



SELECTED RELIGIOUS POEMS

SOLOMON IBN GABIROL

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**SELECTED RELIGIOUS
POEMS
OF
SOLOMON IBN GABIROL**

**TRANSLATED BY
ISRAEL ZANGWILL**

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Selected Religious Poems Of Solomon Ibn Gabirol Translated By Israel Zangwill.

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*DEDICATED
BY THE TRANSLATOR
TO HIS OLD FRIEND,
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PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
AND OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE JEWISH DELEGATIONS
AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE,
IN GRATITUDE, PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL,
TO A TIRELESS AND FEARLESS WORKER FOR OPPRESSED
JEWRIES
AND FOR JEWISH AND AMERICAN IDEALS,
A DOCTOR OF HEBREW LAW,
A LOVER OF HEBREW POETRY,
AND A JEW AFTER IBN GABIROL'S OWN HEART.*

INTRODUCTION

POETRY, philosophy, and science, apparently three distinct fields of intellectual endeavor, are essentially but three different manifestations of the same spiritual force, which urges man onward to search for the solution of the riddle of existence. Science attacks the problem from the physical side; philosophy grapples with it from the rational, or mental side; poetry tries to penetrate the mystery with its vision.

Poetry need not necessarily reveal itself through the art of versification. The astronomer whose eye sweeps through the vast vacancies of space and whose ear catches the harmony of the spheres, the mathematician who calculates the eons, and the physicist who measures the electron and weighs the sun are indeed greater poets than those who merely compose melodious lines. On the other hand, the great poet, who ascends by the light of the divine fire within him to the heights of Pisgah, whence he may look at life from a higher altitude and see it more complete, more in its totality, often catches in a flash of inspiration that which it takes the scientific investigator years of painstaking labor to discover. The difference between those three seekers after truth is only in the method. The aim is the same—to penetrate the veil that hides from us the ultimate truth of life.

That none of them has ever succeeded, or is ever likely to succeed, in lifting the veil that shrouds the great mystery, matters not. The effort in itself is of the greatest moment to mankind. The ceaseless striving and unquenchable yearning after the ultimate truth leaves us at least nobler and purer for the attempt. It also matters little to us when the poet or philosopher or investigator lived. Their achievements are ever present, ever exerting their influences. If the law of motion holds good in the physical world, it holds still stronger in the world of ideas. An idea once set in motion will travel onward and onward and will gain in momentum as it proceeds on its course down the ages. The great poet therefore does not live for his own time. His mission is for all times.

The time and place of the poet are, however, of great moment to the poet himself. More than the philosopher and the physicist, is he affected by his surroundings. The soul of the poet is a most delicate instrument,

extremely susceptible to everything that comes in contact with it. Like the harp that hung over David's couch, the faintest breath will play a tune upon it. The coloring of the sunset, the rumbling of the thunder, the perfume of the woods, are all reflected, echoed or exhaled by it. Of no less importance to the poet are his social surroundings. Encouragement is the breath of his nostrils; disparagement, the blasting wind that withers. In an atmosphere of warm sympathy his genius will put forth the finest fruit of his imagination. In an environment of cold criticism his soul will shrink and shrivel up.

With these reflections in view, the personality of Solomon ibn Gabirol becomes doubly interesting. For he was not only a great poet but also a great philosopher. His vision was broad and his penetration keen. He saw further than the ordinary poet and felt deeper than the ordinary philosopher. He even cultivated science in his effort to grapple with the riddle of existence. His genius flourished in an atmosphere of exceptional instability—now warm, now cold; now hostile, now cordial; and this constant change in the condition of his environment is not without its corresponding change in the temper of his poems.

To obtain an adequately complete view of the life of this poet-philosopher it would have been well to step out of the present and, leaping over centuries and bounding over continents, transfer ourselves to one of those delightful towns of Spain, of nine hundred years ago. It would have been necessary to depict the past with such vivid colors that we could visualize this man of the eleventh century as he lived his daily life, as he feasted or fasted, as he communed with his God or chatted with his neighbor, as he greeted his friends or raged against his enemies, as he pored over his books or roamed in the fields—as he suffered at times and at other times bubbled over with joy. To know him more intimately we should have to enter his private study and watch him work, look over his shoulder and see how he wrote and polished what he wrote, how he passed all problems through the fiery crucible of his brain ere he put them before the world. But to accomplish such a feat one must have abundant material or else possess the magic wand of the poet. I have only a few slender threads with which to weave the story of his life. The biographical material is so scant and, in certain instances, so contradictory that practically all that can be said of him with certainty must be gathered from casual utterances scattered through the multitude

of his verses. And, since a poet's verses are often unintelligible until interpreted by the events of his life, we are in danger here of moving in a vicious circle, trying to make the verses yield up some facts of his life so that these facts, in turn, may help us understand his verses. Under these circumstances, the life of Solomon ibn Gabirol must remain obscure in parts. Still we may succeed in drawing a picture in which the salient features of our poet shall stand out clear and distinct in spite of the shadows of uncertainty here and there.

To begin with, we must deal with the outstanding facts of Gabirol's life. Solomon ibn Gabirol was born in Malaga, a town in the south of Spain, sometime during the period covering the end of 1021 and the beginning of 1022. His father Judah hailed from Cordova whence he is supposed to have emigrated to Malaga during the political upheaval of 1013. As far as we can gather from the poems of his son, he must have been a scholar and a man of considerable repute, for Gabirol often signs himself בִּירְבִי (a sign of distinction for the father) and in one of his poems speaks of him as the "ornament of the world" (עֲדֵי תֵבֵל). From the conclusion of

the same poem in which he speaks of his father's death, we learn that his father must have been the last of his near relations to depart from life. "Enough," he says, "my fears have come true, but my soul will see no further misfortune." That Solomon ibn Gabirol was left an orphan early in life may be gathered from another poem in which he says: "Grieved, without mother or father, inexperienced, lonely and poor, I am alone without a brother and without friends, save my own thoughts." The order of the words "without mother or father" is not required by the meter and we should expect to find the biblical usage of mentioning the father first. Hence, we may bring this as an additional argument that his mother died first and his father later. The same verse states also that he had no brothers. It is therefore safe to assume that, when his father died, he was left without kith or kin.

In Malaga he remained only during his childhood. His formative years he spent in Saragossa. For this we have the evidence of Moses ibn Ezra, in his well-known Arabic work "Al-Muḥāḍarah wal-Muḥakarah" (Discussions and Memoirs). It is possible that his father migrated to Saragossa and took his son with him, or that, on the death of his father, he was taken by some friend to Saragossa, which was then an important

center of Jewish culture. It was the seat of Jonah ibn Ganah, Joseph ibn Ḥasdai and a host of other scholars. It was also the seat of a prominent man by the name of Yekutiel who would have remained unknown in Jewish history but for the fact that he befriended the young poet who immortalized him in his poems. Through the kindness of this Maecenas, Gabirol was able to develop his powers without having to trouble about mundane matters.

Who were Gabirol's masters? This question must remain unanswered. Among all his poems there is only one place in which he speaks of himself as a disciple. In his epistolary poem, addressed to R. Nissim of Kairwan, he says: "Men of my counsel, bring greetings to my friend, and may he accept blessing from his disciple." This would seem to support the statement of Sa'adya ibn Danan that, when R. Nissim came to Granada to give his daughter in marriage to Joseph, the son of Samuel ha-Nagid, Gabirol was one of his disciples. But aside from the fact that ibn Danan is not quite reliable, the marriage of R. Nissim's daughter took place in 1049, when Gabirol was at least twenty-seven years of age, which would make it rather improbable that at that age he sat at the feet of any man. We must therefore consider the verse of Gabirol, mentioned above, as a mere poetic compliment. His precocity undoubtedly kept him from regarding anyone as his particular master.

His literary activity began at a remarkably early age. We know of five poems which he composed at the age of sixteen and one of these, according to the testimony of Sambari, was no less than his versification of the six hundred and thirteen commandments, known as *Azharot*, and it is not unlikely that the *Azharot*, beginning אלהיך אש אוכלה, which are written without meter, were composed at even an earlier date.

Endowed with remarkable gifts, it is no wonder that Gabirol easily acquired all the learning of the age. The only branch of knowledge into which he did not inquire was that of medicine. Again and again he dwells upon his devotion to learning for its own sake:

How can I forsake wisdom,
 And the spirit of God has made a covenant between me and her?
 Or how can she forsake me when she is to me like a
 mother and I to her as a child of old age? . . .

For my soul has sworn that I rest not until I find the knowledge of her Maker.

Again:

From my youth I labored in the cause of wisdom, for her goal is pleasant. She was my sister from my childhood, and of all men she chose me as her friend.

As these two lines occur in a poem which he composed at the age of sixteen, the expression "from my childhood" is significant, pointing to a much earlier period of intellectual activity.

It is also not surprising to find that he was conscious of his powers from the very beginning of his career. It must have produced a spirit of antagonism among his contemporaries to hear a youth of sixteen proclaim himself superior to anyone of his generation. One of his imaginary interlocutors says:

Know that you are unique in your generation.

And in another poem he says:

I am the Mastersinger and Song is my slave. . . .
Though I am but sixteen, I have the wisdom of a man of eighty.

This must have sounded to them as vain boasting. We, however, can see that it is not vulgar boasting. It is rather the self-expression of exuberant youth. The lines in which he sets forth his prowess remind one of a young warrior issuing forth to challenge the enemy—Sohrab leaving his tent to fight Rustum—and it is not so much himself that he exalts as the weapons which God has given him.

I search out the secrets of Rhetoric and open the gates of knowledge and understanding;

I gather stray phrases into strings of thought, and
from scattered words I collect pearls of wisdom. . . .

I penetrate into places closed to all men of understanding,
And sing songs that make the soul rejoice and deliver the heart from
sorrow. . . .

My song is the legitimate offspring of poesy—
Theirs the child of harlotry. . . .

My song is as polished as pearls and through it I am exalted above all men in all times.

We who are removed from him by nearly a millennium and know the true merit of his work feel that he did not overestimate himself. He was indeed the greatest poet of his day and one of the few great poets of all times. Even critics like Moses ibn Ezra and Judah al-Ḥarizi, who were removed from him only by one or two generations, felt the same way about him and placed him above all his contemporaries. But his contemporaries evidently did not relish his claims to superiority. Their antagonism soon grew into resentment, and resentment turned into hatred. Their hatred, in turn, only roused his anger and brought forth such caustic lines as the following:

I am filled with wrath when I behold fools parading as wise men. . . .
They deem their song superior to mine whereas they do not even understand it. . . .

Tiny little ants that they are, they venture to compare themselves with me.

He certainly understood the gentle art of making enemies. Moses ibn Ezra says of him: "Although he was a philosopher as far as his intellectual attainments were concerned, yet his anger always got the better of his understanding. He was unable to control his temper and was easily led to ridicule great men and subject them to contempt in his writings." In fact, he himself admits this weakness on his part:

When my anger is roused,
The heavens rumble with my thunder. . . .
I am not like the man who speaks mellow words and bows and scrapes in humility.

Again, in reproaching a friend, who proved false to him, he boldly tells him that while he humbles himself to his friends it is by no means because of his inferiority. He proclaims his own value in no doubtful terms:

My light is diffused through the world,
It has reached the confines of Shinar and Elam. . . .
Yet I am dirt beneath the feet of my true friends,

Dust to those who keep faith with me. . . .
 But to my enemies I am a sky raining fire upon their heads.
 They can sooner reach the sky with a ladder than they can reach me. . . .
 Now that you have failed me I untie the bonds of friendship;
 I blot thy name from my speech, and will never stoop to mention it
 again.

In an age when the execution of a happy couplet was considered an achievement, when literary quarrels were taken seriously, such lines as the above were bound to bring trouble to their author. As long as Yekutiel lived, Gabirol's enemies were unable to harm him, but when, in 1039, Yekutiel himself fell at the hands of his political enemies, Gabirol was at the mercy of his opponents. They certainly could not r fight him with his own weapons, but they embittered his life to such an extent that he had to leave Saragossa. In the poem with which he took leave of this city he says:

My dwelling is amongst ostriches,
 Among the crooked and the fools who think they are very wise. . . .
 They are a people whose fathers I would disdain to set with the dogs of
 my flock. . . .
 Woe unto knowledge, woe to me
 In the midst of such a people do I dwell.

But in spite of all his difficulties, his literary activity went on apace and one masterpiece after another issued from his pen. Allusion has already been made to the poems which he composed at the age of sixteen. During that early period in his life he also wrote the various panegyrics on Yekutiel, since the latter died before Gabirol was eighteen. At the age of nineteen he composed a poem of four hundred verses in which he set forth the rules of Hebrew grammar. In 1045, before he left Saragossa, while still in the early twenties, he completed his Arabic work on the "Improvement of the Moral Qualities." Graetz justly assumes that in depicting certain evil traits of character, he had in mind some members of the Saragossa community and that his characterization was so bold that it drew upon him the bitter enmity of these people. Likewise, I do not think it farfetched to assume that Moses the Miser, against whom he indited his famous satire ככלות ייני, was a native of Saragossa and that this Miser was one of those instrumental in bringing about Gabirol's

departure from the city where he had spent his youth. We do not know when he completed his collection of Proverbs, "The Choice of Pearls," and his philosophic work, "The Source of Life." Nor can we give any definite dates for most of his poems. These extended over the whole of his life, and even if we hold to the opinion that he lived as late as 1069 or 1070, he lived his life fully to produce, in the short space of forty-seven years, over three hundred poetic compositions besides works on philosophy and ethics.

His productivity may have been enhanced by the fact that he never had to engage in practical occupations. As Ḥarizi puts it, he was one of the few fortunate who sold their pearls at high prices. When Yekutiel died, Samuel ha-Nagid took up his cause, and while we frequently hear Gabirol complaining of ill-fortune, it is not unsafe to assume that his complaints have no reference to material want. It is rather his ill-health and the fickleness of friends that he has in mind. Thus, he was free to devote all his energies to his literary pursuits. Another fact that may have contributed to his large literary productivity was that he had no one dependent upon him. It is quite safe to assume that he never married. Nay, he boasts that he never loved. "Behold," he says, "I have spent my life in search after truth while others have wasted their substance on love." He had no other passion in life but the passion for wisdom and truth. His sole ambition was to study and enjoy the friendship of great men. That he realized his ambition cannot be doubted, for he certainly numbered among his friends and admirers the most exalted personages of his time, and his search after knowledge resulted in the production of literary monuments that have withstood the currents of a millennium and will undoubtedly remain on their high pedestal for ages to come.

Of his life outside of his studies very little can be said. Even the date of his death is a much mooted question. There is a brilliant array of counsel on each side. Dukes, Steinschneider, Neubauer, and Kaufmann are inclined to consider the statements of Moses ibn Ezra and Ḥarizi as authentic that Gabirol died before he reached his thirtieth year. On the other hand, Munk, Geiger, Graetz, and Sachs hold that he lived at least as late as 1069 or 1070, which would bring his age to about forty-seven or forty-eight years. I feel that the arguments on both sides are equally balanced and that a decision must be reserved. We must wait for further evidence.

Gabirol's literary activity may be classified under the following headings: Biblical Exegesis, Grammar, Philosophy and Ethics, and Poetry. That he actually wrote a commentary on the Bible is doubtful, but there are indications that he did not neglect the Bible entirely. Abraham ibn Ezra cites him on three occasions in his commentary on the Pentateuch, once in his commentary on Isaiah, twice in his commentary on Psalms, and once in his commentary on Daniel. All these instances, however, are examples of the allegorical method of interpretation, and it is possible that they were taken from some philosophical work of Gabirol or from some special work on the subject of biblical allegory. In fact we have two citations from Gabirol in David Kimḥi's commentary on Psalms (37-8, 23) which are taken from his ethical work. But the biblical illustrations in which this very work on ethics abounds lend countenance to the suggestion that Gabirol also engaged in biblical exegesis.

Of his work in the field of Hebrew philology we happily possess more tangible proof in the poem on Hebrew Grammar alluded to above, of which Abraham ibn Ezra speaks in the highest terms of praise.

Unfortunately, only about one-fourth of the four hundred verses of this poem has come down to us. Already in the time of R. Solomon Parḥon, in the twelfth century, the remainder of this poem had been lost, and the greater part of the fragment before us is given to remarks of a general nature. Still, even this fragment is sufficient to show that he was a master of the subject. We may look askance at compositions of this sort, but we must remember that, in the days of Gabirol, the art of versification was not limited to emotional subjects. Law, medicine, and even mathematics were considered legitimate themes for the poet. And, in this particular instance, Gabirol seems to have sensed the incongruity between the theme and the form and justified himself by saying that he used the poetic form so that it may be more easily remembered.

The introductory part of this poem has a special interest for us. His plaintive lines on the neglect of the study of Hebrew seem to fit our own times even more than his:

I know that the holy tongue has languished among them, nay, almost perished.

Their language is foreign to the Hebrew, strange to the Jewish speech;
Half of them speak the language of Edom and half in obscure Kedar-

tongue hold discourse. . . .

They know not the prophets, they know not the Book, How then should they read secular writings?

The Lord will call you to account, O remnant of Jacob, for forsaking the most chosen of languages. . . .

Is it fit that a mistress become a maid-servant, waiting upon the concubine?

Woe unto her who does not tend her own vineyard but nurses the vineyards of others.

Gabirol's more arduous labors, however, lay in the field of philosophy and ethics for which he, in common with his contemporaries, employed Arabic, the language of the country. And here it must be pointed out, first of all, that what has come down to us of Gabirol's philosophical works represents but a small part of his labors in this field. To Senior Sachs we are indebted for a more exact knowledge of Gabirol's philosophical activities. In a most ingenious as well as convincing manner, Sachs showed that a number of pseudepigraphic compositions, ascribed to King Solomon, really belonged to Solomon ibn Gabirol. This is the story of his discovery: Johanan Allemano, the teacher of Pico della Mirandola (fifteenth century), in the introduction to his commentary on the Song of Songs, wherein he collected all sorts of compositions, ascribed to King Solomon, cites in the name of an Arabic philosopher, Abu Afláh, an older contemporary of Maimonides, seventeen philosophical essays under the title "Essays of King Solomon, the Jew." In the name of Apollonius, Allemano cites also four other compositions ascribed to King Solomon, making twenty-one compositions in all. Sachs showed that "King Solomon, the Jew" was none other than Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol. How this poor poet was elevated to a kingdom was very simple. Gabirol was often called The Malagan, after his native city, Malaga. In fact, he occasionally signed himself so in the acrostics of his poems. In Arabic this appellation would be written אלמלאך or אלמלאק which is but one step from אל מלך , the king. In this way Gabirol was elevated to the throne and was lost to us. Sachs also pointed out that two of the works cited by Allemano are no other than his "Improvement of the Moral Qualities" and the "Choice of Pearls" under different titles. Nor does this opinion rest on mere ingenious conjecture. Gabirol himself

remarks in one of his poems that he had written twenty books, a number borne out by the titles cited by Allemano.

Unfortunately nothing but the titles of these books and essays has come down to us, and our estimate of Gabirol as a philosopher must rest only on two of his works which have survived the ravages of time. Even of these two, the larger and more important one exists no longer in the original and is to be studied only in a Latin version, and in an eclectic Hebrew translation. We have seen how Gabirol travelled down the ages under the disguise of King Solomon, we shall now see that Fate cloaked him also with other disguises. The "Source of Life," his chief work in philosophy, was translated from the Arabic into the Latin in the middle of the twelfth century by Dominicus Gundissalvus, archdeacon of Segovia, with the assistance of a converted Jewish physician, Ibn Daud, afterwards called Johannes Hispalensis. Henceforth, the *Fons Vitae*, as it is called in Latin, became a work to be reckoned with in the world of scholasticism. And just "as Ibn Sina was corrupted by the Latin writers into Avicenna and Ibn Roshd into Averroes, so Ibn Gabirol became, in turn, Avencebrol, Avicembron, Avicebron; and the scholastics who fought about his philosophy had no idea he was a Jew and celebrated as a writer of religious hymns used in the Synagogue." The reason for this confusion is inherent in the work itself. "Gabirol nowhere betrays his Judaism in the *Fons Vitae*. He never quotes a Biblical verse or a Talmudic dictum The treatise is purely speculative." And so, for centuries, Gabirol marched through the philosophic schools of Mediaeval Europe, some taking him for a Christian and some for a Mohammedan, none suspecting that he was a Jew. It was on November 12, 1846, that the learned world was startled by the announcement of Solomon Munk, in the *Literaturblatt des Orients* that the well-known scholastic Avicebron was identical with the still better known Solomon ibn Gabirol.

The details of this discovery need not be gone into again, nor can I enter here on a learned disquisition on all the various problems connected with the *Fons Vitae*. Such investigation must be left to men who have devoted their lives to this field of research. For quite different reasons Gabirol's other philosophic works need likewise not detain us long. The "Improvement of the Moral Qualities" is a meritorious work, but far from epoch-making, and the "Choice of Pearls," which may be grouped

in this class, lays no claim to originality. All that may be claimed for Gabirol in connection with this work is that in the collecting and arranging of the proverbs he showed a fine sense of discrimination and a fair skill of classification. On the other hand, I regard it as my special privilege to glean from Gabirol's poetic compositions whatsoever bears upon his philosophy. This is the לקט שכחה ופאה, the poor man's portion of the harvest in the field of philosophic research to which I am justly entitled.

While a philosophic strain may be detected in many of Gabirol's poems, we, on our part, need dwell here only on a few of them—those in which the philosophic note is more strongly pronounced and which may really be regarded as philosophic thoughts expressed in the measured cadences of verse rather than poetic reflections with a philosophic coloring.

The first stanza of a Piyyuṭ recited in the Musaf service of the New Year, according to the Sephardic ritual, begins:

He who dwelleth forever, exalted is He alone from of yore.
 Solitary in His royal grandeur is He, and there is none by His side.
 From the light in which He is cloaked He fashioned the universe
 In the manner of the three sealed books. Here we see Gabirol giving expression to the fundamental principle of Jewish philosophy—that God is the first cause, and that to Him the conception of time and place does not apply. Furthermore, the universe is but an emanation of God. What he meant by the last phrase, "in the manner of the three sealed books," becomes clear in the light of one of his remarks in the "Source of Life": "The active Will of God is analogous to the Scribe; the Form resulting from the action of the Will upon Matter can be compared to the Script, while Matter is analogous to the tablet upon which the writing is engraved." By שלשה ספרים, therefore, he does not mean literally three books, but the threefold etymological conception that may be attributed to the letters ס-פ-ר, namely סופר, ספור, and ספר. In other words, the three entities which are accountable for the creation of the universe, namely, Will, Form, and Matter, may be compared to the three agencies involved in the writing of a book, the Scribe, Script, and Scroll, an idea which Gabirol very likely borrowed from the Sefer Yezirah.

The influence of the *Sefer Yezirah* is even more evident in the remaining stanzas of this poem where he speaks of the ten *Sefirot*, the *'En Sof*, and the twenty-two letters of the alphabet.

In fact, the poem gives the impression of being little more than a versification of the *Sefer Yezirah*.

In another poem, for a long time known only through a quotation in Ibn Daud's *Emunah Ramah* and for the first time edited by Senior Sachs and further elucidated by David Kaufmann, Gabirol sums up his theory of Matter in two lines. Matter, according to him, is an emanation of God. But as long as it is without form, it has only a pseudo-existence; therefore, in order to make its existence real, Matter strives after form as one friend longs for another. This idea is put in the following two verses:

חכמים אמרו כי סור היות-כל למען כל אשר הכל בידו
והוא נכסף לשומו יש כמו-יש כמו חושק אשר נכסף לדודו

This may be rendered freely as follows:

The wise men have said that the origin of all material existence lies in the All-embracing-One who has everything in His hand.

Like the lover seeking after the beloved, so does Matter long after the Form, that its semblance of existence (כמרוש) may be turned into real existence (יש).

The longest philosophic poem, however, is the well-known "Royal Crown." In it Gabirol gives expression to his philosophic ideas in a clear and lucid style.

It is simple in its grandeur and all-embracing in its simplicity. As Gabirol himself has said, in the introductory couplet to this hymn, "The wondrous ways of God inspired this song of praise that it may help mankind find the path of right and worth. "

It is difficult to say which is to be admired the more—the exquisite beauty of expression or the great depth of thought. He is a consummate master of both. Indeed, we must agree with the poet that of all his hymns this is the "Royal Crown".

We may now turn our attention to the other poems of Gabirol and endeavor to estimate his achievements as a poet, pure and simple. From

Moses ibn Ezra and Judah Harizi, themselves no mean poets, to the literary critics of the present time, all agree that Gabirol has reached the pinnacle of the Hebrew Parnassus, and it is no mean testimonial to have lived in the hearts of men for nearly a thousand years. There must be something perennial in him to have survived the turbulent torrents of taste and the shifting currents of opinion through which Jewish culture has passed since the golden days of the Spanish period. There must be that in his poetry which makes a permanent appeal to the emotions, aspirations and passions of mankind. It is not the style alone, it is not the skill in versification alone—it must be something elemental, something that touches the spring of human nature, human suffering, human exultation, which makes his poetry as inspiring today as it was nine centuries ago. His real greatness lies in his religious poems. Matthew Arnold has somewhere remarked that mankind will discover more and more that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. And this is exactly what we find in Gabirol's religious lyrics. Sometimes he touches our heart-strings and plays upon them the melody of eternal hope. Sometimes he lays bare the wounded heart of Israel and lets the sacred fountain of consolation play upon it a stream of healing waters that soothe and sustain, and sometimes the agony of his people stabs his soul so deep that he raises a piercing cry to heaven and we feel that in him we have a pleader whose voice must be heard. He brings us nearer to God, and we feel that we have a Father in heaven.

But while the religious poems of Gabirol are as fresh and full of meaning to-day as they were when they were first written down, his secular poems are at times difficult to understand. By reason of the fact that we are far removed from the life of that period, these poems do not appeal to us as strongly as they did to Gabirol's contemporaries. We are no longer able to grasp fully the allusions and metaphors because they were, in a great measure, borrowed from the Arabic. In our estimate of these compositions, therefore, we must fall back for a true judgment upon the opinions of the mediaeval critics who were better able to appreciate them.

Moses ibn Ezra, in the afore-mentioned Arabic work, says:

Younger though he was than his contemporaries, he surpassed them in the art of expression, although, in a general way, they were distinguished

for their language which was choice and full of sweetness. While they may have differed in the order of merit, they all ranked alike for the beauty of their style and charm of expression. But Abu Ayyub was an accomplished author and an eloquent writer who made himself master of that which poetry considers its aim. He attained the end in view and reached the goal. In his writings he used the finest figures of speech, imitating the modern Arabic poets. He was called the Knight of Style and the Master of Verse because of the polish of his style, the fluency of his expression and the charm of the subjects which he treated. All eyes were directed to him and everyone pointed to him with admiration. It was he who first opened the door of prosody to Jewish poets, and those who entered after him upon the same road made their fabric from his material. . . . In his poetry he embodied ideas which were based upon the laws of the Torah and were in harmony with tradition.

In a more facetious style, Ḥarizi, in the chapter on the poets of Spain written in rhymed prose, says:

Before the Song of Solomon, the Small—all great poets in our estimation fall. Since the cradle of Hebrew speech—none did ever his station reach. With unusual gifts dowered—he above his generation towered. Though dubbed small, he surpassed them all. He alone to Parnassus' pinnacle did ascend--the wisdom of the Muses to comprehend. Art claimed him as her first-born—and with a scarlet thread did his arm adorn. All the poets that before him sang—like the wind upon the void their voices rang. None like him has since arrived—no matter how much they may have strived. He is the master of them all—and they in his footsteps fall. The Lord anointed him his nation's King of Songs—and his verse is the Song of Songs. Even great poets find it hard—to grasp the meaning of this bard. For his style is too profound—its depth none can sound."

The verdict of these two critics may be accepted without reservation, and if some of the poems do not seem quite clear to us we must, with Ḥarizi, ascribe it not to Gabirol's ambiguity of style but to our shortcoming; our inability to fathom the depth of meaning.

In the history of Hebrew poetry in Spain Gabirol belongs to the third period. Begun by Menahem ben Saruḳ and Dunash ibn Labraṭ and continued by their disciples, Isaac ben Kapron, Isaac ibn Gikatillah, Jehudi ben Sheshet and others, such as Joseph ibn Abitur and Isaac ben

Saul of Lucena—Hebrew poetry in Spain had reached its highest form of development in the age of Samuel Ha-Nagid, the older contemporary of Ibn Gabirol. When Gabirol came upon the scene, there was already a well-established literary tradition, both in secular as well as religious poetry; still, because he brought the art of Hebrew poetry to perfection, we may, with Moses ibn Ezra and Ḥarizi, regard him as the founder of a new school. He surpassed his contemporaries not only by the quality of his compositions but also by their quantity. He wrote upward of three hundred poems, half of them secular and half religious, besides the "Royal Crown" and the "Azharot" each of which would make a little volume by itself. His secular poems are mostly of a personal nature; his religious compositions cover nearly all religious occasions of the year. If in the technique of his secular poetry, he was the path-finder of his generation, in the structure of his religious poems, he followed the trodden path. In his secular poetry he showed the influence of Arabic culture; in his religious poems he displayed a wide acquaintance with Jewish learning. One can easily see from them that he was well versed in the Talmud and Midrash.

The fate which befell his poems, both secular and religious, is that common to all our mediaeval classics. With the exception of the "Royal Crown" and the "Azharot," which are well known, his religious poems are scattered in scores of rituals, some of them so rare that they are as inaccessible as manuscripts, while his secular poems are thus far so badly edited that they are virtually as if they had never seen the light of day.

In 1858 Leopold Dukes published a volume of Gabirol's secular poems which he gathered from manuscripts in Oxford, Parma, and Vienna. With the exception of two poems which were in the possession of Carmoly, and to which Dukes evidently had no access, this volume, though containing only sixty-nine poems, represented almost all that was then known of Gabirol's secular poetry. Ten years later, in 1868, Senior Sachs made an attempt to gather and elucidate the religious poetry of Gabirol. But his method of elucidation was so comprehensive that a work of one hundred and sixty-seven pages contained only twenty-nine poems, most of them very short.

Neither Dukes nor Sachs made any reference to having seen a complete, independent Diwan of Gabirol's poems. Steinschneider's list of sixty-five poems is based on the Oxford MS. מחנה הנשאר, which is only an appendix to the Diwan of Judah Ha-Levi (מחנה יהודה), and contains the compositions of many other poets; while Luzzatto, who began to make a list of Gabirol's poems, likewise made no mention of any special collection.

The first intimation of the existence of a Gabirol Diwan was given by Harkavy in the prefatory note to four poems of Gabirol published by him in 1893, although he did not emphasize this point. Then came the list of one hundred and fourteen poems published by Neubauer from a Genizah manuscript which seems to have been originally an index to a Diwan of Gabirol. Further proof that the poems of Gabirol were at one time gathered into a Diwan has been furnished by the thirty-three leaves from the Genizah in the possession of E. N. Adler. This fragment, which has been identified and edited by Brody, contains the greater part of thirty-four poems of Gabirol, thirteen of which had been entirely lost to us. And in 1913 I was so fortunate as to discover in the Taylor-Schechter collection a fragment of a Diwan which furnishes additional and conclusive evidence that the poems of Gabirol had at one time been gathered in a complete collection.

But no one can expect that such a collection will some day turn up in its original completeness. The most we may look forward to is to find a leaf here and a leaf there.

It is, therefore, meet and proper that we undertake the task anew, and gather all the poetic compositions of Gabirol together, irrespective of any similar effort that was made in the past. Such, in fact, is the plan of the edition of Gabirol contemplated for the Classics Series which this volume inaugurates. The edition under consideration will contain upward of three hundred compositions, gathered from printed as well as manuscript sources. And while it is not impossible that even in this large collection one or more poems have been overlooked, it may be said, with some degree of satisfaction, that it will contain the largest number of compositions ever recorded under the name of Gabirol. Luzzatto's list (*Ozar Ṭob*, 1880, pp. 69-73), hitherto the largest known, enumerated only 134 religious hymns, whereas the edition contemplated will contain about 175 religious and 146 secular poems. This complete collection of

Gabirol's poetry may indeed serve as a fitting mausoleum on his grave, as a lasting monument of his great personality, a monument built not out of common brick and mortar but out of the treasures which he left behind him. His lyrics may indeed become a sanctuary to which the weary at heart will turn for consolation, the troubled in mind for guidance, and all who love the beautiful for the participation of that which is a joy for ever.

ISRAEL DAVIDSON

ON TRANSLATING GABIROL

I

In his well-known "Romanzero" the greatest modern poet of Jewish birth, Heinrich Heine, satirizing the ignorance of Hebrew literature, wrote—I cite an early translation of my own which preserves the metre of the original—

Jewish girls of wealth and fashion,
 Future mothers of free burghers,
 Culling all the latest knowledge
 In the dearest Paris *pensions*,

Know by heart the names of mummies,
 All the stuffed Egyptian Pharaohs,
 Merovingian shadow-monarchs
 Whose perukes were yet unpowdered,

Also pig-tailed Kings of China,
 Porcelain-pagoda princes,
 Pat from tongue it all comes tripping.
 Clever girls! But oh, good heavens!

Should you ask about the famous
 Names that formed the golden triad
 Of our Jewish constellation,
 Our Arabic-Spanish singers,

These three stars if you should ask of,
 Our Jehuda ben Halevi,
 Or our Solomon Gabirol,
 Or our Moses Ibn Ezra,

Should you bring up names of that sort,
 Then with large eyes will regard you
 All the girls, the pretty darlings,
 Dumb-struck, mud-stuck, disconcerted.

Later in the same poem, Ibn Gabirol is singled out as the thinker among poets, and the poet for thinkers; and finally our eleventh-century singer is compared to that troubadour, that mediæval nightingale, who delicately in the dusk of the Dark Ages sang "The Romance of the Rose." Gabirol, says Heine, is the nightingale of piety, the consecrated Minnesinger whose rose was God.

II

The present volume of translations from this rare singer of the Ghetto limits itself to such of his poems as have been incorporated in or designed for the liturgy of the Synagogue, though it is far from exhausting even these. But Gabirol is not exclusively a devotional poet.

All the arts began with religion, and in Gabirol we catch sight of Hebrew poetry in its period of transition when it was passing from a purely devotional to a secular character. Even the devotional begins to root itself not in tradition but in the individual experience. In a remarkable poem beginning "Three witnesses have I," Gabirol speaks of the starry world without and the moral law within almost with the modern cosmic mysticism of a Kant or a Wordsworth. There is thus a double movement by which the devotional is freeing itself from the hypnotism of the Biblical and liturgical *Anschauung* and taking on a personal quality, while at the same time the subject-matter is enlarging itself with elegies, epigrams, and Horatian epistles. Gabirol's Hiawatha-like jingle on the meanness of his host who failed to give him wine—

"May the man, his son or daughter
Be for ever doomed to water!"

—is sometimes cited as the first secular lyric in Hebrew poetry; but although this is not accurate, little that is prior has been preserved except versified mnemonics about the calendar, or grammar, and verse of a gnomic if not a pious character. While the Bible itself is full of matchless poetry, both primitive and cultured, the purely profane element was so discountenanced in this thesaurus of national literature that "the Song of Solomon" slipped in only as a religious allegory, "Ecclesiastes" scraped through under the ægis of Solomon, while "Job" was ascribed to Moses. And this tendency to make Hebrew literature synonymous with sacred literature was aggravated by the limitations of

Jewish life in the Diaspora, whose sole organ of common consciousness was the Synagogue with its holy lore.

The Jew, living as a "Son of the Law," and continuing to live only because he was a "Son of the Law," did not readily develop a lay literature. Life circled round the Bible. And Torah, not wine, woman, or song, was the poet's expected theme. Luther's trio of themes came along more copiously in Moses Ibn Ezra and Judah ha-Levi; in al-Ḥarizi we get a semi-burlesque Hudibras method, modelled on the *Makamat* of Ḥariri, and in our own day this evolution from liturgical literature has reached its climax in the nature-poetry of a Jacob Cohen, the sensuous strains of a Shneur or the massive bitterness of a Byalik.

But in the Spanish-Hebrew period we see the poet, like some tropical lung-fish that can breathe either in air or water, moving equally between the sacred and the profane. Gabirol is the first Hebrew poet to use the secular image of the Muse, which he figures as a dove, white as a lily of Sharon, with golden wings and a bell-like voice. He is the first to paint the sunset or the autumn, and in a Shelley-like image to show us Night spreading her wings over the tired Day. And he is the first Hebrew poet to handle philosophy.

If he is not also the first to handle rhyme, he is the first great singer to cramp himself with that exhilarating restriction. Rhyme was not an element of Hebrew poetry at its Biblical period. And as Joseph Jacobs has pointed out, Hebrew lends itself less freely to rhyme than Arabic, having fewer of those primitive inflections which smooth the poet's path, with the result that much of Hebrew rhyming is in *o* or *im* or *os* in damnable iteration. 'Rhyme,' to quote from my book, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 'was not introduced into Hebrew poetry before the seventh century, when it appears in the Piyyutim of Yannai. Milton calls rhyme "that barbarous invention to set off lame metre"; but there was not even metre in Hebrew then. That was not brought in till three centuries later, by Dunash ibn Labrat, a young poet of Bagdad origin, who probably picked it up from the Fez poets. "Such a thing hath hitherto been unknown in Israel," said Saadia, the great Gaon of Sura, when Dunash showed him Hebrew jiggling to Arab measures.'

Without rhyme or metre, what was it that constituted Hebrew poetry? Some say parallelism. But even parallelism was not an indispensable

element. The only indispensable element of Hebrew poetry was accent. In short what we now call free verse is closest to the old Hebrew form of expression. Sincerity, not art, is the first quest of the young poet of to-day. Art was never in the thought of a Biblical singer, so consumed was he by sincerity. And thus in free verse do the ends of the ages meet.

But Gabirol cumbers himself both with rhyme and metre, for he is almost Swinburnian in his technical mastery, in his power of dancing in fetters—witness the amazing virtuosity of his versified Hebrew grammar. I have made no effort to follow his exact verse-schemes, well content if I could get an analogous effect by the use of English measures appropriate to his theme. To translate him into bare prose seems to me the only license unpermissible, for poetry is largely verbal enchantment, and to leave out the singing element is to falsify the original even more badly than by mistranslation. But the effort to reproduce this singing element literally, especially the effort to render the exact Hebrew rhyme-scheme, would equally conduce to falsification. Butler shrewdly pointed out in "Hudibras" that

"Rhyme the rudder is of verses
By which like ships they steer their courses."

Even if Gabirol himself never had to deviate from his meaning or from lucidity to steer round rhyming point, it is almost impossible for translators not to tack or divagate, with the result that many versified versions of Hebrew poetry are so padded out for rhyme's sake as occasionally to conceal altogether the structure of the original. I do not suppose I have always escaped this reef, but only in one poem—"Benediction"—have I permitted myself any marked expansion of the theme, and here the original seemed to be swelling gloriously with the implied but unsaid.

III

In translating the *Keter Malkut*, I have regarded a rhyme-scheme as apt to mislead me from my original. It is noteworthy that in this his greatest poem, Gabirol, though he conserves rhyme largely, throws over the jingle of a fixed metre, as if to give sincerity and spontaneousness freer scope. It is as loose as the Arabic *Makamat*, and each stanza being a law to itself, the poet can follow the ebb and flow of his mood, trammelled only

by the need of rhyme. If, then, I rid him of his last fetters, I bring back his poem to a truer Hebraism.

It will be a great proof of Gabirol's domination of rhyme if, when stripped of it, he is seen to have kept his meaning undistorted by it, and to recall at times the great note of his Old Testament predecessors. For, trammelled by neither rhyme nor metre, and aiming only at this Old Testament simplicity, I have escaped all temptation to eke out the poet's plain meaning. You might use me as a crib. And where Gabirol—as so often—is quoting, I have generally adopted the ultra-accurate version of the Bible which we owe to the Jewish scholars of America.

This trick of quotation, which is almost, though not quite, unknown in other poetic literature—even Wordsworth uses it—may puzzle a hearer unfamiliar with neo-Hebrew poetry. It is not like our own decaying practice of classical or of Shakespearean quotation, a mere illumination of the argument, nor is it that rich literary allusiveness of a Hazlitt or a Lamb; it rests upon the Bible almost as on a foundation, to the cramping and even the distorting of the poet's own vision. To the mediaeval Jew the quotation with which Gabirol closed every stanza of his *Keter Malkut* seemed only an additional beauty. The Bible, regarded as a uniform whole, everywhere inspired and inspiring, about which you could move *per saltum*, skipping from Genesis to Micah, or from Job to Chronicles, was "familiar in our mouths as household words." And this familiarity bred not contempt but enhanced delight. The quotation seemed to form the climax up to which the whole stanza was built, and the more unexpected the application, or rather the misapplication, and the more it was applied to a context or a category of ideas with which it had originally no connection, the more *double entendre*, so to speak, the greater the pleasure, as at a crowning stroke of wit. It is as if *Punch* speaking of Joseph Chamberlain should say "a generation arose that knew not Joseph." This sort of punning, legitimate enough in a Hudibras-like work such as al-Ḥarizi's *Taḥkemoni*, becomes grotesque in a poem of the sublimity of the *Keter Malkut*, and it reaches its acme of bad taste when "that white bright spot" mentioned in the Levitical diagnosis of leprosy is used as an image of the moon—Shelley's "orbèd maiden with white fire laden."

It says much for Gabirol's genius that despite the familiarity with every nook and cranny of the Old Testament, which his quotations evince, he was yet able to add so much of his own to these second-hand thoughts, and to keep such a personal vision of the universe.

These quotations cannot, of course, be eliminated from my version. But there is one last feature of Gabirol's poetry which I have had to disregard—the alphabetical acrostic. An English book in my possession, called "Literary Frivolities," not unjustifiably includes acrostic verses among them. I fear that Gabirol's acrostical frivolity cannot be attributed, like his rhymes, to the Arab environment, for it seems pan-Semitic, being found in Babylonian, Samaritan and Syrian literature, as well as in copious and curious passages of the Old Testament, notably Psalm CXIX and the first four chapters of Lamentations.

I remember, in the remote period of my courtship, composing, with possibly hereditary Semitism, a sonnet on my future wife, the first letters of each line forming her name. She was much touched by the contents of the poem till I proudly pointed out the acrostic, when her emotion changed to disgust. She could not realize that a genuine feeling could be expressed with such ingenuity. A similar suspicion haunts us when we read the mediaeval Hebrew poems that run from Aleph to Tav, or—worse still—ostentate the author's name. It is fortunate that in my love-poem I at least put the lady's name and not my own. Yet that is what Gabirol is always doing, though the object of his love is God. There is a whole sheaf of poems by him with the acrostic "*Shlomoh*" or "*Ani Shlomoh*" (like "Here we are again"), sometimes modestly varied by "*Shlomoh ha-Katon*" ("Solomon the Small").

And yet all art consists in conquering the material difficulties of the medium. Just as Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel succeeded in expressing the noble poetry of creation, though he had to do it on the ceiling, and paint awkwardly upwards, so Gabirol, like Swinburne, has triumphed over the limitations set by his own pride of craftsmanship. Consider only that spiritual gem, "At the Dawn," which nobody would guess was in the original a Solomonian acrostic.

It is now in the New Year's Service, and who shall deny its right to that pride of place, even though the familiar *Shlomoh* skips from stanza to stanza? A similar triumph was won in the sixteenth century by the

author of *Lechah Dodi*, which, despite its inclusion of Solomon ha-Levi's name and its intricate rhyme-scheme, has been translated into German by Herder and Heine, and is characterized by Schechter as "perhaps one of the finest pieces of religious poetry in existence." This Poetry of Ingenuity, with its quotations, acrostics and over-rhymings, of which Kalir was the greatest exemplar, though not the initiator, has been aptly compared by Rabbi Cohen of Sydney to the "Emblem" poetry in the seventeenth century English literature, the wings, cups, harps and crosses into which true poets like Quarles, Wither and George Herbert fashioned their verses. Fortunately the *Keter Malkut* is singularly free from Gabirol's acrostical ingenuity. He falls into it only with his *Ashamnu Bagadnu*—that alphabetical confession of Sin which is the poet's sole sin against sincerity of art. And yet there is something to be said for the effect of completeness which the poet aimed at by sinning his sin with an *Aleph*, and a *Beth*, till sin exhausted itself in the *ultima Thule* of the Tav. It has been alleged that the acrostic in the Psalms was designed to aid the worshipper's memory in the days before prayer-books. I am more inclined to regard it as inspired by this same desire to express completeness—what was the object of the alliteration of the *Echah* but to express the totality of desolation? Compare, too, the alphabetical Piyutim which render the greatness of God. But whether the justification be æsthetic or mnemonic, Gabirol's confessional in the *Keter Malkut* may plead either ground.

IV

As the astronomic portions of the *Keter Malkut* seem to be omitted, as if in shame, from modern German versions of the poem, it may be as well to set its science in its historic perspective. Gabirol was a contemporary and fellow-countryman of the Cid, Spain's national hero. Born about 1020, the astronomy he absorbed in Saragossa was the astronomy of the eleventh century. And Copernicus did not publish his system till the middle of the sixteenth. Dante in the thirteenth century gives us in his *Convito* Ten Heavens, each symbolizing a branch of study, and the last corresponding to the Divine Science, Theology. These Ten Heavens reappear in his *Paradiso*, nine revolving round the earth, with a fixed all-encircling Empyrean. Gabirol's chart of the celestial vault is of the same order as the Tuscan poet's, and his poetry in its æsthetic aspect is as little

affected by the inaccuracy of his astronomy—if indeed in these days of Einstein there is anything but a relative inaccuracy.

Maimonides, born half-way between Gabirol and Dante, in his introduction to the Mishnah Tractate *Zera'im*, remarks on the astonishment of the ignorant on learning that the sun, which appears to them as a small flat sphere, is a round body one hundred and sixty-six and three-eighths times greater than the earth, and the philosopher himself is amazed at the unerring science which can calculate celestial dimensions even to a three-eighths. We now believe that "unerring science" was wrong by considerably over a million; not unlike a modern Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the religious emotion which the poet desires to evoke by his figures is as little impaired by such errors as the beauty of his poetry: on the contrary the emotion is augmented by our enhanced sense of the vastness and mystery of the universe. If a sun, one hundred and seventy times as large as the earth sufficed to arouse Gabirol's cosmic rapture, how much more overwhelming is a sun over a million and a quarter times the volume of the globe that holds our petty fortunes, a sun down one of whose rifts, as a Royal Society lecturer said the other day, the earth could be dropped and lost like a boy's marble.

Nor need we be put off by the poet's astrology, that pseudo-science which has still not been slain outright, and of which our *Mazzol tob* is a survival. In Gabirol's day, and long after, it occupied no less proud a place than astronomy, and Jews, owing to their Chaldean origin, were regarded as peculiarly awesome Masters of the horoscope.

And in truth they both produced famous astrologers of their own and translated the Arabic astrologers into Hebrew or Spanish.

A century after Gabirol, Maimonides derided astrology, but a century after Maimonides, Dante is found still ranking it as the science of the seventh heaven, above Grammar, Music, and even Geometry. Indeed, Gabirol and Dante are at one in their conception of science, which differs literally *toto caelo* from the modern.

For if Gabirol admits planetary influences, these are but secondary agencies: to our poet the force that set the planets in motion has never abdicated, and he still salutes, like the great last line of the Divine Comedy,

"The love that moves the heaven and all the stars."

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

THE POEMS

1

AT THE DAWN

At the dawn I seek Thee,
 Rock and refuge tried,
 In due service speak Thee
 Morn and eventide.

'Neath Thy greatness shrinking,
 Stand I sore afraid,
 All my secret thinking
 Bare before Thee laid.

Little to Thy glory
 Heart or tongue can do;
 Small remains the story,
 Add we spirit too.

Yet since man's praise ringing
 May seem good to Thee,
 I will praise Thee singing
 While Thy breath's in me.

2

MY SOUL SHALL DECLARE

My soul shall declare to Thee Thou art her former
 And shall Thee as her maker, O God, testify,
 At Thy word 'Be, O Soul' did she take on existence,
 And from naught didst Thou draw her as light from the eye.

Of Thee she shall own and affirm, hand uplifted,
 'Twas Thou that didst breathe her in me, and as due

For that work she shall pour out her thanks and bear witness
That to me she was given Thy bidding to do.

She serves Thee as handmaid while yet in the body,
And the day she returns to the land whence she came,
In Thee will she dwell, for in Thee is her being,
Doth she rise, doth she sit, Thou art with her the same.

She was Thine when unborn ere the day of her breathing,
With wisdom and knowledge by Thee she was fed,
And to Thee for her ordinance looks, and subsistence,
Indebted to Thee for her water and bread.

Her gaze is to Thee, and in Thee is her hoping
When like novice in child-birth she cries in affright.
O take her torn heart as a sacrifice offered,
And her ribs lacerated for fiery rite.

To Thee let her pour out her tears as drink-off'ring,
Let the breath of her sighing as incense-cloud be,
At her gate and her doorway she watches with prayer,
She is burning like flame with her passion for Thee.

She must ever approach Thee as servant his master,
Or as handmaiden looks to her mistress's eye,
She must spread out her palms in request and petition
And turn herself humbly to Thee in her cry.

For call Thee she must, nor endure to be silent,
Like a bird in the net her one hope is in flight,
In the depth of the night she must rise and keep vigil,
For her work is Thy works to declare and recite.

For Thee she must pine and of Thee make entreaty,
Her hand must be clean and as stainless her thought.
Her breach do Thou heal, be her hope and her helper,
When she draws nigh redeem her, her sin count as naught.

Behold her affliction, and hark to her weeping,
In the sphere of the soul she with Thee is alone,

Repay and restore her, attend to her anguish,
 When her sobs and her tears her backslidings bemoan.

Bemock, O Almighty, the foes that bemock her,
 Avenge with due vengeance her insults and shame,
 In her stress be a rock of support 'gainst her foeman,
 Nor yield up the child Thou to manhood didst frame.

No enemy came, whose reproach could be borne with,
 No cruel one hunted her down in her track,
 'Twas the friends of her household betrayed her—her passions—
 'Twas her comrade who bloodily stabbed in the back.

I ever am seeking my body's best welfare,
 Yet it in return would my spirit undo.
 Ah, truly the fruit of the tree in its root is,
 The proverb "Like mother, like daughter" is true.

3

THE MESSIAH.

Lord, tell me when
 Shall come to men
 Messiah blest,
 When shall Thy care
 His couch prepare
 To be my guest,
 To sleep on my golden bed,
 in my palace rest.

Wake, dear gazelle,
 Shake off thy spell,
 Nor slumber still.
 Dawn like a flag
 Surmounts the crag
 Of Tabor's hill,
 And its flame it unfurls o'er my
 Hermon, the hoar and chill.

From the wild-ass brood
 To the grace renewed
 Of Thy dainty roe,
 O Lord, return,
 For behold we yearn
 Our love to show,
 And our soul with Thy soul at
 one as of yore to know.

Thrice welcome he
 Who comes to me
 Of David's line,
 My palace treasure
 Is at his pleasure
 With all that's mine,
 My pomegranate, cinnamon, spice, and
 the jars of my old sweet wine.

4

INVITATION

Come up to me at early dawn,
 Come up to me, for I am drawn,
 Belovèd, by my spirit's spell,
 To see the sons of Israël.
 For thee, my darling, I will spread
 Within my court a golden bed,
 And I will set a table there
 And bread for thee I will prepare,
 For thee my goblet I will fill
 With juices that my vines distil:
 And thou shalt drink to heart's delight,
 Of all my flavours day and night.
 The joy in thee I will evince
 With which a people greets its prince.
 O son of Jesse, holy stem,
 God's servant, born of Bethlehem!

5

THREE THINGS CONSPIRE

Three things conspire together in mine eyes
 To bring the remembrance of Thee ever before me,
 And I possess them as faithful witnesses:
 Thy heavens, for whose sake I recall Thy name,
 The earth I live on, that rouseth my thought
 With its expanse which recallesh the expander of my pedestal,
 And the musing of my heart when I look within the depths of myself.
 Bless the Lord, O my soul, for ever and aye!

6

BEFORE MY KING

In prayer prone before my King,
 I bend to Him my face and knee,
 My heart His sacrifice shall be,
 My tear His liquid offering.

In waiting for the sun's caress,
 In watching for the morning light
 To scatter all my godless night,
 My soul consumes in weariness.

Though He delays, shall I not start
 To seek His face? Nay, of a sooth
 I yet shall find his word of ruth
 Bring comfort to my bitter heart.

The promise Zechariah gave,
 How sweet it tastes in this our woe!
 My soul shall bid my heart to know
 I trust the living God to save.

7

OPEN THE GATE

Open the gate, my love,
 Arise and open the gate,
 For my soul is dismayed
 And sorely afraid
 And Hagar's brood mocks my estate.

The heart of the hand-maid's sons
 Is hateful and haughty grown,
 And all because of the cry
 Of Ishmael piercing the sky,
 Ascending and reaching the Throne.

I stumble 'twixt beast and beast,
 The wild ass swift to slay
 Has followed my flight
 From the courts of Night
 Where crushed of the boar I lay.

Alas! for my thick-sealed fate,
 Ah woe for the days to come!
 It helps but to pain me
 That none can explain me,
 And I, myself, I am dumb.

8

POUR OUT THY HEART

Pour out thy heart to the Rock,
 Pour out thy inmost soul
 To the stronghold naught can shock,
 As the mornings and evenings roll.

To Him who around and before
 Is, whether thou rest or roam,

To Him let thy thoughts upsoar,
 Be thou on the road or at home.

Thus tested by praise and belief,
 Thou favour divine shalt gain,
 He will turn His ear to thy grief,
 He will bend His eye on thy pain.

Behold, He will pay thy reward,
 Thou shalt share the abode of the blest,
 For the day thou return to the Lord,
 He will draw thee close to His breast.

9

SIX YEARS WERE DECREED

Six years were decreed for a slave to wait
 When his freedom he sought at his master's hand,
 But the years of my bondage lack term or date,
 It is hard, O my Master, to understand.

Why, Sire, should a hand-maid's son bear sway,
 And me with affliction and anguish task?
 There cometh no answer, howe'er I pray,
 In despite that each day for reply I ask.

What word at the last wilt Thou say, my King?
 An Thou findest no ransom, O Lord, take me!
 Take me for Thy people as offering,
 I will serve Thee for ever and ne'er go free.

10

'TIS JOY TO ME

'Tis joy to me to dwell in Thee,
 At thought of Thee all grief retreats,

Thy mercies call for thanks, but all
I have to pay are tongue's conceits.

Not heaven's height can bound Thy might,
How then shall thought due praise assign?
Teach me, and bless with righteousness,
And let my will but further Thine.

The praise I bring as offering
Accept in lieu of sacrifice,
My service call memorial,
Pleased with Thy worshipper's device.

Let Thy clear eye, O Lord, descry
How wretched are my fears and hopes,
And send Thy light to chase the night
In which my blinded spirit gropes.

In kindness great, compassionate,
O guard for me Thy tenderness,
Within its wideness let me hide
The vastness of my trespasses.

And as Thy name to me became
A treasure in my heart to stand,
So let to Thee my spirit be
A treasure held within Thy hand.

11

MY REFUGE

I have made Thee my refuge, my terror and trembling,
And when straitly besieged I have made Thee my tower,
When to left and to right I have sought for a helper,
I could look for dear life to no aid but Thy power.
More than all earthly treasure I have made Thee my portion,
Through all cares the delight and desire of my days,
In the flood of Thy love I have rapture eternal
And prayer is but an occasion for praise.

12

ECSTASY

My thoughts astounded asked me why
Towards the whirling wheels on high
In ecstasy I rush and fly.

The living God is my desire,
It carries me on wings of fire,
Body and soul to Him aspire.

God is at once my joy and fate,
This yearning me He did create,
At thought of Him I palpitate.

Shall song with all its loveliness
Submerge my soul with happiness
Before the God of Gods it bless?

13

I HAVE SOUGHT THEE DAILY

I have sought Thee daily at dawn and twilight,
I have stretched my hands to Thee, turned my face,
Now the cry of a heart athirst I will utter,
Like the beggar who cries at my door for grace.
The infinite heights are too small to contain Thee,
Yet perchance Thou canst niche in the clefts of me.
Shall my heart not treasure the hope to gain Thee,
Or my yearning fail till my tongue's last plea?
Nay, surely Thy name I will worship, while breath in my nostrils be.

14

HUMBLE OF SPIRIT

Humble of spirit, lowly of knee and stature,
 But in fear and awe abounding,
 I come before Thee.
 And in Thy presence to myself appear
 As a little earth-worm.
 O Thou, who fillest the earth and whose greatness is endless,
 Shall one like me laud Thee,
 And how shall he honour Thee?
 The angels of heaven do not suffice,
 How then one like me?
 Thou hast wrought good and hast magnified mercies,
 Wherefore the soul shall magnify praise of Thee.

15

FOR A MARRIAGE

Send to the prince's daughter
 Her ruddy, fair-eyed king,
 Like a fruitful branch he blossoms,
 Transplanted to a spring.

Thy Torah has his worship,
 He runs, to taste its charms,
 Before Thee like a warrior,
 Accoutred in his arms.

I day by day am waiting
 Salvation's promised day,
 Enquiring how and whence it
 Will come to be my stay.

Restore the tortured People
 To the friend of her youth divine,
 And bring the two together
 To the house of joy and wine.

16

THE SUN

Like a bridegroom the sun
 Dons his robe that is spun
 Of light,
 Which from Thee emanated
 Yet in no wise abated
 Thy light.

Taught to go westward round
 With obeisance profound
 To his Lord,
 He by service so loyal
 To a master so royal
 Is a lord.

While his homage each day
 Serves to mark and display
 Thy glory,
 'Tis Thy hand that investeth
 The robe on which resteth
 His glory.

17

THE REDEMPTION

The despoiled and dispersed Thou shalt gather to Zion,
 Restoring the slaves who were sold without fee,
 And the priests to their ritual robes, while the scion
 Of families ruling shall once more be free
 To carol, high God, his thanksgiving to Thee.

To the heathen a banner to raise Thou wilt hasten,
 Thou shalt strengthen and gird up the loins that we trust,
 And the suppliants whom Thy dispersal did chasten
 Thou wilt raise as of yore from captivity's dust,
 The breastplate of righteousness clothing the just.

My impudent foe seeks my life-faith to sever,
 To my face he enquires how long yet wilt thou wait,
 But I am afflicted, not cast off for ever,
 For my God is the help of the low in estate,
 Protecting the poor as He humbles the great.

His heritage shall to the exile be given,
 And a strong hand the sick and the punished replace,
 The abased and abandoned, by every fang riven,
 Shall their freshness renew by the patriarchs' grace
 And the strangers be scorched like a tropical place.

18

GOD AND ISRAEL

God:

Though bereaved and in mourning, why sit thus in tears?
 Shall thy spirit surrender its hopes to its fears?
 Though the end has been long and no light yet appears,
 Hope on, hapless one, a while longer.

I will send thee an angel My path to prepare,
 On the brow of Mount Zion thy King to declare,
 The Lord ever regnant shall reign again there,
 Thy King, O proclaim, comes to Zion.

Israel:

How long, O my God, shall I wait Thee in vain?
 How long shall Thy people in exile remain?
 Shall the sheep ever shorn never utter their pain
 But dumbly through all go on waiting?

God:

Have faith, hapless one, I will pardon and free,
 Not always shalt thou be abhorrent to Me,
 But be Mine e'en as I shall return unto thee,
 'Tis yet but a little space longer.

Israel:

How long till the turn of my fate shall draw near,
 How long ere the sealed and the closed be made clear,
 And the palace of strangers a roof shall appear?

God:

Hope on for a shelter and refuge.
 With healing shall yet thy entreaties be graced,
 As when Caphtor was crushed shalt thou triumph re-taste,
 And the flowers cast off shall re-bloom in the waste,
 Hope on but a little space longer.

Israel:

My people of yore 'neath one people was drowned,
 But from Egypt or Babel deliverance found,
 But now we are hopelessly compassed around
 By four birds of prey grim and speckled.
 They have eaten my flesh, yet to leave me are loath.

God:

The Rock you must trust to remember His oath,
 Your lover that went shall return to His troth,
 Hope on, hapless one, a whit longer.

19

REASSURANCE: A TRIALOGUE.

Cantor to God:

"What profits it to see Thy people wallow,
 A prostrate lily whelmed in floods of water?
 She twitters like a caged and frightened swallow,
 When Thou art girt with weapons for her slaughter.
 Be over her, O Rock, a shield erected,
 And make Thy corner-stone of that rejected!"

Congregation:

"Before my foe I am humiliated,
 He sits in fatted ease while I must wander,
 Before his flouts and roars and blows prostrated,
 Yet I endure and fix my vision yonder,
 And wait for healing, with my crying stifled,
 Like Hannah's, and a heart subdued and rifled."

Cantor to Congregation:

"What ails thee that soul-sick and bitter-hearted,
 Thou faintest, face and hands with teardrops streaming?
 Sow charity, and kindness shall be carted,
 Who trusts in force is ignorantly dreaming.
 Oppression passes, trampled by oppression,
 And violence breeds violent succession."

Congregation to Cantor:

"My years have gone in sorrow and in sighing,
 I hoped for respite but instead comes wailing,
 Before the balm arrives behold me dying."

Cantor to Congregation:

"Ah wait, faint heart, that sighest, sick and failing,
 Thyself against God's mercy do not harden,
 Thou, eased of foes, shalt flower like a garden."

Congregation to God:

"Mine eyes are sick and faint from hope's depression,
 Dumb like a sheep I bear Thy storm of fury,
 Perchance my pain shall cancel my transgression,
 Crush not the plagued and stricken son of Jewry,

The broken-hearted, crouching 'neath Thy rod,
 He waits Thee, night and day, O jealous God.

Gripped like a bird within its captor's fingers,
 And crushed to dust, I groan beyond all bearing."

God:

"Hearken, afflicted one, for hope yet lingers,
 And look to Me, whose angel is preparing
 My path, for though at night be tears and sadness
 Yet in the morning come delight and gladness."

20

DUOLOGUE

God:

"Daughter of Zion, tried in Sorrow's furnace,
 E'en as I swore thy fathers, be at rest.
 I swore it for My sake, and now thy crying
 Hath mounted to My habitation blest,
 And I have heard, for gracious is My breast."

Israel:

"Obeisance low I made, for I am feeble,
 Thy kindness responds to all who yearn.
 Come back, dear Lord, whose name is linked with pardon,
 No other saviour Israel can discern,
 Unto his myriad families return!"

God:

"Where'er thy origin, whosoe'er thy master,
 A man shall come—nay, I—thy cause to plead,
 Whoever holds the bill of thy divorcement.
 Like wall or tower of fire I guard thy seed,
 Then wherefore weep or heart affrighted heed?"

Israel:

"Why do I weep? Because Thou keepest silence,
 Though violence rages and, all uncontrolled,
 The mob destroys, and we as slaves to strangers,
 Master and man together, have been sold,
 And no Redeemer do our eyes behold."

God:

"Who art thou thus to shrink from man in terror
 And be dismayed because of mankind's scorn?
 My angel I will send, as wrote the prophet,
 And gather Israel winnowed and new-born:
 This miracle shall be to-morrow morn."

Israel:

"To gather me my chieftains Thou didst promise,
 The day comes not and miracle is none,
 Nor see I Temple built nor any herald
 Of Peace arrive to be my Holy One—
 Ah, wherefore lingers Jesse's promised son?"

God:

"Behold, I keep the oath I swore to gather
 My captives—kings shall bring their gifts to thee;
 Created for a witness to the nations,
 My holy ones shall testify to Me—
 Yea, Jesse's son Mine eyes already see."

21

ESTABLISH PEACE

Establish peace, for us, O Lord,
 In everlasting grace,
 Nor let us be of Thee abhorred,
 Who art our dwelling-place.

We wander ever to and fro,
 Or sit in chains in exile drear,
 Yet still proclaim where'er we go,
 The splendour of Our Lord is here.

Sore-tried, involved in heathen mesh,
 Deep-sunk as though in midmost sea,

Each morn the thought is roused afresh,
Who will arise to set us free?

From rampart and from mountain reft,
Immured in thick and pitchy gloom,
Had not the Lord a remnant left,
Death in the dust had been our doom.

All realms behold our driven seed,
Like wounded doves we fly their hate.
All nations hunt us and impede
And in the desert lie in wait.

Gripped as a bird within a net,
Ever pursued in deadly chase,
With harsh devices daily met,
Perchance our God will grant us grace.

How many periods are past,
And we in exile lingering,
By enemies encompassed fast,
Who jeer that now we have no King!

They plot and league in lying spite
God's truth with cunning to eclipse,
Our tongues, they say, shall give us might,
We own no master to our lips.

Shine forth, great God, in splendid flame,
Bare Thy great arm of ancient days,
Be jealous for Thy glorious name,
Not unto us, O Lord, the praise.

To dust the Arab kingdom sweep,
The ravenous beasts who tear and bite,
Who rend our scattered sons as sheep,
Whose motto is to seize by might.

Our heritage they have possessed,
Exiled, devoured us at their will,

Consumed and wasted and oppressed
And machinate against us still.

So low our nation hath been brought,
So many masters override,
A little more and it were naught,
Had not the Lord been on its side.

Beneath the feet of slaves we bend,
In pit and prison we are pressed,
The hunters at our necks impend,
We labour still and have no rest.

Where is that kindness from above
Of which Thy servitors have heard,
The boon of Thy peculiar love,
For which we have our fathers' word?

O glorious sovran of the height,
Abase, destroy their topmost tower,
The final marvel bring to light,
Arise and save us, show Thy power.

Uplift the lowly from the mire,
And make our meditation sweet,
The lily gather from the brier,
And our salvation, Lord, complete.

With joy the lost and wounded bless,
Wipe from all eyes the tears that run,
Unveil the orb of righteousness,
For unto us is born a son.

O break the yoke, the slave release,
Rebuke the arrogant again,
And send Thy messenger of peace,
Whose feet are welcome as the rain.

Rejoice, my dear despised, the King
In all His beauty thou shalt see,

And this the song that men shall sing
 In Judah's land, our own and free.

The prayer of the meek finds grace,
 And God will hearken and forgive,
 Tread down corruption, sin erase,
 And in His light will let us live.

My song of penitence He ranks
 As though an altar-sacrifice.
 Healed of my sins I give Him thanks,
 Who 'spite our deeds remits the price

Delight and peace from Thee we hail,
 Thy hand Thy people's sin outscored,
 Drew o'er iniquity a veil
 Nor gave wrongdoing its reward.

Perpetual ascend to Thee
 Thy people's and Thy servants' cries,
 O let us Thy compassion see,
 And Thy salvation greet our eyes.

22

JUDGMENT

My breast I am smiting,
 My own sins indicting.
 How then canst Thou draw me
 To strife and thus awe me,
 And bring Me to judgment?

My branch hangeth ailing,
 My eyelid is failing,
 My aims to derision
 Are turned by the vision
 Of Thee bringing judgment.

The creditor calleth,
 The dread decree falleth,
 The awful day breaking
 God's creatures sets quaking
 In fear of His judgment.

Through Thy attributes preaching,
 Almighty, and teaching,
 O weigh aberration
 In the scale of salvation,
 Nor bring us to judgment.

In Thy merciful fashion
 Award us compassion,
 That man who but dust is
 May handle with justice
 The haters of judgment.

Like a vapour evanished,
 Man is melted and banished,
 His birth is coëval
 With a harvest of evil,
 'Tis Thou must bring judgment.

We await—O behold us—
 Thy love to enfold us.
 Did Thy warning not hasten
 Our impulse to chasten?
 For the Lord loveth judgment.

23

PRAYER FOR THE HAZZAN

As the servant longs for the master's hand, so craves the cantor's soul,
 O extend Thy mercy upon him, rend his debt-recording scroll.
 "Unto Me return, then will I to thee"—were this Thy word unsaid,
 Like a captain humbled while at his post he now would droop his head.
 To Thy servant, Lord, Thou wilt surely ope the penitential way,

May his fruit be sweet as he stands to lead our prayers to Thee to-day.
 As we watch our brother, behold, we note the grey that streaks his hair,
 And his heart a-swim in a sense of sin as praying stands he there.
 Let the fervent breath of Thy suppliant be witness for his heart,
 Let him but return to Thee this once, he never will depart.

24

TWO THINGS HAVE MET

Two things have met in me, one in their ways,
 And stand within me, above or below,
 My tongue that hastes to proclaim Thy praise,
 My heart Thy greatness to see and know.
 The angels on high cannot speak of Thy glory,
 Then how shall contemptible man tell its story?

When men bring tribute, an ox, say, or dove,
 The lean or the fat gives Thee equal delight,
 If but 'tis brought by a heart full of love.
 So too take my prayer as priestly rite,
 For my soul and spirit unite in Thy praise,
 Two things having met in me, one in their ways.

25

FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

The breath of the remnant of Jacob shall praise Thee,
 For with testimony confirmed Thou hast made him Thy witness
 And keepest Thy covenant with him and Thy kindness;
 Therefore shall he thank Thee on the day Thou hast appointed judgment.

The breath of the company of Israel shall ravish
 Thy heart,

Daily proclaiming Thy Unity.
 To be judged of Thee and by Thy hand inscribed
 In the book of life,

They stand this day according to Thy ordinance,
For all things are Thy servants.

The breath of the nation set apart from the seventy
And weighing true in the scales of righteousness,
Shall hail Thee as King,
A monarch of justice and righteousness,
Who sits on the Throne of righteousness,
A righteous judge.

The breath of the congregations chosen of Thee shall thank Thee,
And their bannered tribes,
O Thou who stretchest Thy hand to receive the transgressors of Thy
judgments,
That Thou mayest be justified when Thou speakest
And be in the right when Thou judgest.

The breath of those conserved in Israel,
Thy servants who fear Thee,
Shall hail Thee as mighty.
Thou art near to all that call upon Thee,
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of
Thy throne.

The breath of the holy ones hallowing Thee,
Responding in all their passion of desire,
Acclaims Thee as holy.
Holy God, King living forever, they cry,
And would that our mouths were as full as the sea
With song!

26

MY LORD AND KING

Almighty God, on lofty throne
In wisdom Thou didst build the world,
Thy might the firmament unfurled
And Thou wast King ere kings were known.

Sole King, who hung the earth on naught,
 In great assemblies I will cry,
 For every soul must testify,
 The Lord of hosts rules all He wrought.

His seat is hid in mystery,
 Myriads of holy ones in dread,
 His ministers in lowlihead,
 Surround His awful Majesty.

His praises in set order sing,
 Although all praise He hath outsoared,
 Declare the Kingdom of the Lord,
 Proclaiming that the Lord is King.

The depths of sky His mercy planned,
 The waters are His footstools. He
 Their measures gave to stream and sea
 And poured them in with royal hand.

The sea unto His bounds submits,
 Our King and God, so great and high,
 His glory covers all the sky
 When that upon His throne He sits.

Sole King, He spreads for curtain Space,
 The sun uprises from the east
 To draw from earth a dainty feast,
 A strong man glad to run a race.

O glorious Sovereign whom I sing,
 Be gracious unto us and kind,
 For Thine own sake, if but I find
 Grace in Thine eyes, my Lord and King.

To the glorious one, girdled by praise,
 Great in deeds and tremendous in ways,
 Who filleth with wonders our days,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Lord whose decrees never fail,
 Who spreadeth the clouds like a veil,
 And maketh the dust hard as mail,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Builder whose measures none knows,
 By whom the high heavens arose,
 And beauty like lightning that glows,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Judge who His servants will spare,
 For the souls of His faithful will care,
 And will make their inheritance fair,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Chief on whose breast Right is borne,
 Who is served by the seed to Him sworn,
 Who gathereth lilies from thorn,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Washer who whiteneth sin,
 Whose cloud blotteth evil within,
 Whose forgiveness repentance can win,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Alchemist turning his gold
 To the diamond's perfection, clear, cold,
 Like the streams that Damascus enfold,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

To the Lord who His scattered will keep,
 To whom cries of the lowly that weep
 Are dearer than bullocks or sheep,
 Blow ye at New Moon the trumpet.

28

LET THE ISLES REJOICE

Let the numerous isles rejoice with trembling,
 For He is high and exalted and acknowledged as One
 In the height of the firmament.
 The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.
 The clouds acclaim Thee beyond every other power,
 In every mouth is thy unity uttered,
 And by the people of God is Thy praise proclaimed.
 And who is like to Thy people Israel,
 The one nation on earth,
 To give thanks to Thee upstanding,
 O God inhabiting the heights,
 And to proclaim Thee as One?
 The Lord reigneth, let the nations quake.
 He sitteth among the Cherubim, let the earth tremble.
 The scattered shalt Thou assemble and the sighing redeem,
 To Thy holy house Thou shalt lead them with rejoicing,
 And from earth's four corners gather the exiles.

29

FOR THE DAY OF MEMORIAL

The seeker of good shall acceptance find
 From the God whose glory is boundless,
 If he turn unto Him with repentant mind,
 And sackcloth on both of his shoulders bind
 By way of memorial.

So come and return to our God on high
 Who fashioned the uttermost heavens,
 Let your songs of praise to His footstool fly
 And thank Him to-night in a choral cry
 By way of memorial.

O King of the Kingdom that hails Thy name
 Since first to the void Thou spakest,
 Evoking the light that from darkness came,
 Accept this plea to expunge my shame
 As rite of memorial.

Prepare, O Israel, to meet Thy God,
 Let every man seek to find ransom,
 Remove the evil at which ye nod,
 Cleanse ye and wash ye or dread His rod
 This day of memorial.

30

GOD DWELLETH HIGH

God dwelleth high above man's dwelling-place,
 Ye multitudes, come praise and honour Him,
 Huzzah before the King whose name is God,
 Sound joyous flourishes upon the trumpet.
 His creatures fear His glory more than man
 When awful deeds are wrought, for dread is He.
 The day shall be when at the sound of trumpet
 Thy people to the Mount of Olives flock,
 And they, according to Thy word, shall go
 With shouting and with tumult and perceive
 The thunders, lightnings, and the trumpet's sound.
 Regard the people nestling in Thy shadow,
 And trustfully proclaiming that perchance
 Again the Lord of hosts will gracious be
 And marvels once again be wrought in thunder
 And lightning and thick cloud upon the Mount
 And pealing of the Shofar. Consecrate
 Yourselves again to-day unto His service,
 And should again your glad redemption dawn,
 Uplift yourselves sublime above all else,
 And mark the banner flown upon the mountains
 What time the horn resounds. O Lord, whose dread

Sets all the world's inhabitants a-tremble,
 Be herald of good tidings to the people,
 So staunch beneath the adversary's yoke.

Thus when the ram's horn poureth forth its note
 And ye shall hear the Shofar's long-drawn peal,
 Thanksgiving offer up to God and song,
 And tell His mighty deeds and chant His praise
 According to the measure of His greatness.
 O praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet,
 So shall the Merciful show graciousness
 To you who cry, and as of old restore
 Your captives, yea the Lord of hosts o'er you
 Shall keep His watch, with trumpet-blasts for warning.

31

FOR ATONEMENT EVE

Send forth Thy messenger, Thy interpreter,
 And let him do wonders with signs and happenings,
 To cleanse us this night from scandal and defamation!
 Great God, boundless and unsearchable,
 Thy righteousness is like mighty mountains,
 Thy judgments are like the great deep.

Bare to Thee and spied out is the heart's imagination and secret,
 Lo, shaped in iniquity, how shall man justify the evil of his work?
 Can the grains of his dust justify it that were accounted vanity even while
 he was still in being?

How then after he has perished and every element passed back to its
 source,

When he is driven like chaff before the wind and like smoke from the
 lattice?

Who shall stand up for Thy people, and who set them free?
 If for decision Thou shouldst draw nigh them, and
 if for judgment Thou shouldst take them,
 Then judge them, I pray Thee, by Thy righteousness,

And reprove them not according to Thy wrath.
 For what is the weak that he should contend with the mighty,
 And how can dry stubble stand in the flame?

Lo, as the flower fadeth and the wind flitteth by like a shadow,
 So flesh from spirit is rent asunder;
 If then Thou wilt stir up chastisement,
 There is no way of deliverance shouldst Thou press hard;
 For the worker is sluggish,
 And the day short and the work abundant.

32

LORD OF THE WORLD

Lord of the world, O hear my psalm,
 And as sweet incense take my plea.
 My heart hath set its love on Thee
 And finds in speech its only balm.

This thought forever haunts my mind,
 Some day to Thee I must return,
 From Thee I came and backward yearn
 My very fount and source to find.

Not mine the merit that I stand
 Before Thee thus, since all is Thine,
 The glorious work of force divine,
 No product of my heart or hand.

My soul to Thee was humbly bent
 Even before she had her birth,
 Before upon the sphere of earth
 Her heav'nly greatness made descent.

33

LORD, WHAT IS MAN?

Lord, what is man but flesh and blood? O weep!
 His days unconscious stray, like shadows sweep,
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

Lord, what is man? A carcase fouled and trodden,
 A noxious creature brimming with deceit,
 A fading flow'r that shrivels in the heat.
 Wert Thou as stern as he with sin is sodden,
 How could he face Thy wrath? Ah, see him creep:
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

Lord, what is man? He rolls in mud and lies,
 Insanely fouls the clean and spoils the fine.
 Did but Thy justice follow his design,
 Mown like the grass were he, or herb that dies.
 In doom's dark hour be then Thy pity deep,
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

Lord, what is man? Proud, born in sin, defiant,
 His drink is violence and on wrong he feeds.
 Sea-tossed and furnace-fierce, if judged by deeds
 He would be crushed like weakling fighting giant.
 Thy mercy therefore let his prayer reap,
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

Lord, what is man? A trickster vile, abhorred.
 If Thou shouldst deal with him in equity,
 A mouldered robe, a scattered cloud were he.
 Therefore forgiveness is his best award.
 His base is dust, his form a clayey heap,
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

Lord, what is man? A tree despoiled, mere stubble
 Its only fruit. Didst Thou his sin repay,
 He like a snail or wax would melt away.
 Therefore forgive, nor press him in his trouble.
 Moth-like he rots, old joys he can but weep,
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

Lord, what is man? A lonely creature driven
 Like fallen leaf, bemocked by empty words,

As full of guile as basket is of birds.
 His rottenness would swift as smoke be riven,
 Didst Thou his measure, not Thy measure keep.
 His stroke comes sudden and he falls on sleep.

34

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Propound a mystery, O my tongue, and give praise to God,
 For He hath delivered me and exalted my horn.
 Awake, my heart, and turn to the Almighty,
 And in awe of His anger let my hand be lifted to Him.

Set the Most High before thee, and know that every thought
 And every hidden imagining are to Him not hidden.
 Dread the day of His wrath, and the dreadful position
 Wherein is help or refuge for no creature.

On the day He shall judge the peoples and destroy beings
 And wither all His adversaries as with the fiery blast of his nostrils
 And decree the fate of all potentates, officers and rulers,
 Nor pay regard to mighty princes.
 And destroy tyrants and cut off the scornful,
 The proud and presumptuous who rely on the
 preciousness of their palanquin;

Who have forgotten their Creator and put their trust in their riches
 And prided themselves above high God,
 Who humbleth and uplifteth,
 And have rebelled against their Master,
 With their host and their multitude,
 And the silver they have acquired, and the fine gold and sapphires,
 And have built structures, and carved out windows,
 And erected palaces, and battlements and chambers,
 Nor remember the Almighty,
 But wax fat in the abundance of power,
 And speak arrogantly to Him
 And roar like young lions.

But He is great and fearful,
And girded about with might;
He calleth the generations
And from Him are the hill-tops.
Doth He not regard the lowly,
And abase every one that is proud?
He will raise up the broken pauper
And lift him from the dunghill.

Woe to them for this,
When their Creator shall sit in judgment,
To take vengeance on them, their grown and their little ones,
And they shall fall into the net, weeping bitterly,
And when quaffing the cup of foaming wine
Shall drain only dregs,
And shall be consumed in their iniquity,
And their riches shall not profit them,
And all they build shall be upset
As though overthrown by strangers.

And the God of the ages will abhor the man of blood
And will break the haughty
Like a potter's vessel,
And will bring low their pride
And silence their psaltery
And make their voice sound
Like a ghost from the dust,
And demolish their battlements
And their houses of pleasure,
And make over their inheritance
To strangers and aliens,
And the gadfly shall sting them
To determined destruction,
And they shall be trodden of passers-by
Like a ground or a street.

Therefore turn ye from them and their counsels,
Nor vie with them
Lest your fate be as that of these arrogant.

35

LAMENTATION

Strayed in mid-youth, rouse up, nor sleep, for lo!
 The days of youth like clouds of smoke will pass.
 Ere evening falls, thou shalt be withered grass,
 Though morning saw thee like a lily blow.

Why waste on ancestors a heated breath,
 Or note which progeny was Abraham's?
 Whether his food be herbs or Bashan rams,
 Man, wretched wight, is on his way to death.

36

THE DWELLERS IN CLAY

O habitants of homes of clay,
 Why lift ye such a swelling eye,
 Ye are but as the beasts that die,
 What do ye boast of more than they?

It is for us the wiser part
 To know ourselves for worms whose doom
 Is in the clay to find a tomb,
 Nor, falsely proud, exalt our heart.

What shall aught profit mortal man
 Whose latter end adjoins the grave?
 Here were no change, though Nature gave
 A thousand years to be his span.

Should he as rebel walk, behold
 Earth opens hot to swallow up
 His ashes in her flaming cup
 And vain is all his might of gold.

Unhappy man, with chastened soul,
And opened eyes, true vision win,
To see thy lowly origin
And thy inevitable goal.

To what may be compared thy lot?
Thou art, O weak and wretched wight,
The gourd that shot up in the night
And in the morning it was not.

To be unborn were better worth
Than thus to reap distress and pain,
For how essay great things to gain
When struggling in this snare of earth?

A fallen creature from the womb,
Thou sinnest for a slice of bread,
And in a moment's wildered dread,
Can live through every plague and gloom

While spirit with thy body links,
With living light shall glow thy flesh,
But should the soul desert its mesh,
To mire and sliminess it sinks.

Behold no jot with thee will stay
Of all the glory now so great,
Strangers shall seize thy loved estate,
And empty thou shalt go away.

Thy soul thou gavest o'er to lust,
Nor pondered on this bitter truth.
But if thou sinnest in thy youth,
What wilt thou do when thou art dust?

O let the wicked turn aside,
And take, O King, the path to Thee.
Perchance the Rock will heed the plea,
And from His wrath the sinner hide.

O haughty-souled, come gather all,
 Remember and stand fast and raise
 Your heart and hands in common praise
 And thus to God in heaven call:

"Woe to our souls, and wellaway
 For all the sins that we have sinned,
 Alas, we have pursued the wind
 And like to sheep have gone astray.

"What favour can we ask or grace?
 The wave of sin has overflowed
 Our heads, and heavy is our load
 Of guilt, how dare we lift our face?

"Draw up Thy people from the pit,
 Thou Ruler of the depth and height,
 Stiff-necked were we in Thy despite,
 Yet of Thy mercies bate no whit

"But shed Thy sweet compassion o'er
 The people knocking at Thy gate,
 Thou art the Master of our fate,
 And unto Thee our eyes upsoar."

37

ALMIGHTY GOD

Almighty God, who sufferest Thyself
 To be entreated, and who payest heed
 Unto the poor, how long wilt Thou from me
 Be far and hidden? Night and day I turn
 And with a steadfast heart I call to Thee,
 And pour incessant gratitude for Thy
 Excelling goodness. O my King, with pain
 For Thee my heart is torn, in Thee it trusts.
 Dreaming this shut-in dream, it looks to Thee
 For life's interpretation. This I ask,

This is the plea to which I beg assent,
My sole petition, neither more nor less.

38

THE LORD OF HEAVEN

The seven heavens cannot Thee enfold,
Sustained by Thee, they do not Thee sustain.
They hymn Thee since Thou madest them of old,
And when they perish, Thou shalt still remain,
O mighty God!

The messengers of heaven Thee revere.
They stand to praise Thee in Thine inmost shrine,
Yet from beholding Thee they shrink in fear,
For how behold the dazzling dread Divine?
O Lord, my God!

What voice is this that singeth without cease
And spends in song to Thee its nights and days?
But Thou, omnipotence beyond increase,
Art high—I know—uplifted over praise,
O Lord, my God!

So great Thy majesty and manifold,
How canst Thou lodge in tabernacle's span?
Such glory no circumference can hold,
For Thou art vastly mightier than man,
O Lord, my God!

He at whose feet celestial creatures creep
A day of liberation will proclaim,
And from all corners call his scattered sheep,
However sorry-looking they or lame,
The Lord, my God!

39

ASK OF ME

"Ask of Me, beautiful mouth,
 What dost thou ask of Me?
 For thy suppliant cry
 Hath ascended on high
 Inclining My ear to thy plea."

"First with the lion we met,
 Next came the leopard's leap,
 We were fain to take flight
 From our garden's delight
 And into a hiding-place creep.

"Hardly these creatures had passed,
 Sated with Judah's spoil,
 Than the wild ass we feared
 Out of midnight appeared
 To trample and dwell on our soil.

"Ishmael's offspring command
 Back to his Arab land,
 As his mother of old
 To her mistress was told
 To return and submit to her hand."

40

FORGET THY AFFLICTION

Forget thy affliction, and cease supplication,
 Recall thy release from Egyptian rod,
 The hand is not short that hath laid earth's foundation,
 Who stretched out the heavens remaineth thy God.

And at thy due season the glory that dwelleth
 In Zion shall rest on thy head that great day,
 When moonlight as sunlight in radiance wellet
 And sunlight shall glow with a sevenfold ray.

41

TO MY SOUL

Be wise, my precious soul, and haste
 To bow to God in reverence.
 Let vanities no more be chased,
 Bethink thee ere this world lies waste,
 The world that waits thee going hence.

Thy life to God's life is akin,
 Concealed like His beneath a veil,
 Since He is free of flaw or sin,
 Like purity thou too canst win,
 To reach perfection wherefore fail?

And as His arm upholds the sky,
 Do thou thy dumb brute body lift,
 Thou, soul, to which we can descry
 No like on earth—O magnify
 The God of whom thou art the gift.

Greet then, my soul, thy Rock with praise,
 Hail him, my inmost heart, with song
 Unceasingly throughout my days,
 And let all souls their voices raise
 My benediction to prolong.

42

LOOK UP TO THY MAKER

Look up to thy Maker, O soul of mine,
 Thy Creator remember whilst thou art young;
 Cry morning and night to His grace divine,
 And in all thy songs let His name be sung.

On earth the Lord is thy portion and cup,
 And when from thy body thou goest lone,

A place for thy rest He hath builded up
 And made thee a nest underneath His throne.

Wherefore morning and night I will bless my Lord,
 And from all that hath breath let His praise be poured.

43

INVOCATION

Root of our saviour,
 The scion of Jesse,
 Till when wilt thou linger,
 Invisible, buried?
 Bring forth a flower,
 For winter is over!

Why should a slave rule
 The lineage of princes,
 A hairy barbarian
 Replace our young sovran?

The years are a thousand
 Since, broken and scattered,
 We wander in exile,
 Like waterfowl lost in
 The depths of the desert.

No man in white linen
 Reveals at our asking
 The end of our Exile.
 God sealed up the matter,
 And closed up the knowledge.

44

BENEDICTION

Let earth and sea and the Temple's throng
 And every highway become exalted,
 The world and all who therein do dwell,
 And every creature of fen and fell,
 In a melody nevermore halted,
 With forest and meadow and all their yield,
 Fruit of the woodland and fruit of the field,
 Unite in an ecstasy deep and strong
 In a rapturous endeavour,
 With a single mouth in a single song,
 Their spherical symphony to prolong,
 And bless the Lord who is blessed forever.

The pundits vainly enquire His source,
 His secret, the wonder of His foundation.
 Where is His throne, or His light, or His force,
 And who in His council dares take a station?
 Sublime and hidden beyond our quest,
 His essence unfathomed and unexpressed,
 Even in sacred song and story,
 This to declare is our sole resource,
 That all the earth in its daily course
 Overflows with its Maker's glory.
 This is the reach of our poor endeavour,
 Then who beside shall by man be blest?
 For He is One on His throne above,
 And His lonely sway shall be shaken never.
 Then let all creatures in awe and love,
 Man or insect, or serpent or dove,
 Now bless the Lord who is blessed forever.

His bands of ministers gleam and flash
 Like living coals or with flames for features,
 Squadrons of four-winged cherubim dash,
 By the steps of His throne are the mystic creatures
 With their chariot-wheels, and at His behest,
 They run in His service with holy zest,
 All united together run,
 One in song and in service one,

Every being of all the blest
 In a loyalty naught can sever.
 Wherefore sing to Him every breast,
 Tranced in His adoration rest,
 And bless the Lord who is blessed forever.

His domain is established, His Peace secure,
 On the beams of the earth and the clouds He rides,
 The homesick exile he vows to cure,
 Who now amid thistle and thorn resides,
 And the day of redemption in trust abides.
 Yea, the remnant shall yet as a people endure,
 Regathered, forgiven, when He decides,
 And live as a nation unique and pure,
 For when it was chosen and glorified,
 Its mission it knew and its task descried,
 That the love of God be its high endeavour,
 And its purpose His reverence to assure,
 The world to His worship by faith allure,
 And bless the Lord who is blessed forever.

45

MY HEART CLAMOURS

My heart craves to praise Thee,
 But I am unable.
 Would my understanding
 Were as spacious as Solomon's.
 Without it my wisdom
 As yet ill suffices
 For expounding Thy wonders
 And Thy deeds of beneficence
 Wrought for me and all mankind.
 Without Thee all's hopeless,
 And where is the rock
 Sustaining, suspending
 The weight of the world?

I am as one orphaned;
 Nay, on Thee I am cast.
 What then can I do
 But look to Thee, wait on Thee,
 In whose hand is the spirit
 Of all that is living,
 In whose hand is the breath
 Of all the creation?

46

ARISE, O MY RAPTURE

Arise, O my rapture, at dawn I exclaim,
 Go seeking the face of my love, the King,
 I thirst at the thought of Him, burn as with flame,
 And chatter like swallow upon the wing.

No gifts can I bring save of heart or of wit,
 My cause to my lips I can only trust.
 Desires my Redeemer a ritual fit,
 How should I suffice who am based on dust?

When I with my self seek communion, I shrink,
 Were I mightier far, I should still be small,
 Soul and strength in adoring Thee faint and sink,
 Yet sing Thee I must till the end of all.

47

PASSOVER PSALM

Who is like unto Thee to uncover the deeps,
 And who hath Thy power to raise and cast down?
 Show Thy marvellous love to the captive who weeps,
 O Worker of wonders, of awesome renown!

Thy children belovèd intoned a new song
 When Egypt's proud host found a watery grave,

There was praise from the saints in their jubilant throng
 When the wheels of the chariots clogged in the wave.

Thy fondlings storm-tossed were all weeping and tired
 When the great roaring flood-tides before them arose,
 But Thy hand led them safe to the haven desired
 And the waters returned, overwhelming their foes.

The chariots of Pharaoh and all that great host
 God cast in the billows and covered them o'er,
 But His people trod sea-bottom, coast unto coast,
 He admonished the sea and it dried like the shore.

Thus, Lord, do Thou Zion support and uphold,
 Arise, for the hour of her grace is at hand,
 The day long appointed to sing as of old,
 God reigneth, His Kingdom forever shall stand.

48

O GOD, MY SUN

O God, my Sun, up now and rise, I pray thee,
 And be as the moon to illumine my darkness:
 Wherefore wilt Thou play the passing wayfarer
 And vanish like the fleeing gazelle?
 When shall the bud come to blossom,
 And the tender grape yield its sweet savour?
 How long wilt Thou cast off the remnants of Joseph?
 I was as a lamb led to the slaughter,
 One man drawing me from the fold and another performing the sacrifice.
 The lion rose murderous against me,
 And the wild ass breaketh my bones.
 The wild boar tore me, breathing fury,
 Pushing westwards and northwards.

Dread God, who hast stretched out the heavens,
 Who closest and none can open,
 Now at last reprove kings for my sake—

For far be it from Thee to be forgetful!—
 Thou shalt bring forth my prisoners from the pit:
 For the sake of our hero-ancestor's righteousness,
 And shalt cleave the crown of the woman of Uz
 And shave off the hair of Esau.

Take the young brood and prosper them,
 But do *not* let go the mother.
 O restore the maiden in her beautiful freshness,
 And fill with moisture all that is withered.
 Renew the Temple and the altar
 And establish singing men for Thy praise;
 One to glow with a song of loves,
 And one to make melody for the chief musician.
 Thus wilt Thou cause the horn of the Messiah to shoot up,
 And I shall be wholly joyful.

49

THE LOVE OF GOD

To Thee, O living God, my being yearns,
 For Thee my soul consumes, my spirit burns.

Within Thy chosen people's hearts Thy glory
 Inhabits, be they babes or fathers hoary,

To bind Thy chosen to Thy chariot wheels.
 And with the radiance that Thee conceals

I fill my heart and make for my delight
 A lampstand set beside me in the night.

The wisest weary them to comprehend
 Thy mystery, then how should I ascend

The secret of Thy glorious shrine to tell?
 Thy shining semblance is unsearchable.

Then let my craving to my own soul turn
 To find the wealth divine for which I yearn.

For Wisdom's house is as of sapphires builded,
Her pavement as with gold of Ophir gilded.

Within the body is her hidden lair,
Like a young lion she is couchant there.

She is my bliss and joy in lamentation,
She is my thinking cap of meditation.

What man dare all her beauty's praises sum,
Or be to her perfections wholly dumb?

Answer her swiftly, God of grace above,
For she is sick with longing for Thy love.

"Gently, dear damsel, sip salvation's water,
For thou, most dazzling maiden, art My daughter."

THE ROYAL CROWN

May this my prayer aid mankind
 The path of right and worth to find;
 The living God, His wondrous ways,
 Herein inspire my song of praise.
 Nor is the theme at undue length set down,
 Of all my hymns behold "The Royal Crown."

I.

Wonderful are thy works, as my soul overwhelmingly knoweth.
 Thine, O Lord, are the greatness and the might,
 the beauty, the triumph, and the splendour.
 Thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and Thou art exalted as head over all.
 Thine are all riches and honour: Thine the creatures of the heights and
 depths.
 They bear witness that they perish, while Thou endurest.
 Thine is the might in whose mystery our thoughts can find no stay, so far
 art Thou beyond us.
 In Thee is the veiled retreat of power, the secret and the foundation.
 Thine is the name concealed from the sages,
 The force that sustaineth the world on naught,
 And that can bring to light every hidden thing.
 Thine is the loving-kindness that ruleth over all Thy creatures,
 And the good treasured up for those who fear Thee.
 Thine are the mysteries that transcend understanding and thought.
 Thine is the life over which extinction holdeth no sway,
 And Thy throne is exalted above every sovereignty,
 And Thy habitation hidden in the shrouded height.
 Thine is the existence from the shadow of
 whose light every being was created,
 Of which we say, in His shadow we live.
 Thine are the two worlds between which Thou hast set a boundary,
 The first for deeds and the second for reward.
 Thine is the reward which Thou for the righteous hast stored up and

hidden,
 Yea, Thou sawest it was goodly and didst hide it.

II.

Thou art One, the first of every number, and
 the foundation of every structure,
 Thou art One, and at the mystery of Thy Oneness the wise of heart are
 struck dumb,
 For they know not what it is.
 Thou art One, and Thy Oneness can neither be increased nor lessened,
 It lacketh naught, nor doth aught remain over.
 Thou art One, but not like a unit to be grasped or counted,
 For number and change cannot reach Thee.
 Thou art not to be visioned, nor to be figured thus or thus.
 Thou art One, but to put to Thee bound or
 circumference my imagination would fail me.
 Therefore I have said I will guard my ways lest I sin with the tongue.
 Thou art One, Thou art high and exalted beyond abasement or falling,
 "For how should the One fall?"

III.

Thou existest, but hearing of ear cannot reach Thee, or vision of eye,
 Nor shall the How have sway over Thee, nor the Wherefore and Whence.
 Thou existest, but for Thyself and for none other with Thee.
 Thou existest, and before Time began Thou wast,
 And without place Thou didst abide.
 Thou existest, and Thy secret is hidden and who shall attain to it?
 "So deep, so deep, who can discover it?"

IV.

Thou livest, but not from any restricted season nor from any known
 period.
 Thou livest, but not through breath and soul, for Thou art soul of the

soul.

Thou livest, but not with the life of man, which is like unto vanity and its end the moth and the worm.

Thou livest, and he who layeth hold of Thy secret shall find eternal delight:

"He shall eat and live for ever."

V.

Thou art great, and compared with Thy greatness all greatness is humbled and all excess diminished.

Incalculably great is Thy being,

Superber than the starry heaven,

Beyond and above all grandeur,

"And exalted beyond all blessing and praise."

VI.

Thou art mighty and there is none among all Thou hast formed and created who can emulate Thy deeds and Thy power.

Thou art mighty, and Thine is the completed power beyond change or alteration.

Thou art mighty, and from the abundance of Thy might dost Thou pardon in the time of Thy wrath

And forbearst long with sinners.

Thou art mighty, and Thy mercies are upon all Thy creatures, yea upon all of them.

"These are the mighty deeds which are from eternity."

VII.

Thou art Light celestial, and the eyes of the pure shall behold Thee
But the clouds of sin shall veil Thee from the eyes of the sinners.

Thou art Light, hidden in this world but to be revealed in the visible world on high.

"On the mount of the Lord shall it be seen."

Light Eternal art Thou, and the eye of the intellect longeth and yearneth for Thee.

"Yet only a part shall it see, the whole it shall not behold."

VIII.

Thou art the God of Gods, and the Lord of Lords,
Ruler of beings celestial and terrestrial,

For all creatures are Thy witnesses

And by the glory of this Thy name, every creature is bound to Thy service.

Thou art God, and all things formed are Thy servants and worshippers.
Yet is not Thy glory diminished by reason of those that worship aught beside Thee,

For the yearning of them all is to draw nigh Thee,

But they are like the blind,

Setting their faces forward on the King's highway,

Yet still wandering from the path.

One sinketh into the well of a pit

And another falleth into a snare,

But all imagine they have reached their desire,

Albeit they have suffered in vain.

But Thy servants are as those walking clear-eyed in the straight path,

Turning neither to the right nor the left

Till they come to the court of the King's palace.

Thou art God, by Thy Godhead sustaining all that hath been formed,

And upholding in Thy Unity all creatures.

Thou art God, and there is no distinction 'twixt Thy Godhead and Thy

Unity, Thy pre-existence and Thy existence,

For 'tis all one mystery.

And although the name of each be different,

"Yet they are all proceeding to one place."

IX.

Thou art wise. And wisdom is the fount of life and from Thee it wellet, And by the side of Thy wisdom all human knowledge turneth to folly.

Thou art wise, more ancient than all primal things,
 And wisdom was the nursling at Thy side.
 Thou art wise, and Thou hast not learnt from any beside Thee,
 Nor acquired wisdom from any save Thyself.
 Thou art wise, and from Thy wisdom Thou hast set apart Thy appointed
 purpose,
 Like a craftsman and an artist
 To draw up the films of Being from Nothingness
 As light is drawn that darteth from the eye:
 Without bucket from the fountain of light hath
 Thy workman drawn it up,
 And without tool hath he wrought,
 Hewing, graving, cleansing, refining,
 Calling unto the void and it was cleft,
 And unto existence and it was urged,
 And to the universe and it was spread out;
 Establishing the clouds of the heavens
 And with his hand joining together the pavilions of the spheres,
 And fastening with the loops of power the tent-folds of creation,
 For the might of his hand extendeth to the uttermost borders,
 "Linking the uttermost ends."

X.

Who shall utter Thy mighty deeds,
 For Thou madest a division of the ball of the earth into twain, half dry
 land, half water,
 And didst surround the water with the sphere of air,
 In which the wind turneth and turneth in its going,
 And resteth in its circuits,
 And didst encompass the air with the sphere of fire,
 And the foundations of these four elements are but one foundation,
 And their sources one,
 And from it they issue and are renewed,
 "And from thence was it separated and became four heads."

XI.

Who can declare Thy greatness?
 For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of fire
 with the sphere of the firmament,
 Wherein is the Moon,
 Which by the splendour of the Sun raceth up, panting and shining,
 And in nine and twenty days fulfilleth her revolving
 And then remounteth her bounded circuit.
 Of her secrets some lie unveiled and some are unsearchable,
 And her body is to the body of the earth
 As one part is to thirty-nine parts,
 And from month to month she stirreth up the world and its chances,
 And its good and evil happenings,
 According to the will of her Creator,
 "To make known to the sons of men His mighty deeds."

XII.

Who shall tell Thy praises?
 For Thou madest the Moon the chief source whereby to calculate
 Appointed times and seasons,
 And cycles and signs for the days and the years.
 Her rule is in the night,
 Until the coming of the fixed hour
 When her brightness shall be darkened
 And she shall clothe herself with the mantle of gloom.
 For from the light of the Sun is her light,
 And should it hap on the night of the fourteenth that both of them stand
 On the line of the Dragon,
 So that it cometh between them,
 Then the Moon shall not convey her light,
 And her illumination shall be extinguished,
 To the end that all the peoples of the earth shall know
 That they are the creatures of the Most High,
 And however splendid they be
 There is a Judge above them to humble and exalt.
 Nathless she shall live again after her fall

And shall be resplendent again after her darkness,
 And when she is in conjunction with the Sun at the end of the month,
 If the Dragon shall be between them,
 And both shall stand upon one line,
 Then the Moon shall stand before the Sun like a projecting blackness
 And shall hide the light thereof from the sight of all beholders,
 In order that all who behold may know
 That the sovereignty is not with the hosts and legions of heaven
 But that there is a Master over them,
 Obscuring and irradiating,
 For height behind height He keepeth, yea, and the heights beyond them,
 And they that imagine the Sun is their god
 At such time shall be ashamed of their imaginings,
 For their words are then tested,
 And they shall know 'tis the hand of the Lord hath done this
 And that the Sun hath no power
 And His alone is the rule who can darken its light,
 Sending to it a slave of its slaves,
 A beneficiary of its own kindly glow,
 To becloud its radiance,
 To cut off the abominable idolising thereof,
 "And let the Sun be removed from sovereignty."

XIII.

Who shall declare Thy righteousness?
 For Thou hast compassed the firmament of the moon with a second
 sphere
 Without deviation or infraction,
 And within it is a star called Mercury,
 And its measure to the earth is like one to twenty-two thousand.
 And it completeth its turbulent course in ten months
 And is the stirrer up in the world of strifes and contentions
 And enmities and cries of complaint,
 And it giveth the force to obtain power and to heap up wealth,
 To gather riches and to lay up abundance,
 According to the command of Him who created it to be His minister

As a servant before a master.
 And it is the star of prudence and wisdom,
 "Giving subtlety to the simple
 And to the young man knowledge and discretion."

XIV.

Who shall understand Thy mysteries?
 For thou hast encompassed the second sphere with a third sphere,
 And therein a brightness (Venus) like a queen amid her hosts,
 And her garments adorned like a bride's,
 And in eleven months she fulfilleth her circuit,
 And her body to that of the earth is as one to thirty and seven,
 To those who know her secret and understand her.
 And she reneweth in the world, by the will of her Creator,
 Peace and prosperity, dancing and delight,
 And songs and shouts of joy,
 And the love-cries of bride and bridegroom on their canopies.
 And it is she conspireth the ripening of fruit
 And other vegetation,
 "From the precious things of the fruits of the sun,
 And from the precious things of the yield of the moons."

XV.

Who shall understand Thy secret?
 For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of this shining one
 With a fourth sphere, wherein is the Sun
 That completeth his circuit in a perfect year.
 And his body is one hundred and seventy times
 greater than that of the earth,
 According to indications and devisings of intellect.
 And he is the apportioner of light to all the stars of the heavens,
 And giveth to kings salvation
 And majesty, dominion and awe,
 And reneweth marvels on the earth,
 Whether for war or for peace,

And rooteth up kingdoms,
 And establisheth and exalteth others in their stead
 And hath power to abase and uplift with a high hand,
 But all according to the will of the Creator who created him in wisdom.
 Every day he prostrateth himself before the King,
 And taketh his stand in the house of his course,
 And at dawn he raiseth his head
 And boweth towards the west in the evening.
 "In the evening he goeth down and in the morning he returneth."

XVI.

Who can grasp Thy greatness?
 For Thou hast appointed the Sun for the computing
 Of days and of years, and appointed periods,
 And to make the fruit-tree to burgeon,
 And, under the sweet influence of the Pleiades and the bands of Orion,
 The green shoots luxuriant.
 Six months he journeyeth towards the north to warm the air,
 And the waters, the woods, and the rocks,
 And as he draweth nigh to the north,
 The days grow longer and the seasons wax,
 Till there is found a place where the day is so lengthened
 That it lasteth six months,
 According to confirmed indications,
 And six months he journeyeth towards the south
 In his appointed courses
 Till there is found a place where the night is so lengthened
 That it lasteth six months,
 According to the proof of searchers.
 And from this may be known a fringe of the ways of the Creator,
 A whisper of His mighty powers,
 Of His strength and His wondrous works.
 As from the greatness of servants
 May the greatness of the master be known
 By all men of understanding,
 So through the ministering Sun is revealed

The grandeur and glory of the Lord,
 "For all the goods of his Master are delivered into his hands."

XVII.

Who can grasp Thy wonders?
 For Thou hast appointed him to furnish light to the stars
 Of high or low degree,
 And to the Moon,
 "If that white bright spot stays in its place"
 And according as she moves away to stand opposite the Sun,
 She receiveth his shining
 Until his light is at the full when she stands before him,
 And it irradiates her whole face.
 And when that she draws nigh in the latter half of the month,
 And declineth from him
 And is far from standing opposite him
 And proceedeth to the side of him,
 In that degree waneth her splendour,
 Till the end of her month and her circuit,
 And she declineth to her extreme rim.
 And when she is in conjunction with him
 She is hid in secret places
 For a day and half an hour
 And some numbered moments,
 And after that she is renewed and returneth to her prior self
 And "issueth forth as a bridegroom from his chamber."

XVIII.

Who can know Thy wondrous works?
 For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of the
 Sun with a fifth sphere,
 And therein Mars like a king in his palace,
 And in eighteen months he completeth his circuit.
 And his measure to the body of the earth
 Is as one and five-eighths to one.

And this is the scope of his greatness,
 That he is like a terror-striking warrior
 Whose shield of red gives him might,
 And who stirreth up wars,
 And slaughter and destruction,
 With men smitten of the sword
 And consumed of flame,
 Their sap burned to dryness;
 And years of dearth
 And fiery burnings and thunders and hailstones
 And piercings and withdrawals of the sword in consonance with them,
 "For their feet run swiftly to commit evil and hasten to shed blood."

XIX.

Who shall find words for Thy tremendous works?
 For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of Mars with a sixth sphere,
 A vast and mighty encompassing sphere,
 Wherein dwelleth the righteous planet (Jupiter).
 And his body is greater than that of the earth seventy-five times
 By the measure of her breadth.
 And he completeth his revolution in twelve years,
 And is as a planet of goodwill and love,
 Stirring up the fear of heaven,
 And righteousness and repentance and every good quality,
 And increasing all crops and fruits,
 And causing wars to cease,
 And enmity and strife;
 And his appointed task is to repair by righteousness every breach,
 "For He judgeth the world in righteousness."

XX.

Who shall reason of Thy greatness?
 For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of
 Jupiter with a seventh sphere,
 And therein revolveth Saturn.

And his body is greater than that of the earth
 ninety-one times by the measure of him,
 And he completeth his revolution in thirty years of his course,
 And stirreth up wars,
 And spoliation and captivity and famine,
 For such is his appointed task;
 And devastateth the lands,
 And rooteth up kingdoms
 According to the will of Him
 "Who hath appointed him to His service,
 Even such strange service."

XXI.

Who shall attain to Thy exaltation?
 For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of Saturn with an eighth sphere
 of encompassment,
 And it is laden with the twelve constellations
 On the line of the belt of its ephod,
 And all the higher stars of cloudland
 Fixed in its rigidity.
 And every star of them compasseth its circuit in six and thirty thousand
 years,
 From the greatness of its altitude;
 And the body of each is a hundred and seven times that of the earth,
 And this is the limit of its greatness.
 And from the might of these stars
 Is drawn the strength of all creatures below,
 Each after its kind,
 According to the will of the Creator who hath appointed them,
 And set every one of them in its fit station,
 And given it its name,
 "Each man to his service and his station."

XXII.

Who can know Thy pathways?
 For Thou hast made palaces for the seven planets
 In the twelve constellations,
 And to the Ram and the Bull Thou hast imparted Thy strength in uniting
 them,
 And the third is the Twins, like two brothers in their unity
 And their human likeness.
 And the fourth is the Crab,
 And on him, as on the Lion, hast Thou bestowed of Thy splendour,
 And on his sister the Virgin, who is near unto him,
 And on the Scales and the Scorpion placed by his side,
 And on the ninth that was created in the form of a man of might, whose
 strength runs not dry,
 For he is the Archer, mighty of the bow.
 And thus too by Thy great power are created the Goat and the Water-
 Bearer,
 While alone is the last constellation,
 "For the Lord did appoint a great Fish."
 And these are the constellations high and exalted in their degrees,
 "Twelve princes according to the nations."

XXIII.

O Lord, who shall search out Thy profundities?
 For Thou hast set apart above the sphere of the constellations
 The sphere that is ninth in order,
 That encompasseth all the spheres and their creatures,
 Wherein they are closed up,
 Which driveth all the stars of heaven and their planets
 From the east to the west in the might of its movement.
 Once a day it bows down in the west to the King who enthroned it, p. 100
 And all the creatures of the universe in its midst are as a grain of
 mustard in the vast ocean
 From the mighty vastness of its breadth.
 Yet all this and its greatness are accounted as nothing and naught
 By the side of the greatness of its Creator and King,

And all its sublimities and grandeur
 "Are vain and void in comparison with Him."

XXIV.

Who shall understand the mysteries of Thy creations?
 For Thou hast exalted above the ninth sphere the sphere of Intelligence.
 It is the Temple confronting us,
 "The tenth that shall be sacred to the Lord,"
 It is the Sphere transcending height,
 To which conception cannot reach,
 And there stands the veiled palanquin of Thy glory.
 From the silver of Truth hast Thou cast it,
 And of the gold of Reason hast Thou wrought its arms,
 And on a pillar of Righteousness set its cushions
 And from Thy power is its existence,
 And from and toward Thee its yearning,
 "And unto Thee shall be its desire."

XXV.

Who shall descend as deep as Thy thoughts?
 For from the splendour of the sphere of Intelligence Thou hast wrought
 the radiance of souls,
 And the high angels that are the messengers of Thy will,
 The ministers of Thy presence,
 Majestic of power and great in the Kingdom of heaven,
 "In their hand the flaming sword that turneth every way,"
 Performing their work whithersoever the spirit wafteth them,
 All of them shapen to comeliness, shimmering as pearls,
 Transcendent creatures,
 Angels of the outer courts, or angels of the Presence,
 Watching Thy movements.
 From a holy place are they come,
 And from the fount of light are they drawn.
 They are divided into companies,
 And on their banner are signs graven of the pen of the swift scribe.

There are superior and attendant bands,
 And hosts running and returning,
 But never weary and never faint,
 Seeing but invisible.
 And there are some wrought of flame,
 And some are wafted air,
 And some compounded of fire and of water,
 And there are Seraphim in burning rows,
 And wingèd lightnings and darting arrows of fire,
 And each troop of them all bows itself down
 "To Him who rideth the highest heavens."
 And in the supreme sphere of the universe they stand in thousands and
 tens of thousands,
 Divided into watches,
 That change daily and nightly at the beginning of their vigils,
 For the ritual of psalms and songs,
 "To Him who is girt with omnipotence."
 All of them with dread and trembling bow and prostrate themselves to
 Thee,
 Saying: To Thee we acknowledge
 That Thou art He, the Lord our God;
 Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves,
 And the work of Thy hands are we all.
 For Thou art our Lord, and we are Thy servants,
 Thou art our Creator, and we are Thy witnesses.

XXVI.

Who can approach Thy seat?
 For beyond the sphere of Intelligence hast Thou established the throne
 of Thy glory;
 There standeth the splendour of Thy veiled habitation,
 And the mystery and the foundation.
 Thus far reacheth Intelligence, but cometh here to a standstill,
 For higher still hast Thou mounted, and ascended Thy mighty throne,
 "And no man may go up with Thee."

XXVII.

O Lord, who shall do deeds like unto Thine?
 For Thou hast established under the throne of Thy glory
 A standing-place for the souls of Thy saints,
 And there is the abode of the pure souls
 That are bound up in the bundle of life.
 They who were weary and faint here await new strength,
 And those who failed of strength may here find repose;
 For these are the children of rest,
 And here is delight without end or limit,
 For it is The-World-To-Come.
 And here are stations and seeing-places for the standing souls,
 Whence, in "mirrors of the serving-women,"
 They can behold and be seen of the Lord.
 In the palaces of the King do they dwell,
 And at the King's table stand,
 And glory in the sweetness of the fruit of Intelligence,
 For He giveth them of the dainties of the King.
 This is the rest and the heritage
 Whose goodness and beauty are endless,
 Such is "the land which floweth with milk and honey and such the fruit
 thereof."

XXVIII.

O Lord, who can unroll Thy mysteries?
 For Thou hast made in the Height chambers and store-houses,
 Some of them awesome to tell of, a tale of mighty doings,
 And some treasuries of life for the pure and the clean.
 For some are treasures of salvation to those who have returned from
 iniquity,
 And some are treasures of fire,
 And rivers of brimstone
 For the breakers of the covenant.
 And there is a provision of deep pits whose fire is never quenched.
 "He that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein."
 And there are caverns of storm-winds and tempests

And congelation and cold,
 And treasures of hail and ice and snow and drought,
 Also of heat and flowing channels
 And of thick smoke and hoar-frost and of clouds and thick cloud,
 And darkness and gloom.
 The whole hast Thou prepared in its due season,
 "Thou hast ordained it for mercy or judgment,
 And established it, O Rock, for correction!"

XXIX.

O Lord, who can comprehend Thy power?
 For Thou hast created for the splendour of Thy glory a pure radiance
 "Hewn from the rock of rocks and digged from the bottom of the pit."
 Thou hast imparted to it the spirit of wisdom
 And called it the Soul.
 And of flames of intellectual fire hast Thou wrought its form,
 And like a burning fire hast Thou wafted it,
 And sent it to the body to serve and guard it,
 And it is as fire in the midst thereof yet doth not consume it,
 For it is from the fire of the soul that the body hath been created,
 And goeth from Nothingness to Being,
 "Because the Lord descended on him in fire."

XXX.

O Lord, who can reach Thy wisdom?
 For Thou gavest the soul the faculty of knowledge that is fixed therein,
 And knowledge is the fount of her glory.
 Therefore hath destruction no power over her,
 But she maintaineth herself by the stability of her foundation,
 For such is her nature and secret;
 The soul with her wisdom shall not see death.
 Nevertheless shall her punishment be visited upon her,
 A punishment bitterer than death,
 Though be she pure she shall obtain favour
 And shall laugh on the last day.

But if she hath been defiled,
 She shall wander to and fro for a space in wrath and anger,
 And all the days of her uncleanness
 Shall she dwell vagabond and outcast;
 "She shall touch no hallowed thing,
 And to the sanctuary she shall not come
 Till the days of her purification be fulfilled."

XXXI.

O Lord, who shall requite Thy goodness?
 For Thou hast placed the soul in the body to vivify it,
 And to teach and show it the path of life
 And to deliver it from evil;
 Thou hast formed man from a pinch of clay and breathed into him a soul,
 And didst impart to him the spirit of wisdom
 Whereby man is divided from the beasts
 That he may ascend to a higher sphere.
 Thou hast him enclosed in Thy universe,
 And directest and beholdest his deeds from without,
 And all that would conceal him from Thee
 Thou beholdest from within and without.

XXXII.

Who shall know the secret of Thy operations?
 For Thou hast provided the body with the means to do Thy work,
 And Thou hast given it eyes to see Thy signs
 And ears to hear of Thy tremendous deeds,
 And thought to understand the fringe of Thy secrets,
 And a mouth to declare Thy praise,
 And a tongue to proclaim Thy might to all corners,
 Even as I to-day, "Thy servant, the son of Thy handmaid",
 Am declaring according to the feebleness of my tongue.
 A shadow of a shade of Thy sublimity,
 For these are but a fraction of Thy ways.
 How mighty then must be the sum of them,

"For they are life to those who find them."
 By them, all who hear of them may recognize Thee,
 Even if they cannot see the face of Thy splendour.
 For whoso hath not heard of Thy might,
 How can he recognize Thy Godhead,
 And how can Thy truth enter his heart,
 And how can he fix his thoughts on Thy service?
 Therefore hath Thy servant found the heart
 To make mention before his God
 Of a shade of a shadow of the sum of His praises.
 Peradventure thereby less shall be exacted of his iniquity
 "For wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his Lord if not with
 these heads?"

XXXIII.

O God, I am ashamed and confounded
 To stand before Thee with this my knowledge
 That even as the might of Thy greatness,
 So is the completeness of my poverty and humbleness,
 That even as the might of Thy potency
 So is the weakness of my ability,
 And that even as Thou art perfect, so am I wanting.
 For Thou art a Unity, and Thou art living,
 Thou art mighty, and Thou art permanent,
 And Thou art great, and Thou art wise, and
 Thou art God!
 And I am but a clod, and a worm,
 Dust from the ground,
 A vessel full of shame,
 A mute stone,
 A passing shadow,
 "A wind that fleeth away and returneth not again."
 To an asp akin,
 Deceitful underneath,
 Uncircumcised of heart,
 Great in wrath,

Craftsman in sin and deception,
 Haughty of eye,
 Short in forbearance,
 Impure of lips,
 Crooked of ways,
 And hot-footed.
 What am I?
 What is my life?
 What my might and what my righteousness?
 Naught is the sum of me all the days of my being,
 And how much the more so after my death!
 From nothing I came,
 And to nothing I go.
 Lo! before Thee am I come, as one "not according to the law,"
 With insolence of brow,
 And uncleanness of thoughts,
 And a lewd desire
 On his idols turned,
 And lust showing itself master;
 With a soul impure
 And a heart unclean,
 Perishing and corrupted,
 And a body plagued
 With a rabble of pains
 Increasing until increase is impossible.

XXXIV.

O my God, I know that my sins are too great to tell,
 And my trespasses too many to remember,
 Yet as a drop from the sea will I make mention of some,
 And make confession of them;
 Perhaps I shall silence the roar of their waves and their crashing,
 "And Thou wilt hear from heaven and forgive."
 I have trespassed against Thy law,
 I have despised Thy commandments,
 I have abhorred them in my heart,

And with my mouth spoken slander.
 I have committed iniquity,
 And I have wrought evil,
 I have been presumptuous,
 I have done violence,
 I have plastered over falsehood,
 I have counselled evil,
 I have lied, I have scoffed,
 I have revolted, I have blasphemed,
 I have been rebellious and perverse and sinful,
 I have stiffened my neck,
 I have loathed Thy rebukes and done wickedly,
 I have corrupted my ways,
 I have strayed from my paths,
 I have transgressed and turned away from Thy commandments.
 "But Thou art just in all that is come upon me
 For Thou hast dealt truly and I have dealt wickedly."

XXXV.

O God, my countenance falleth,
 When I remember all wherein I have provoked Thee.
 For all the good which Thou hast bestowed on me
 I have requited Thee with evil.
 For Thou hast created me not from necessity, but from grace,
 And not by compulsion of circumstance
 But by favour and love.
 And before I was,
 With Thy mercies didst Thou precede me,
 And breathe into me a spirit and call me into being,
 And after I came forth into the light of the world
 Thou didst not forsake me,
 But like a tender father didst Thou watch over my growing up,
 And as a nurse fostereth a suckling didst Thou foster me.
 Upon the breasts of my mother Thou madest me rest trustfully,
 And with Thy delight didst satisfy me.
 And when I essayed my feet, Thou didst strengthen my standing

And didst take me in Thine arms and teach me to walk.
And wisdom and discipline didst Thou impart to me,
And from all trouble and distress didst Thou relieve me,
And at the time of the passing away of Thy wrath
In the shadow of Thy hand didst Thou hide me,
And from how many sorrows concealed from mine eyes didst Thou
deliver me!
For before the hardship came
Thou didst prepare the remedy for my distress all unbeknown to me,
And when from some injury I was unguarded,
Thou didst guard me,
And when I came within the fangs of lions
Thou didst break the teeth of the whelps and deliver me thence,
And when evil and constant distress anguished me,
Thou hast freely healed me,
And when Thy dreadful judgment came upon the world,
Thou didst deliver me from the sword
And didst save me from the pestilence,
And in famine didst feed me,
And with plenty sustain me.
And when I provoked Thee,
Thou didst chastise me as a father chastiseth his son,
And when I called out from the depths of my sorrow,
My soul was precious in Thy sight,
Nor didst Thou send me empty away.
But all this didst Thou yet exceed and add to
When Thou gavest me a perfect faith
To believe that Thou art the God of Truth
And that Thy Law is true and Thy prophets are true.
For Thou hast not set my portion with the
rebels and those who rise up against Thee
And the foolish multitude that blaspheme Thy name;
Who make mock of Thy law,
And contend with Thy servants,
And give the lie to Thy prophets,
Making a show of innocence
But with cunning below,
Exhibiting a pure and stainless soul,

While underneath lurketh the bright leprous spot:
 Like to a vessel full of shameful things,
 Washed on the outside with the waters of deceit,
 And defiling all that is within.

XXXVI.

Unworthy am I of all the mercies and all the truth
 Which Thou hast wrought for Thy servant.
 Verily, O Lord my God, will I thank Thee
 For that Thou hast given me a holy soul,
 Though by my deeds I have defiled it,
 Polluted and profaned it with my evil inclination.
 But I know that if I wrought wickedly,
 I harmed but myself, never Thee.
 In sooth, at my right hand my fierce inclination
 As an adversary standeth,
 Allowing me no breathing-space to establish my tranquillity.
 Oft have I purposed with double bridle to lead him,
 From the sea of his lusts to dry land to restore him,
 But I could not prevail.
 My devices he baulked, made profanities flow from my lips.
 I think thoughts of simplicity, he fabricates guile and iniquity,
 I am for peace, and he is for war,
 To the point that he made me his footstool,
 And even in peace-time shed the blood of war.
 How oft have I sallied forth to combat against him,
 And set in battle-array
 My camp of service and repentance,
 And placed the host of Thy mercies beside me for auxiliary,
 For I said, if my evil inclination
 Shall come to one camp and shall smite it,
 Then the camp that is left shall escape.
 As I thought, so it was.
 For temptation has routed me and scattered my forces,
 So that there is nothing left me but the camp of Thy mercies.
 But yet I know that by these I shall overcome it,

And they shall be unto me better than a city of refuge.
Peradventure I shall prevail and smite it and drive it away.

XXXVII.

May it please Thee, O Lord my God,
To subdue my fierce desire.
O hide Thy face from my sins and trespasses,
Do not carry me off in the midst of my days,
Until I shall have prepared what is needful for my way
And provender for the day of my journeying,
For if I go out of my world as I came,
And return to my place, naked as I came forth,
Wherefore was I created
And called to see sorrow?
Better were it I had remained where I was
Than to have come hither to increase and multiply sin.
I beseech Thee, O God, judge me by Thine attribute of mercy,
And not by Thine anger lest Thou wither me.
For what is man that Thou shouldst judge him?
And how shalt Thou weigh a drifting vapour?
When Thou placest it in the balance,
It shall be neither heavy nor light,
And what shall it profit Thee to weigh the air?
From the day of his birth man is hard-pressed and harrowed,
"Stricken, smitten of God and afflicted."
His youth is chaff driven in the wind,
And his latter end is flying straw,
And his life withereth like a herb,
And God joineth in hunting him.
From the day he cometh forth from his mother's womb
His night is sorrow and his day is sighing.
If to-day he is exalted,
To-morrow he shall crawl with worms.
A grain of chaff putteth him to flight,
And a thorn woundeth him.
If he is sated, he waxeth wicked,

And if he is hungry, he sinneth for a loaf of bread.
His steps are swift to pursue riches,
But he forgetteth Death, who is after him.
At the time he is straitened, he multiplieth his promises,
And scattereth his words,
And is profuse in vows,
But when he is enlarged,
He keepeth back his word and forgetteth his vows,
And strengtheneth the bars of his gates,
While Death is in his chambers,
And he increaseth guards in every quarter
While the foe lieth ambushed in his very apartment.
As for the wolf, the fence shall not restrain it
From coming to the flock.
Man entereth the world,
And knoweth not why,
And rejoiceth,
And knoweth not wherefore,
And liveth,
And knoweth not how long.
In his childhood he walketh in his own stubbornness,
And when the spirit of lust beginneth in its season
To stir him up to gather power and wealth,
Then he journeyeth from his place
To ride in ships
And to tread the deserts,
And to carry his life to dens of lions,
Adventuring it among wild beasts;
And when he imagineth that great is his glory
And that mighty is the spoil of his hand,
Quietly stealeth the spoiler upon him,
And his eyes are opened and there is naught.
At every moment he is destined to troubles,
That pass and return,
And at every hour evils,
And at every moment chances,
And on every day terrors.
If for an instant he stand in security,

Suddenly disaster will come upon him,
Either war shall come and the sword will smite him,
Or the bow of brass transpierce him;
Or sorrows will overpower him,
Or the presumptuous billows flow over him,
Or sickness and steadfast evils shall find him,
Till he becometh a burden on his own soul,
And shall find the gall of serpents in his honey.
And when his pain increaseth
His glory decreaseth,
And youths make mock of him,
And infants rule him,
And he becometh a burden to the issue of his loins,
And all who know him become estranged from him.
And when his hour hath come, he passeth from
the courts of his house to the court of Death,
And from the shadow of his chambers to the shadow of Death.
And he shall strip off his broidery and his scarlet
And shall put on corruption and the worm,
And lie down in the dust
And return to the foundation from which he came.
And man, whom these things befall,
When shall he find a time for repentance
To scour away the rust of his perversion?
For the day is short and the work manifold,
And the task-masters irate,
Hurrying and scurrying,
And Time laughs at him
And the Master of the House presses.
Therefore I beseech Thee, O my God,
Remember the distresses that come upon man,
And if I have done evil
Do Thou me good at my latter end,
Nor requite measure for measure
To man whose sins are measureless,
And whose death is a joyless departure.

XXXVIII.

O my God,
If my iniquity is too great to be borne,
What wilt Thou do for Thy great name's sake?
And if I do not wait on Thy mercies,
Who will have pity on me but Thee?
Therefore though Thou shouldst slay me, yet will I trust in Thee.
For if Thou shouldst pursue my iniquity,
I will flee from Thee to Thyself,
And I will shelter myself from Thy wrath in Thy shadow,
And to the skirts of Thy mercies I will lay hold until Thou hast had mercy
on me,
And I will not let Thee go till Thou hast blessed me.
Remember, I pray Thee, that of slime Thou hast made me,
And by all these hardships tried me,
Therefore visit me not according to my wanton dealings,
Nor feed me on the fruit of my deeds,
But prolong Thy patience, nor bring near my day,
Until I shall have prepared provision for returning to my eternal home,
Nor rage against me to send me hastily from the earth,
With my sins bound up in the kneading-trough on my shoulder.
And when Thou placest my sins in the balance
Place Thou in the other scale my sorrows,
And while recalling my depravity and frowardness,
Remember my affliction and my harrying,
And place these against the others.
And remember, I pray Thee, O my God,
That Thou hast driven me rolling and wandering like Cain,
And in the furnace of exile hast tried me,
And from the mass of my wickedness refined me,
And I know 'tis for my good Thou hast proved me,
And in faithfulness afflicted me,
And that it is to profit me at my latter end
That Thou hast brought me through this testing by troubles.
Therefore, O God, let Thy mercies be moved toward me,
And do not exhaust Thy wrath upon me,
Nor reward me according to my works,

But cry to the Destroying Angel:
 Enough!
 For what height or advantage have I attained
 That Thou shouldst pursue me for my iniquity,
 And shouldst post a watch over me,
 And trap me like an antelope in a snare?
 Is not the bulk of my days past and vanished?
 Shall the rest consume in their iniquity?
 And if I am here to-day before Thee,
 "To-morrow Thine eyes are upon me and I am not."
 "And now wherefore should I die
 And this Thy great fire devour me?"
 O my God, turn Thine eyes favourably upon me
 For the remainder of my brief days,
 Pursue not their escaping survivors,
 Nor let the remnant of the crops that the hail hath spared
 Be finished off by the locust for my sins.
 For am I not the creation of Thy hands,
 And what shall it avail Thee
 That the worm shall take me for its meal
 And feed on the product of Thy hands?

XXXIX.

May it please Thee, O Lord my God,
 To return to me in mercy,
 And to bring me back to Thee in perfect repentance.
 O dispose my heart and turn Thine ear to supplication,
 And open my heart to Thy law,
 And plant in my thoughts the fear of Thee,
 And decree for me good decrees,
 And annul the evil decrees against me,
 And lead me not into the power of temptation,
 Nor into the power of contempt,
 And from all evil chances deliver me,
 And hide me in Thy shadow until the havoc pass by,
 And be with my mouth in my meditation,

And keep my ways from sin through my tongue,
 And remember me when Thou rememberest and favourest Thy people,
 And when Thou rebuildest Thy Temple,
 That I may behold the bliss of Thy chosen ones,
 And purify me to seek diligently Thy Sanctuary devastated and ruined,
 And to cherish its stones and its dust,
 And the clods of its desolation,
 And rebuild Thou its wastes!

XL.

O my God, I know that those who implore
 favour from Thee
 Have for ambassadors their antecedent virtues,
 And the righteousness which they have heaped up,
 But in me are no good deeds,
 For I am shaken and emptied like a stripped vine,
 And I have no righteousness, no rectitude,
 No piety, no uprightness,
 No prayer, no plea,
 No innocence, no faith,
 No justice, no quality of goodness,
 Neither service of God nor turning from sin.
 May it be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our Fathers,
 Master of the Worlds,
 To have mercy upon me,
 And be Thou near me,
 To favour me with the visitation of Thy goodwill,
 And to lift up to me the light of Thy face,
 And to show me Thy graciousness!
 Requite me not according to my deeds
 And make me not a byword to the base.
 Take me not away in the midst of my days
 Nor hide Thy face from me.
 Purify me from my sins,
 And cast me not out from Thy presence,
 But quicken me with glory

And with glory receive me afterwards.
And when Thou shalt bring me out of this world,
Bring me in peace to the life of the world to come,
And place me in glory among the saints,
And number me with those whose portion is appointed in the world of
life
And purify me to shine in the light of Thy countenance,
And restore and revive me
And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
Then will I say:
I thank Thee, O Lord, that though wroth with me,
Thine anger is turned away and Thou hast comforted me.
Thine, O Lord, is loving-kindness
In all the goodness Thou hast bestowed on me,
And which Thou wilt bestow till the day of my death.
And for all this it behooves me to give thanks,
To laud, to glorify, to extol Thee.
By the mouth of Thy creatures O yield Thyself praise,
By those hallowing Thee be Thou self-sanctified,
Through those owning Thy Unity cry Thou Thy oneness,
With the lips of Thy glorifiers chant Thee Thy glory,
And exalt Thee in rhapsody through Thine exalters,
Supremely upborne on Thy worshippers' breath,
For 'mid the gods and their works, O Lord,
there is none like to Thee and Thine.

May this word of my mouth and my heart's true thought
Find, O Rock and Redeemer, the favour sought.
