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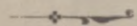
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JEWISH HYGIENE AND DIET,  
THE TALMUD AND VARIOUS OTHER  
JEWISH WRITINGS,  
HERETOFORE UNTRANSLATED.

—BY—  


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We are now in the age of pride and the Niobe of nations. But when we look back even to the dark age of the Egyptians, we find that our sanitary measures are far behind any other advancements of modern civilization.

Hygeia, commonly called the goddess of health, and from which the term hygiene has its etymology, was a pretender, as well as her father Esculapius, who styled himself the god of medicine.

But when we look back beyond the days of those pretenders, we find that nations lived hundreds of years before them, whose literature was ever preserved by a nation which has preserved itself and survived nations of ordinary power.

When the Egyptians strove amongst themselves, their literature was destroyed, and the loss of the library of Alexandria is felt at the present age.

But of those people of whom I am now about to speak, though driven from country to country, and from nation to nation, at all ages and in all centuries, and are still persecuted, nevertheless their literature is preserved and shines forth with them in full maturity.

Hippocrates, who is supposed to have lived about 400 years before Christ, whose writings on medical art have been preserved, and who endeavored to explain the causes of disease in the human frame, and their symptoms, and pointed out their preventatives, and laid down sanitary regulations and exercises for



the preservation of health, appears to have been acquainted with those large volumes of scientific writing, as he well describes their contents.

I am surprised at Galen, the great master, one of the most illustrious men in the annals of medical science, that he does not mention something about them. But I am not surprised at Paracelsus, the father of quacks, who styled himself Theophrastus Bombastus, Philosophus, and other great names to which he was not entitled.

Ever since the days of Hallè, and to the present day, men have lived in both hemispheres who became illustrious for their researches in sanitary science, still, on those great works which embrace the teaching and learning of human hygiene, they are mute.

I mean the illustrious works of the Jewish Talmud, the greater part of its contents, hygiene, a perfect treatise for preserving health. One might not think it possible that the researches of the learned could overlook such a valuable scientific writing. It is strange but nevertheless true, and can be partly explained. They are writings and teachings of a creed whose name was, before the crucifixion of Christ, and ever since has been hated, persecuted, and rebelled against.

Secondly, they are written in languages that modern scientists are unacquainted with, from the fact that the Talmudic language is a conglomeration of the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Greek and Latin. It was preserved by oral delivery for many generations before Christ, and until about the second century after Christ when the Mishna was compiled. About the middle of the sixth century the entire work was finished.

The תלמוד Talmud (teaching) comprises the Mishna and the Gemara. Its contents are of a diversified character, relating not merely to religion, but to phil-

osophy, medicine, history, jurisprudence and the various branches of practical duty.

The *mishnah* (repetition), or in abbreviated form *shas*, (six), and the *gamara*, (completion or supplement), comprising the Talmud Babylon and Talmud Jerusalem is composed of six *sedarim* or orders, containing 63 *massecoth*, or tracts, and 524 *perakim*, or chapters; of which 231 are devoted to sanitary regulations or exercises.

The first *seder* called *seder zeraim*, the order of seeds, treats of sowing the productions of the earth, trees, uses of fruits, etc. It comprises the following treatises:

1. מסכת ברכות *massecoth berachoth*, the treatise of blessings.
2. מסכת פאה *massecoth pehah*, treatise of the corner.
3. מסכת דמאי *massecoth demai*, treatise of the doubtful.
4. מסכת כלאים *massecoth ciliam*, treatise of the heterogeneous.
5. מסכת שביעית *massecoth shebieth*, of the seventh year.
6. מסכת טרומה *massecoth terumah*, of the oblation.
7. מעשר ראשון *maasher rishon*, of the first tenth, or tithe.
8. מעשר שני *maasher sheni*, of the second tenth.
9. חלה *challah*, of the cake.
10. ערלה *orlah*, of the prepuce.
11. בכורים *bicurim*, of the first fruits.

The second *seder* called *seder moed*, the order of festivals, when they should begin and terminate, the different ceremonies to be observed on such occasions, etc., comprises the following treatises:

1. מסכת שבת *massecoth shabbath*, of the laws of the Sabbath.
2. ערובים *erubim*, of mixtures, showing how, on the evening of the Sabbath, the food collected by various neighbors should be united as if they be-

longed to one household, so that persons living at a distance should not break the Sabbath by too long journeys. [This treatise has some hygienic bearing].

3. פסחים *pesachim*, the passover.

4. שקלים *shekalim*, shekels, treatise on contributions.

5. יומא *yoma*, the day of atonement, treats of the solemnities peculiar to it.

6. סוכה *succah*, tabernacles, how they are to be built and used. This contains, also, some hygienic rules on ventilation.

7. ביצה *betsah*, egg, whether an egg laid on a festival day should be eaten that day or not.

8. ראש השנה *rosh hashannah*, New Year's, how the day should be kept.

9. תענית *taanith*, fasts, treats of the various fasts throughout the year.

10. מגילה *megillah*, the roll, treats of the feast of Purim.

11. מועד קטון *moed katon*, minor feasts.

12. חגיגה *chagigah*, sacrifices on festivals, treats of the three great festivals when all the males were obliged to appear before the Lord, and the sacrifices they were to bring.

The third *seder* called סדר נשים *seder nashim*, the order of women, this section discusses the distinctive rights of men and women, marriage, divorce, the customs, inclinations and sickness of women. It is divided into the following treatises:

1. יבמות *yebamoth*, brother's widow, treats of the law obliging a brother to marry the relict of his deceased brother.

2. כתובות *cethuboth*, marriage settlements, relates to marriage contracts, dowries, etc.

3. נדרים *nedarim*, vows, what vows are binding or not, who can make vows and who not.

4. נזירות *neziroth*, Nazarites, the laws relating to them.

5. גיטין *gittin*, divorce. This treatise has many valuable points on medical jurisprudence on that subject.

6. סוטה *sotah*, jealousy, trial of, treats of women suspected of conjugal infidelity.

7. קידושין *kiddushin*, betrothing, treats of the laws of espousal. It states that all ass-drivers are wicked, camel-drivers are honest, sailors are pious, physicians are destined for hell, and butchers are company for Amalek.

The fourth *seder* is called סדר נזיקין *seder nezekin*, the order of damages, and is composed of the following treatises:

1. בבא קמא *baba kama*, the first gate. It assesses damages done by a beast according to the benefit it receives. If it eats a peck of dates its owner would be fined a peck of barley, as dates are not more nourishing to a beast than barley.

2. בבא מציעא *baba metziah*, the middle gate, treats of the laws of usury, landlord and tenant, etc.

3. בבא בתרא *baba bathra*, the last gate, relates to commercial transactions, buying and selling, inheritances, etc.

4. סנהדרין *sanhedrin*, treats of the great national senate.

5. מכות *maccoth*, stripes, relating to the forty stripes which were to be inflicted on certain offenders.

6. שבועות *shebuoth*, oaths, who are qualified to take them. A vast amount of medical jurisprudence is found in these chapters, as it treats of persons who are disqualified—women, slaves, idiots, deaf persons, the blind, the wicked, despised relations, and those interested in their evidence.

7. עדיות *edaioth*, evidences, respecting witnesses and witness-bearing.

8. אבות *aboth*, fathers, contains a history of those ho handed down the oral law.

9. הוריוה *horaioth*, punishment, how persons were to judge in cases of trial, and how transgressors were to be punished.

10. אבודה זרה *abodah zarah*, idolatry, or the worship of stars and meteors, and how to avoid idolatry.

The fifth *seder* is called סדר קדשים *seder kodashim*, *the order of holy things*, treating of sacrifices, oblations, their different species, etc. It is composed of the following:

1. זבחים *zebachim*, sacrifices, the nature and quality of the offerings.

2. מנחות *menachoth*, meat offerings.

3. חולין *cholin*, unconsecrated things. This treatise is a notable endeavor towards the protection of animals, as well as to the hygiene of mankind. It treats of what is clean and unclean, of not eating the sinew that shrank, and not killing the dam and her young in one day.

4. בכורות *becoroth*, first-born, respecting the first-born of beasts.

5. ערכין *eracin*, estimations, relates to the valuing and taxing of things dedicated to God.

6. תמורה *temurah*, exchanges, the manner in which exchanges are to be made in sacred things.

7. כריתות *cerithuth*, cutting off, treats of offenders cut off from God.

8. מעילה *meilah*, trespass, treats of things partaking of the nature of sacrilege.

9. תמיד *tamid*, daily sacrifices.

10. מדות *middoth*, measurements, relates to the measure of the temple.

11. קנים *kinnim*, birds' nests.

The sixth and last *seder* is called סדר טהרות *seder taharoth*, *the order of purifications*, relative to the purity and impurity of vessels, to household furniture, and other things and the way they should be purified.



It is composed of twelve treatises almost entirely devoted to hygiene, as follows :

1. כלים *celim*, vessels, treats of vessels and household goods which convey uncleanness.
2. אהלות *aholoth*, tents, treats of tents, cottages and houses retaining uncleanness, how persons who enter them become unclean, and how they are to be cleansed and disinfected.
3. נגעים *negaim*, plague of leprosy, treats of leprosy of men, garments, or dwellings, how their pollution is conveyed and how they are purified.
4. פרה *parah*, the red heifer, directs how she is to be burned and her ashes used in purifying.
5. טהרות *tahoroth*, purifications, how purification is to be effected when a person who has touched an object has been made unclean.
6. מקואות *mikvaoth*, pools of water, concerning the reservoirs of water in which the Jews bathed, or washed themselves.
7. נדה *niddah*, separation, the uncleanness of women during the menstrual period, etc.
8. מבשירין *meeshirin*, liquors, treats of fluids and their purification.
9. זבים *sabim*, issues, treats of nocturnal pollution, seminal emissions, masturbation, etc.
10. טבול יום *tebul yom*, the day of baptism, treats of certain days when the Jews have to wash their bodies, or immerse themselves in order to become clean.
11. ידים *yadaim*, hands, respecting the washing of hands before eating any meal.
12. עוקצין *oketzin*, stalks of fruits, relative to the stalks of fruits and how they become unclean by touching other fruits.

It can be seen from the above treatise that it is full of hygiene. It is true that it contains many fabulous, trifling, absurd, childish and irreverent things,

and we coincide with Milman when he says:<sup>1</sup> "the Talmud, that wonderful monument of human industry, human wisdom and human folly."

The only people at present, with very few exceptions, who seem to be acquainted with the Talmud are the Jews, and they appear to be silent or skeptical in regard to it. I cannot conceive why those Jewish physicians living in the most enlightened parts of civilization, in America and Europe, in a city like Vienna, for instance, where in fact the greater part of the medical faculty of the University of that city is composed of Jewish writers and teachers, who are second to none, why they should be silent on the writings and teaching of this great work which has been suppressed for so many generations.

It rests with me in my humble judgment to think they are guilty of two unpardonable mistakes,—one the fear of prejudice to their reputation by revealing their treasures,—the other, their false impression that it is theological and of no value to science. It is said<sup>2</sup> Galileo read medicine with a Jewish physician who taught him the Talmud, and from which he formed his ideas of astronomy, and that should remind them of him who to the last moment said "it moves for all that." They forget that the<sup>3</sup> *Codex Romana* is taken from the Talmud, on which is based all the moral and civil law of all civilized governments. They forget that among the commentators were physicians of no simple ability, men like Maimonides, רמבם Rambam, commonly called Moses Egyptianus, who was a physician to the Sultan; Nachmandides called רמבן; Ramban, who wrote valuable works on medicine; Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, commonly called רשי Rashi, and many other illustrious men of the middle ages, like Ibn Gabrial, Ibn Ezra,

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *History of the Jews*. Book xx.

<sup>2</sup> *Racconto Viti di Galileo a Agostino Mascardi*.

<sup>3</sup> *Historia Codex Romana*. Cap. xxii, a Clodius.

Abarbanel, and Alfosi, some of them were even counsellors to crowned heads,—the illustrious Abarbanel<sup>1</sup> was privy counsellor to Alphonse the V, King of Portugal. If men of this rank could take advice from those men, I think we surely could be benefited by it. We could translate with great pride Egyptian, Grecian, Roman and Hindoo, names not worthy of mention, but of those men whose names would decorate the index of medical authors, the annals of medical science is obliterated.

Those names just mentioned are but a few of the great commentators, whose discourses taken separately would no doubt be approved by the present most advanced minds of sanitary science.

Those works would have long been in the hands of progressive physicians, if not for the short life of Chiarini, an Italian, who proposed to publish a French translation of the whole Jerusalem and Babylon Talmud. In his *Theorie du Judaïsme* and in his *Talmud Babylon*, Leipsic, 1831, he explained his views and intentions. His death, however, while attending the sick, of cholera, in 1832, unhappily cut short his labors.

There were numerous others who have attempted to translate separate treatises and chapters. The best of all is the one lately published by Doctor Rabbino-witz, of Paris, though not complete but worthy of note. I trust it will soon be translated in many other modern languages.

Happening to be one day in the Union Hebrew College of Cincinnati, I listened to a boy of fourteen, who so clearly recited to his instructor and translated it into English the Talmud חולין *cholin* giving all the anatomical names of the animals, and describing the pathological views of the organs, their healthy and unhealthy appearance, that with pain I

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Politica Lusitania, d' Somduva,*

thought if here is but a boy, probably without a finished education, who can translate so readily, how easily could a physician of his race, with all the accomplishments of modern education perform the task. It left one to charge them with gross negligence and rational hypothesis for their assumption.

There are besides the Talmud many other valuable works among the Jews which are almost entirely devoted to hygiene, viz. : חיי אדם *Chi Adam*, life of man; שולחן ערוך *Sulchan Oruch*, a set table; יורה דעה *Aarach Chaim*, path of life; יורה דעה *yorah deah*, teaching of knowledge, etc.

I would enter into detail of the תרי"ג מצוות *Tarjag Mitzvoth*, six hundred and thirteen commands of the law, more than one-half of which pertain to hygiene, and show that the whole period of Jewish life, from Alpha to Omega, is based upon sanitary measures and morality, which is the basis of health. But my time being limited, I will attempt to prove this as briefly as possible, and comment upon it, basing my views upon the researches of many scientific investigators and naturalists.

To do this we must commence with the first origin of the race. Our earliest acquaintance of Jewish history discloses the fact that it has commenced with a sanitary act. <sup>1</sup>Abraham was the first Jew who became such by circumcision. In his days there lived a people all around, in the foremost rank.

The Canaanites and Egyptians were distinguished for their sensual propensities, especially for their low passions in lust and harlotry, so that scarcely one female from the age of three years and upwards could be found without having been defiled; not one woman was safe from being ravished; a husband had to guard against jeopardy on her account. For the truth of this statement we must refer to Biblical history,

<sup>1</sup>Genesis xvij.

When <sup>1</sup>Abraham was to start for Egypt he took the precaution to deny his wife Sarah, claiming her to be his sister, he feared the Egyptians might slay him and take possession of her, whereupon the ancient Rabbi's comment "because the Egyptians were then well known for being an unchaste, lascivious and lewd character." <sup>2</sup>It relates further that Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to select a wife for his son Isaac from amongst the maidens of his own kinsmen and there was but one maiden, Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, and she was a pure virgin, never having been defiled by any man. It implies, says the great commentator Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi), <sup>3</sup>that all the girls of other parentage were either naturally ruptured or misused in an unnatural way.

By such a state of prostituted humanity Abraham deemed necessary some prophylactic, so as to protect his descendants against raging diseases which might occur from such a state of immorality.

Abraham was a patriarch and philanthropist, a lover of humanity; his father, an idol maker, made him acquainted with human weakness of faith. He knew well he could make his people follow him by impressing upon them a power above mankind, so he declared circumcision an ecclesiastical act, and like other true men, upon his own person, at his old age, ventured the operation.

By this he has accomplished something that every physician of the present day approves. Humanity might be proud if every man in the world was circumcised. It is true they do not claim it as a sanitary measure, but I do not care, be it to serve God or the devil, I for one would feel proud of its operation. The horrible suffering from phymosis and paraphymosis is but too well known and can not occur within the tribes of Israel.

<sup>1</sup>Genesis xx.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis xxiv.

<sup>3</sup>Rashi's Commentary on the Bible. Genesis xxiv.

It appears that the Jews were educated to morals from their beginning, contrary to the "History of Prostitution" by Dr. Sanger, wherein he claims that prostitution commenced with Jewish women, and was a common thing among them even without shame. He endeavors to prove this by relating the criminal intercourse of Tamar and Judah. This is one of the curious errors into which learned men occasionally fall, strangely and unaccountably. <sup>1</sup>Tamar was not a Jewess.

He further aims to prove by Judah sending his friend, a man of high standing, to redeem his pledges. It can be proved just the contrary by a careful perusal; that when he sent the Adullamite to repay his cloak, bracelet and staff, and when he returned saying he could not find her, Judah said: <sup>2</sup>"Let her take it to her, lest we will be shamed." And after he found out Tamar his daughter-in-law played the harlot, and that she was pregnant, he would not recognize her.

If prostitution was so common among the Jews they would surely have some infection, or at least some disease, but we must admit that there is no disease mentioned within the whole book of Genesis except that Leah had sore eyes.

It is true that the Egyptians were so wicked in their practice, that it may seem incredible to us, but it admits of the fullest proof that <sup>3</sup>prostitution was a part of their worship, and in some of their temples large numbers of females were kept, and the price of their shame went to the support of their priests. Sons cohabited with their mothers, brothers with their sisters and with their nearest kinsmen; man with man, and man with beast.

Such was the state of affairs among the Egyptians

<sup>1</sup>Kitto's Biblical Cyclopædia.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis xxxviii.

<sup>3</sup>Manley's Commentary of the Bible, vol. iii, chap. xx, sec. viii.

at the time of Moses the great legislator. He, with his philanthropic heart and active mind, saw that his people were in danger of becoming educated to the same mode of life as the Egyptians. Moses, like Abraham, saw that he could be believed only by frightening them by commands through a heavenly king. He at once proceeded to Mount Sinai to receive such commands. When he returned he appeared with mystical performances, with fire all around him, heavy clouds were produced by the smoke, thunder and lightning followed as a matter of course. These had great effects upon the people and his commands were kept holy; not only the ten commandments, but all other commands that Moses claimed to be the gift of a God. Here again he instructs them: "After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwell shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do \* \* \* none of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness. The nakedness of thy father or the nakedness of thy mother shalt thou not uncover; thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's wife; \* \* \* of thy sister; \* \* \* of thy son's daughter; \* \* \* of thy father's wife's daughter; \* \* \* of thy father's sister; \* \* \* of thy mother's sister," etc., "also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness so long as she is put apart for her uncleanness; \* \* \* thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto, \* \* \* for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you."

Indeed, it can be seen by the Egyptian doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration that it tended di-

<sup>1</sup> Exodus, xix.

rectly to induce this crime. It is not, however, a matter of inference, but of historical truth that this crime was practiced in Egypt both by males and females, but the code of Moses intercepted the Jews from following the footsteps of their neighbors; and right here it is proper for us to remark that its influence continued unto all generations. There were intervals when the Jews became perfidious. There were many who became <sup>1</sup>uncircumcised in order to devow their nationality. Under such circumstances it became a necessity to establish laws more rigid than those given by Moses. Here arose the great Rabbis and compilers of the Talmud and formed a **סנהדרין** Sanhedrin who established a court of law which had the power to enact religious ordinances and to decide legal cases, with pains and penalties according to their crime, having jurisdiction over life and death. This tribunal consisted of seventy-one men,<sup>2</sup> the most learned among the Jews, who were the highest power of the nation.

Besides this great body at Jerusalem there existed many minor Sanhedrins consisting of twenty-three members, in every large country, while at smaller places the judiciary consisted of three persons, composing their minor courts. The former mentioned Sanhedrins are the ones who ordained the great laws of hygiene. The last mentioned minor courts are still in existence and operation in almost every congregation throughout Europe. They are termed **בית דין** *baith din*, house of judgment. Their main acts are decisions upon what is **כשר** *cashir*, clean, or **טרייפע** *traipha*, unclean, so that if anything occurs within a Jewish household that raises the question of cleanness it is referred to this body, and their decision is generally abided by. These questions arise

<sup>1</sup> Celsus describes the operation. DeRé Medica, vii, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Some claim seventy-two, including the High Priest.



very frequently, especially among the Orthodox Jews, as their cleanliness is amazingly great.

In washing the hands, נטילה ידיים *natilat yadaim*, they are not only instructed to do this, but they are told in what manner: for instance, they are not to wash their hands by dipping them in a vessel, but the water must be poured upon them; they must pour with the right hand upon the left, and with the left on the right, etc., three times; after this they wash the face and rinse the mouth, drying the hands and face with a towel. This must be done as soon as they arise from the bed,—even in the daytime. They must not touch any portion of the body before this is done; also before and after each meal, after each evacuation or urination, or the touching of dead bodies or anything unclean. In districts of Orthodox Jews they have public baths which are used every morning before breakfast by each individual; these are termed בית טבילה *Bait Tbilah*, a house of baptism. This certainly is a very notable endeavor to prevent disease.

It lays down sanitary regulations for what they must eat and drink. The diet is so regulated that one article of food will not interfere with another in digestion; for instance, after eating meat they are to wait three hours before milk or its substances dare be used, as the milk is liable to coagulate and irritate the stomach; even vessels in which meats are prepared are prohibited to be used for milky substances, or *vice versa*. This is done for the purpose of strengthening the commands so that they will not allow themselves to consume meat and milk at the same time. They are also prohibited from eating חיות רעות *chait roet*, wild beasts that do not chew the cud, or have the hoof parted, of the species of a bear, lion, tiger, etc., as such live almost exclusively upon animal food. This is reasonable, as they are

liable to be infected by morbid poisons from the consumption of dead animals that might have died from hydrophobia or other raging diseases, such as are sometimes found among dogs, cats, rabbits, foxes, wolves, etc., for whatever disease originates spontaneously in those animals is subject to be transmitted from one to the others; they are therefore dangerous as diet. Even עופת רעת *aphet roet*, wild fowls of the species of the crow, eagle, ostrich, owl, stork, bat, etc., are prohibited, as they consume dead animals.

The meat the Jews consume from the beast or the fowl must be killed in a certain way, and with a certain instrument, not according to the vulgar custom by striking on the head, by a rude knife, or in a coarse and violent way that would mangle or lacerate the body, which might produce instant inflammation and probably blood poison, thus making it unclean and unfit for anybody to consume.

The killing of the beast as well as the fowl must be by bleeding through the jugular vein. Prior to the killing the animal must be well rested, and its respiration normal. There must be no broken limbs; their lungs must be blown up to the trachea and if it does not expand it is soaked in water twenty-four hours, when if it does not expand, the animal is unclean.

The veins and arteries must be dissected from the animal; this is done for no other purpose but to ascertain whether there are deep-seated abscesses or not, (such abscesses being generally found about the arteries and veins) that would make the animal unclean. The blood of all animals is prohibited as the consumption thereof is dangerous to human life, as all animals are subject more or less to scrofula or other blood diseases. According to 'Drs. Buchner, Kerner, Dunn, Horn, Shuman and others, poison has

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<sup>1</sup>Christison on poisons,

developed in sausages made of blood and to which they have given the name of Allantotoxicum.

Therefore the Jews do not eat meat, either of the beast or fowl, unless prior to eating it has been well soaked and salted. Their mode of preparing is first to soak it half an hour, then it is well rinsed off with clean water, and salted on both sides, placed upon a board slanting, there to remain from twenty to thirty minutes, then again it must be rinsed three times before its use is proper. The prohibition of the use of חזיר *chazir* swine for food among the Jews is unnecessary to dwell upon, as its effects are but too well known to the laymen as well as to the physician. Not only from the danger of trichinæ but of all other diseases that the hog is inherent to. The hazard from the use thereof and its importation have of late years become national issues in all civilized governments. It should not only be an issue where it is to come from, but its use should be entirely eradicated. Mountains would sink down from the dead caused by the use of this miserable brute. Fish without scales and fins וקשקשת דגם בלו כנפיר *dagim balé snapir wacash-cashet* are also prohibited among the Jews. This stands to reason, as frightful poisons are found in many kinds of fish, not to say that all fish without scales and fins are poisonous, but all poisonous fish are without scales and therefore they must be dreaded. Naturalists have declared that fish live upon their kind, that is to say fish without scales live only upon such as have no scales, etc., so they are liable to be poisoned from others.

All שרצים *sharatzim*, creeping things, or reptiles or food containing the same is strongly prohibited and the use thereof is considered a great crime by the Jews.

Water, vinegar, and other liquids suspected of foreign bodies must be strained through a cloth. All vegetables subject to vermin, such as parsley, cara-

way, lettuce, green onions, peas, mushrooms, berries, cherries, and all vegetables whatsoever must be picked and examined leaf by leaf, kernel by kernel, and grain by grain.

All fruits such as apples, pears, cherries, citron, apricots, peaches, oranges, lemons, nuts, etc., that are decayed or mouldy, the use of is prohibited; the seeds thereof are always considered as unfit for use. By this it can be seen the ancients have already feared the germ of disease.

All wines such as יין מסך *yayin mesech*, drugged wines are interdicted, as such wines might influence or propagate gout or cause other afflictions.

Even the manner in which food should be cooked and prepared is laid down, for example the Talmud asserts that an egg cooked in sand, as is done in hot climates, or laid beside a hot kettle, or wrapped in towels, is not proper food to be consumed, this may appear to us as senseless, but nevertheless it stands to reason that an egg cooked in the above described manner may become partly hatched. By this it can be seen that hatching eggs by artificial temperature is not entirely a modern invention.

One, and above all, of the hygienic laws of the Jews is the separation of women during their menstrual period הלכות נדה *halchot niddah* the laws of menstruation. It is the duty of every husband at least two or three days prior to the expectation of that period to separate from his wife not only from the bed, but even the chamber they occupy if possible, or if any spots be visible upon her clothes, or she should inform him of it, he should at once sever from her and they must remain apart during all the period of her sickness and until six days thereafter, and during that time they are not allowed to eat out of one vessel, and it is advisable not to dine at the same table, nor in any way play or joke with each other. This last to prevent the awakening of passion. In six days

after the period has ceased, she must test herself with a clean white cloth, if no red spots appear she must then go *מקוה* *mikvah*, pool or *טבילה* *tabilah*, bathing. Bath houses for that purpose are generally erected by Jewish congregations, but the wealthy people sometimes have them erected in their residences. The bathing must be done by immersing so that every hair on top of her head is covered with water; her legs and arms must be spread in order to allow the water to surround all parts of the body. Gentlemen, I can not describe in less than a volume the laws and regulations of separation.

The same laws as the above are applied to newly married women: After the first intercourse *השמיש* *tashmish*, they must make the separation and go through the same *modus operandi* as a menstruant. This to allow healing.

They are also instructed how to visit the sick *בקר* *bakur cholim*, whom they shall visit, and in what diseases. Not only that, but even the clothes they wear are regulated, how they should be made and of what fabrics. The cloth must not be a mixture *שעטנז* *shatnez*, of linen and wool; this may appear very frivolous to us, but I say there are sanitary measures even in this, as these two textures counteract each other, wool retains its temperature, is a non-conductor of heat and keeps the body warm, while linen is a conductor of heat and cools the body. The custom of burying their dead in linen, is done for no other purpose but to prevent infection, as wool is a retainer of contagious and infectious matter. Pasteur's experiments are but too fresh in our minds. I do not know whether he attributes the contagion of the sheep to the animal body itself or to the wool. I can not conceive that an animal interred for many years could still contain contagion, as the body would be entirely decomposed. But I do believe the wool

might retain its infection for hundreds of years, especially if buried in dry ground.

In accordance with the above proofs it can be seen, as heretofore stated, that the laws of morals and health were with the Jews from their earliest history. And those who are acquainted with the Talmud, which is based upon the fundamental principles of the Bible, know that there is not another religious sect or creed in the universe, with the exception of the Jews, and the Mohammedans, who have in their theology, hygiene and diet. It is an established fact that the Koran<sup>1</sup> is taken from the Talmud, or the Mohammedans would not have it.

One thing is certain; the Mosaic and Talmudic laws have accomplished more by their terrific fear of some unknown power that they inculcate than all the legislation of the civilized world with their rigid pains and penalties.

Some say the works of Shakespeare were written 200 years before their proper time. I have just as much reason to believe that the Talmud was written a thousand years ahead of its time. It appears to have every field of literature cultivated, and those pertaining to health to the utmost extent.

You may ask, what have the Jews to show for their sanitary or hygienic measures? Gentlemen, I will say they have a superior claim to the respect of society. Statistics speak for them and show that they produce a vast amount less of venereal diseases than any of the civilized or uncivilized nations on the face of the earth. Above all, I believe that the sanitary mode of Jewish life has great tendency to cultivate the brain and mind.

The Jewish race appears to produce a greater per cent. of great men (according to their numbers) in every branch of science and art than any other sect

<sup>1</sup> Geiger, Was hat Mahommed aus dem Judenthum genommen

or creed on the earth. Who does not know the great composers and writers in music, Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, Rubenstein and others? Not a word will I say about the stage, as the name of Rachel and others, is but too well-known. Not a whisper of the great thinkers and poets, Heine, Phillippsohn, Zunz and Auerbach, but we cannot afford to skip the names of Spinoza, Acosta and Moses Mendelssohn.

As commercial men their superior is not known. As financiers they rule the world. There are, however, very few who follow the profession of law, as they are generally debarred from practice in many of the European countries, but if permitted, they are not excelled in that profession. The American bar is proud of and honors the name of Judah P. Benjamin, of New Orleans, his attainments have made him a great man in the courts of England.

I was astounded after various inquiries and correspondence with all the medical colleges of the world, which was done by me at great labor, that 67 per cent. of Jewish physicians maintain professorships in medical colleges; 36 per cent. are medical authors. Medicine appears to be the favorite study, and as a rule, they always maintain a high standing. There have been many Jewish physicians in a professional capacity at the courts of famous kings. The celebrated<sup>1</sup> Maimonides was physician to King Salaheddin, of Egypt, already mentioned in the fore part of this paper. Rabbi Meir to the King of Castile; Zedekiad, physician to Louis the Pious of France, and Montalto to Queen Marie of Medicis.

It was once decided by the fathers of the church that a Jew could not act as medical adviser to crowned heads, and yet Pope Boniface IX and Pope Julius III appointed Jews for their body physicians.<sup>2</sup> Of Francis I, it is related, while once seriously sick,

<sup>1</sup> Post-Biblical History, page 65. Sigmund Hecht.

<sup>2</sup> Post-Biblical History, page 66. Sigmund Hecht.

he requested Charles V, Emperor of Germany, to send him a Jewish physician. The Emperor sent a convert, but Francis refused to accept his services, and said he had plenty of Christian physicians, he needed the services of a Jew.

By the foregoing it can be seen that what I have asserted, to wit: that the Jewish hygiene cultivates the mind, has already been recognized as a fact by the highest authorities of church and crowned heads.

In conclusion I will say it is high time for us to review the past history of that nation, and ascertain, while the nineteenth century still lingers, if it is not best for us to adopt some of their codes in life. Let us no longer berate a nation which was so brave and full of humility. Let us throw away the idle writings of priestcraft, through which we are deprived of writing our scientific attainments with those of the ancient Jews, and dividing the responsibility of health and life.

I may have accomplished little by these researches, but I have at least pointed out a subject in which science is deeply interested. As it has long been my desire to discourse with my honored colleagues, especially those with whom I feel connected by conjugality of sentiment on the subject of Jewish hygiene, I therefore trust that the Section of State Medicine of the American Medical Association will encourage at least some of these extraordinary measures of health, which will, I am confident, tend to final good in all science, all principles, all feelings, and all actions.

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