reason and understanding.

16. In like spirit, have we in Jewish Science formulated ten fundamentals. These are not speculative creeds which every adherent of Jewish Science must accept, but are beliefs which Jewish Scientists attain through conviction and experience. They are not imposed, but are the outgrowth of a search for spiritual truth. The following is the declaration of the ideals by which we guide our lives day by day:

1. The Jewish faith is the only faith we acknowledge. Jewish Science is the application of the Jewish Faith to the practices of life.

2. We believe wholeheartedly in the efficacy of prayer. We believe that no prayer, when properly offered, goes unanswered.

3. We shall endeavor every day of our lives to keep serene; to check all tendencies to violence and anger; to keep calm even in the face of unpleasant and discouraging circumstances.

4. We shall strive to be cheerful every day of our lives. The Talmud says that the Divine Presence departs from one who is in gloom. It is God's design that man should find joy and cheer in his existence on this earth.

5. We shall seek to cultivate an attitude of love and good-will towards everyone. We shall make no room in our heart for hatred or bitterness. The world was created on a plan of divine love, and to admit thoughts of hatred or malice is to violate the plan of God.

6. We shall cultivate a disposition to contentment, envying no one, and praising God for the good he has already bestowed upon us. Contentment is the greatest friend of happiness; envy, its greatest enemy.

7. We shall make conscious effort to banish worry and fear from our lives. We regard these two as the greatest enemies of mankind and give them no place in our consciousness.

8. We shall trust in God's goodness in every circumstance of our life.

9. We believe that death is an elevation to eternal life, and not a cessation of existence.

10. We believe that God is the Source of Health and the Restorer of Health.

17. In these fundamentals, we, in Jewish Science, profess our wholehearted belief in the efficacy of prayer; we acknowledge the duty of keeping serene and cheerful, of cherishing good-will and contentment, of banishing worry and fear; we declare our trust in God's goodness and love; we profess our assurance of immortality because we have faith in God's loving-kindness and the everlastingness of His creations.

## CHAPTER IX

## TRAINING THE CHILD IN FAITH

1. Man is possessed of a profound craving for God and an urgent desire to invoke His help. It is for this reason that we find a yearning after God even in the very early stages of human history. The conception of the Divine Presence, and the methods of invoking Divine help, did not, however, transcend the primitive mind's comprehension of the environment in which it found itself. As man grew, so did his understanding of God. Countless generations served as stepping-stones between heathenism and paganism, and as many more between paganism and monotheism. Between the worship of God through the immolation of the first-born and the substitution therefor of animal sacrifice, centuries passed; and many more centuries of human unfoldment have elapsed between the sacrifice of animals and this new religious era of silent prayer.

2. Just as the comprehension of God has grown through centuries in the mind of the race, so does it also grow in the life of the individual. The God of youth differs from the God of childhood and the God of maturity transcends the God of youth. As man advances, his mind gains in clearness, in seriousness, and, therefore, in truth.

3. The craving for God in childhood is exceedingly potent, and when this desire is vigilantly and properly

guided and unfolded, it proves a source of supreme blessing to man, through all the days of his life. The soil in which religious teachings may first be planted is exceedingly fertile; the imagination of childhood is both rich and ravenous, and if the seed sown at that period is sound and wholesome, it will indeed mature and bear nourishing fruit. It is essential, however, that no religious conception be instilled in the child which at a maturer age, he will regard as purely fabulous or preposterous. He should be shown at once the finest of our religious treasures, he should be taught the highest of our religious truths. And we should have no fear that these may be incomprehensible to his unripe understanding. It is far better that the child should strain his imaginative powers in the comprehension of religious truths that may be above him, than that he should revel in fantastic myths which will soon be below him. It is true that the child's fancy may of itself create a God invested with attributes after its own likeness; but that which the child's imagination itself creates is not sustained by the influence of authority, and therefore vanishes with the growth of his mental capacity, making room at the same time, for a clearer understanding of the God-reality. To give a child legends and folk-lore of miracles and supernatural manifestations, and tell him that that is religion; to give him an anthropomorphic image and tell him that that is God, is to pave the way for his embracing atheism in later life. For such early teaching he will soon outgrow in his contact with life and with rational, scientific education; and

in his reaction, he may pass the rest of his life without religious faith.

4. It is for this reason that Jewish Science is deviating from the traditional methods of religious training. The religious instruction which the Jewish child has hitherto been receiving has consisted mainly of the Biblical narratives. The teacher of religion, believing the child incapable of comprehending the salient truths of faith, has fed instead the young imagination with the miraculous stories of the Bible. They do, indeed, gratify the child's imagination and evoke a glowing response; but as the child grows to the stage where the imagination recedes and reason takes its place, he rebels against teachings that are not acceptable to his rational mind. What is more, as the child advances into youth and becomes initiated in the knowledge of the world as the mind of today perceives it, he immediately becomes aware of the immense contradictions existing between the conceptions instilled in him in his childhood and those he receives in his youth. In childhood, he learned that God created the world in six days, in the higher schools he learns that all existence is the result of an endless evolutionary process stretching over millions of years. His innocent mind becomes perplexed at this taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. With bitter struggle, but with open eyes, he goes in quest of truth. Seizing upon the improbability of a world created in six days, of man breathed out of the dust, of woman cut out of a rib, and of other uncommon occurrences, his mind works onward from that point to the conviction that the cosmos transmitted to him in his

childhood and accepted by him unquestioningly, is at variance with scientific law. Soon the reality of the very deity, the creator of the miracle-built world of his childhood, is brought into question. And in his groping search for truth, the youth often arrives at a denial of God.

6. In Jewish Science, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the world go closely together. To our understanding the Divine Mind not only transcends, but also saturates the universe with His Presence. We see Him not as a worker of miracles that interfere with the process of nature, but as one whose miraculous achievement *is* the process and law of nature. We accentuate the truth that the Divine Mind is behind and within existence, that He is the Cause of cause and effect, that He is the Source of Life and light and of all that exists. We believe that the method of His creation is well reflected in the creation of the individual, that is, the method of gradual unfoldment and growth, from the simple to the complex, from the dependent to the self-directing state of being. This realization of the Divine Presence does not in any way conflict with the knowledge of this world which the human mind has acquired. It supplements, in fact, and clarifies human knowledge, giving it a firmer background and a solid foundation.

7. We, therefore, in Jewish Science, do not begin the religious training of the child with the miraculous narratives of the Bible. We realize that these contain poetic and symbolic truths and are best understood when studied at a mature age. We begin by teaching the child, also through the medium of stories, of the existence of God,

as we, of today, comprehend His Presence. We lay a religious groundwork in his consciousness for the knowledge which he will acquire later in the higher institutions of learning. We inculcate in the child the immanence of the Divine Mind, so that when he studies at a later period the processes of nature, he will see them as the methods which the Divine Mind employs for the development of the universe.

8. Then, still through the medium of narratives, we acquaint the child with the attributes of the Divine Mind. The child learns of God's goodness, of His love, of His righteousness, as well as of His creativeness. Such truths take deep root in his tender consciousness, so that he deeply realizes that all around him are the expressions, the creations of God. He begins to see himself as truly a child of God—a child of the all-loving Father, Who gave him life, Who supplies him with strength, Who gives him wisdom and understanding, Who takes care of him and guards and sustains him. The child then grows in faith and in truth; he grows into manhood without fear and without worry. He acquires in fact at his most impressionable age that wholesome, optimistic, devout attitude that makes worry and fear impossible.

9. The child, in Jewish Science, is taught that the attributes of God are also imbedded in *his* being. He is made to realize the truth that the more he consciously practices goodness and uprightness, that the more he expresses love and tenderness, that the more he seeks to achieve and create, that the more he does all this, the more does he consciously open the channels by which the

divine powers within him find expression. And we show him that it is for this very reason that he experiences profound joy and inner encouragement whenever he performs an act of kindness and uprightness, whenever he accomplishes a difficult task, or creates something beautiful or useful; the divine within adds vigor and strength to the deed. He learns that whenever he gives expression to the noble part of his nature, there is created a perfect harmony between the divine qualities within and the human acts without, and this harmony fills the heart with joy. The violation, on the other hand, of the divine within will always prove, he learns, a source of misery and wretchedness. It creates a division between the divine within and the human without, and this disharmony it is that causes unhappiness. This truth, as all the others that we teach him, is inculcated in the child in his own terms, according to his understanding and through narratives in which he greatly delights; and he grows up with a true conception of the source of happiness and the origin of unhappiness.

10. In Jewish Science, we also teach the child *how* to pray. We are endeavoring to avoid the errors of past generations who taught their children how to recite prayers, but not how to pray. In Jewish Science, the child is taught how to invoke the help of the Divine Mind, so that if he finds himself in difficulty or perplexity or sorrow, his tender child-heart will not be thrown into panic or despair. He knows where to turn for help, and how to approach the never-failing Source of Help. His earnest prayer, he finds, properly offered, never fails to

invoke the response he desires. We are witnesses to the fact that children trained in the Jewish Science teachings have learned completely to overcome fear, the great bane of childhood. They are entrenched in the realization of God's ever-protecting Presence. "God is in me and with me all the time; therefore I have no fear." This affirmation drives fear from their consciousness; it is a prayer for courage and confidence, and it never fails of its purpose. The children in Jewish Science are taught how to live happily and in accordance with the laws of life; how to follow the good and the wholesome and how to avoid the deteriorating and the injurious, and how to invoke the aid of the Divine Mind, when confronted by anxiety or difficulty.

11. The entire disposition of the child is thus religiously moulded. The child becomes deeply imbued with the thought of God. He sees God as the Creator of all, the Sustainer of all, the Father of all mankind. It is clear to him that God works through loving kindness and mercy, that He loves and therefore guards all those whom He called into existence, and that man therefore has nothing to fear; and no cause for worry. He is also taught that God is the Source of Holiness, and that whatever He created bears the stamp of sanctity; the child learns that he himself, being one of God's creatures, is inherently a sacred being; his limbs and his organs are sacred, his thoughts and his feelings are sacred, all his functions are sacred, and the responsibility is laid upon him to keep these undefiled and pure. No function of his body, no thought of his mind must be abused or desecrated, for

he is created in the image of the Holy One. "Be ye holy," he is taught, "for I, the Lord thy God, am holy."

12. "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children," the Scriptures enjoin. What is this great truth that we are commanded to teach the children? It is that "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The greatest lesson that we can teach the child is to love God. From this love, all ethics, all systems of conduct, all theories of upright living, must take their source.

13. The child who is taught to love God, also attains to love of his fellow-man. For he is taught at the same time that God, or the Divine Mind, makes His abode in every being of His creation, and that He dwells in man as in the rest of creation, and that His presence in man constitutes the noblest aspect of man. It is therefore impossible to love God and hate man, for these are inseparable.

14. By teaching the child to love God, we lay the deepest foundation of virtue in the consciousness of the child. For he will set his will in the direction of the will of Him whom he loves, he will seek constantly to strengthen the harmony between himself and Him to whom he is devoted.

15. To restate, briefly, our methods of training the child in faith: we hold up creation, the world and its natural forces, as the undeniable testimonies of the Divine Presence; we teach God's method of creation as a process of gradual unfoldment and development. Of the Bible, we teach none of the miracle narratives, until the child has reached a maturer state, in which he may find in them a symbolic and spiritual meaning, rather than a

literal truth.<sup>1</sup> We do this so that he may not, in his mind, identify legend with religion, and that his conception of God may be truer, larger, than that of a miracle-worker who displays his power by oversetting the laws and processes of nature. We do this, so that his religious ideas may not later be destroyed in his contact with the facts of life, of science and of rational thinking. We teach the child the wonders of God, not in folk-lore or miracle, but in the ever-visible wonders of life itself. We implant in the child a realization of the goodness of God and His nearness to him, so that whenever he finds himself facing the difficulties of life, he knows that he may turn to Him for help. Above all, we teach the child how to pray, how to offer a prayer with his mind and heart, how to reach the Divine Mind with the supplication of his innermost being.

16. The child, who, in this way, has been trained in faith, grows up without fear, without anxiety, without perplexity. He gives expression to the highest and finest in him, suppressing everything low and unkindly as unfit of the divinity that is part of himself. He learns to face life with courage and with hope, and with the assurance that God is with him "whithersoever he goeth."

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<sup>1</sup> This does not exclude the teaching of the rest of the Bible. We early teach the child portions of the Psalms, which breathe faith in divine goodness, and those parts which contain ethical and moral injunctions.

## PART II

### HOW TO LIVE