

Chapter 3

The Book of Fragments

The present chapter contains a collection of short chapters written in an impressionistic style and was meant for a book about the Jewish question, but it was never finished. The notes were written in pre-revolutionary spelling in black ink and pencil on strips of paper with a width of 10 to 12 cm. Several fragments have been abridged. More than 100 fragments with a length of 0.5–2 pages have been found; approximately one quarter of them have a complete text; for others Vygotsky just wrote down the title and left an empty space. The notes were made in Gomel and Samara in 1916 and 1917. By the end of 1917, work on the manuscript had stopped. (cf. Zavershneva 2013).

Vygotsky set two epigraphs at the beginning of the text (the manuscript just gives their location in the Holy Book): 1. “And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land” (Jonah 1:9); 2. “The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God” (Psalms 53:1). Vygotsky considered two titles for the book: *Without Title* (with the subheadings “Jewish stuff” and “I am a Jew”) and *The Book of Fragments*, which was used by the present editors.

[Written in ink:]

The poor in spirit¹

<...> In our time we do not harvest enough ideas. We are all somehow convinced we know everything. If you go to a Jewish street and ask any adolescent he will very accurately and faultlessly enumerate all of the 10 commandments of his creed. Do we not value nowadays those who wonder, who simply do not know, who have not yet found the definitive and soothing answers, those who are not convinced, who do not teach? Should not those persons be dear to us for whom the Jewish problem is still an unresolved problem, who do not routinely mark all days and affairs with a positive “+” or “-.” who lost their way in the maze, who are confused by the omnipresent mysteries, who are not enlightened, who do not know? In our time we confidently bind shapely, truncated sheaves, our harvest of the field of ideas. We confidently go along the furrows and boundaries and bind everything—even the smallest ear—into a single sheaf.

Those who are still wondering must feed themselves with the *leket*, etc. of the field of ideas, the ears that have not been gathered and bound.²

For the poor in spirit (not the meek ones but the poor who do not know), are these scattered ears of the literary borderlands—the poor of the *leket*, *shich'chah*, and *pe'ah*?

Frolicking (Samara) [Written in pencil in an empty space]

This is an expression by Rozanov that I heard about Jewish literature.³ It seems to him that with Sholem Asch and Sholem Aleichem, Jewish literature is frolicking behind the Russian, the European one.⁴ Does not this expression also define almost all new Jewry? Frolicking. This is not just about literature, it is broader: the national politics. And as long as the leaders of the new Jewry seek salvation in the imitation of Europe, the bulk of the population will abide in frozen rigidity. It penetrates the literature and life of the Jews.

[Written in ink:]

Ashrei haom⁵...

This is pronounced daily by all prayers; praying Jews still exist.

But hardly anyone takes it seriously. *Ashrei haom shekaha lo*? Blessed is the people for who it is *so*?

The average ordinary Jew would be the last to say this. On the contrary, the *point de départ* of all Jewish philosophies of our days—and of many, many past ones—is the complete rejection of this *so*, a thousand-fold rejection, in a thousand ways, and for a thousand reasons.⁶ Otherwise, why would there be Zionists, nationalists, autonomists, the struggle for equal rights and self-determination, territorialism, Bialik, Chernikhovskiy, Berdichevskiy, etc., etc., that is, all that for which the Jews both outwardly and inwardly have lived for so many years?⁷ And those who are praying, do they assert this *so* with all their heart? *Ashrei haom shekaha lo* implies to renounce an ancient tradition, age-old customs and habits.

Blessed? On the contrary, we have become used to complaints. And therefore the anti-Semitists justly criticize us. Dostoevsky: “There is probably no other people in the whole world that complains so much about its fate, with its every step and every word. About its humiliation, about its suffering, about its martyrdom.”⁸ In a word, he is completely right in noticing the hatred to this *so*.

Ashrei means to assert that *so*, that is, to introduce sheer nonsense from the political, national, and very many other viewpoints. We need the courage to question dogmas and rules, to change all signs, and to mark with a “+” what for ages was burdened by a “-.” Does not consistency compels us to do the reverse as well: to mark all plusses of our days with a “-”? After all, this is the way the algebraic laws of factoring work.

Well, let it be. While they do not assert this *so* in politics, in the plane of practical action where one needs a criterion of practical use, it is proclaimed in non-committal, unpretentious passages, scattered notes, semi-lyrical fragments.

It is here the *Ashrei* belongs. No one will be confused. For these leaflets are not addressed to those who know and think but to the poor in spirit. And if the poor in spirit are blessed, so is the people for who it is *so*.

The whole point is how to understand “blessed.” I am far from considering with anti-Semitism that the complaints of the Jews are unfounded, that the Jews actually live well. <Illegible>, wealth, influence, <of the press>, and so on. I neither wish to defend Plato’s well-known philosophical thesis that it is better to be beaten than to beat, that is better to suffer whatever insult than to inflict it.⁹ Let the missionists take comfort in that thesis: It suits their doctrine.¹⁰ All this is too magnificent and rich for the poor in spirit. <...>

Poor prophets (Samara) [Note made in fall 1917 written in pencil around an encircled older note dated “Gomel, Summer 1916.”]

“C.N. Bialik is not really a prophet when you have Isaiah before you, but when you compare him with the last prophets, with Habakkuk, with Malachi, even with Ezekiel, then this comparison no longer seems exaggerated to the enthusiast fan of Bialik.” Bal-Makhshoves.¹¹

Not at all. It is more a relegation of the prophets than a promotion of Bialik. What is here the exaggeration? Really, why be shy?

And indeed, what kind of poets are Ezekiel and Habakkuk? I would rather call Bialik a prophet.¹²

About the center

Feierberg called the *beis ha-midrash* “the central point of the Universe.”¹³ You think that is the exaggeration of a poorly educated Jewish young man? But no matter how immense the Universe is in your eyes and no matter how insignificant the *beis ha-midrash*, the center remains a neutral and even dimensionless point in an enormous circle.

About optimists

 (Samara, autumn 1917)

Daily life causes muddy waves in the stream of optimism. He who does not bring confidence to the solution of a problem cannot claim attention. We just need those who give hope for prosperity, an answer, development. Who needs non-soothing words? They may drive you crazy. There are enough bad things in reality. Who needs them in theories and books? That is what a *theory* is for, to improve reality.

The first and last word of all theories is: It will be okay. You think this is a vulgarization of the current theories? Absolutely not. It even inadequately reflects the divine optimism by which all live in these cold days. It will be okay. Will it?

No. It will be very bad.

And I even think it will be worse than ever. True, the times of the inquisition have passed, but they will seem paradise compared to what is still to come. Can we concretely imagine the form this evil will take? The hatred of enlightened and civilized people is worse than the hatred of brutes and fanatics. All sorts of deaths and horrors

are impending. The punishment and wrath of God are dreadful. All that happened will seem insignificant compared to what is happening, is on its way, is near.¹⁴

Everything goes down into the abyss.

Doom is impending.

Then you will search for words and will not find them. And perhaps then this will remind you of Ezekiel: “And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: And there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.”¹⁵

And then you will not believe that that roll on which were written “lamentations, and mourning, and woe” was sweet in his mouth: “Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.”¹⁶

<...> And it will be hardly sweet as honey for you. If the optimism does not turn rancid.

But what is the sense of being the messenger of the bad news?

That is neither sweet. But sweeter than optimism.

About great poets (Samara, September 7, 1917)

J. Klausner called L. O. Gordon “the greatest Jewish poet of all time.”¹⁷ This we can only accept in the sense that the Jews never had any great poets and if we firmly believe that what is said is true. For me that is not self-evident. But I prefer to understand it in this *sense*.

Judaism and Europe

Appearance is misleading: Surfaces are easy to touch.

Do not believe it.

About human strength and comfort

Nietzsche’s madman felt the interplanetary cold and the darkness of despair when he learned that God was dead. He lit a lantern in clear daylight and asked: Has it not become colder?¹⁸

For Jews it was quite different: This discovery caused their hearts to fill with feelings of human strength and comfort. To settle down on earth, solidly, firmly, without God. Indeed, can an enlightened people *live*, organize its whole life according to a book? <...>

For that reason the first idea after the discovery of the old God’s death was the feeling that life is illusory, ethereal, as if it only seems to exist, is just imagined, hangs in the air. Are we a people? Are we alive when what we lived for has died? Are we a phantom? We do not exist. The Jews only seem to exist.

The second idea was to settle more solidly on earth without God, according to all the mundane laws of sociology, ethnography, jurisprudence. A crazy thirst for mundane safeguards, security, solidity and comfort. The human “no shepherd, one flock.”¹⁹ We will manage. We will protect ourselves.

Common sense instead of God. So far the Jews behaved like madmen. Now we will be sensible, practical.

God, the old God died for all of us. But it was no tragedy.

On the contrary, it became clearer, brighter.

Who needs a lantern in the clear daylight of atheism?

Everything is clear, counted, and weighed.

Order.

Heine caught a shimmer of madness in the eyes of the prayers in a Venetian synagogue on the Day of Atonement.²⁰ He lived for Judaism and abandoned it. Forever.

We must hold on to more rational utility, proceed to mundane solidity.

In general, the Jews felt warm, solid, comfortable. We will do it all ourselves. God is an illusion. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"²¹ In learning they discovered their terrible strength: organization, the cooperation of persons, development.

You think this was a theomachist revolt?²² No, the Jews' attitude to the dying God was one of contemptuous sympathy, as if He were a bankrupt debtor: After all, there was no longer anything to be got from Him. Read Bialik if you do not believe it.

For the sake of appearances and to observe the decencies, God is still invited to ceremonies. But no one takes him seriously into account.

Indeed, in our age... Positive means solid. Everything else is from the evil one. God hindered man: Read in Gordon about the children, fighters, widows, the poor Jews tormented by God.²³ In His name they were tormented by prophets, Talmudists, rabbis. The result was weakness, political feebleness, debility. The Jewry is decaying, disintegrating. A bit of revival, light, warmth, comfort, strength.

And "I am a stranger on earth"; "I am dust and ashes?"²⁴

The voice said, 'Cry.' And he said, 'What shall I cry'? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the people *is* grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: But the word of our God shall stand for ever...²⁵

And this is, of course, what science also says: death. There is a limit to human strength and the comfort of peoples. And beyond that limit, where a living people dies, the dead old God raises from the dead, for what kind of human strength and comfort can exist if there is expulsion, punishment, death... <...>

[Written in ink:]

Who created whom?

God the Jews, as told in the Bible? Or the Jews their God, as the eloquent Darmesteter says?²⁶

Certainly not a futile question. Much depends on the answer. How the first took place we all know: This is told in the Bible. It is also known how the latter took

place: God is the idea of justice projected onto heaven, he developed like all popular culture (the Bible and God form part of popular culture as well), and from an obscure, evil, jealous nationalist idol he became a good, humane God of all mankind. This is how the Jews developed their idea.

Whom to believe? <...>

To many people, the second God is more appealing: He does not stop developing. For Hermann Cohen he has become a fully European, civilized, philosophical, <illegible>, idealist God. And then further and further: an endless progress. He is more convenient as well: He does not lead into exile; he does not send down punishments; he is not jealous for His people. And that is why he is always in the hands of reliable persons whose goodness, most importantly, is beyond doubt.

But there—even good persons are in His hands.

What is better you must judge yourself. There is just one unquestionable proof. We tend to think that the power to create is also the power to destroy. The Jews killed their God. That is, they developed him to the point that he became no more than a good idea. And the vestiges of prejudice and superstition all disappeared.

The Jews killed their God; this means they created him as well.

And if God created the Jews, let Him kill them.

About biographical Jewry

Nowadays the Jews have become so fragmented that if you wish to grasp their mystery you must study them biographically: “Who bear their Jewishness and how”.

H. Kohen bears it as the “virtue of loyalty.” Being a rational virtue, it is not closer to an empirical virtue than the Platonic idea [of a table] to a table; it is a philosophical virtue. We, contemporary Jews, *preserve our Jewishness* as the belief in a unique God! That is, he preserves it as a certain philosophical conviction. He speaks with disdain about those who cannot reconcile Europe and Judaism. His Jewishness he bears as an ethical *Adelsbrief*.²⁷ And all is well in his country. He feels European for it combined both things. About traditional Judaism: He calls its “despotic ritualism” its “downside.”²⁸ He would like to get rid of it. The virtue of loyalty does not require loyalty to ritualism. But in this way, apart from this virtue, Jewry becomes humanism as such, a category of universality and generality.

But not all is well in the land of <“ethics”>. Kohen suffered from his Jewishness: For a long time Germany kept quiet about him. The Germans know the virtue of loyalty to one’s origin as well. And so the Jew is “offended in his honor”—The Jews set their hope on the state and its historical development? In the “rational state of the future,” the hurt feelings of honor will be cured. Kohen knows no other states. But neither he is happy, not to speak of “honor.” Loyalty to... ritualism? No. But then, what kind of loyalty? By the way, you must bear your virtue of Judaism via the “offended honor” to the “rational state of the future.”

Lazarus also settled in the happy country of <ethics> where Judaism is focused on rational generalities.²⁹ When he talks about an exclusively Jewish people, then exactly in the sense of its generality. That which unites and does not divide the Jews

is dear to him. That is why he says that the ethical Torah has no equal. His ideal is: *treu und frei*.³⁰ But after all, *treu* is what binds us. That is no longer *frei*. And *frei* is no longer *treu*. <...>

“We are Germans, Germans and nothing but Germans,” says Lazarus in line with his views on the nation.³¹ Listen to his *frei*: “We, German Jews, have no other history as the history of the German people; we share their joy and sorrow, worries, struggles, and triumphs since the national constitution made us into full citizens... Together we fought on the battlefield, together we sat in parliaments and town councils, together we worked in laboratories, together we cured and nursed in hospitals, together we taught at universities. But we also participate in the national freedom efforts; for a long time—and more and more—we have been widely and fully contributing to the ideal interests of the people. Trade and industry, art and science fill our life and what we do and how we do it, whether we like it or not, we do it like Germans.”³² This is *frei* and *treu* is: “Loyalty is the root of our religion just like our religion is the root of our loyalty. Providence made us into Jews, the first duty of each man of honor is to *remain with the flag!* [Vygotsky’s emphasis]. A flag which has been carried for 3000 years and which is flawless; blood enough but our own! It is the flag with the inscription: “Adonai nissi! The Everlasting is my banner!”³³ To remain with this flag is a point of honor. And not just honor: This community and this loyalty gives the moral world of the person something that is irreplaceable. And when we nowadays turn to all other sciences, it is crucial that also the scholars, the philosophically learned men of Israel, whose inner life is no longer fully determined by the religious worldview of the Jewry but by the general culture and the general world of ideas, which determines the core of their life—when these men, I say, nevertheless stay with their fellow men, because their light shines on the others. It matters whether a person belongs to one group or another when he is much more free and much higher in his inner life than some denomination could make him. For the group is judged by its members and that is why those who in whatever way climb high—through social position, through talent, through performance—have the duty to stay with their fellow men.”³⁴

This is the founder of the scientific *Völkerpsychologie*!!! The meaning of *frei* is ideas shared with all mankind, which provide the meaning of life. The meaning of *treu* is a flag, Jewry as a banner. What kind of *Adonai nissi* if “inner life is not determined by the religious worldview of the Jewry but by general culture”? Neither *frei* is *frei*, nor *treu* is *treu*. *Neither one nor the other*. And he bears his Jewishness as one who is appointed in a high position, as an honor, as a duty.

But Gornfeld’s characteristic of Lazarus is interesting.³⁵ He recommends Lazarus to “his fellow believers” (obviously, either according to their passport or fellow believers in the empty, weathered *Adonai nissi*), because the “special structure of this thinking... I would not hesitate to call Jewish...”³⁶ We cannot say that his Jewishness falls under that “immense capital of ideas and sentiments, characteristic of the modern thinker,” the analysis is weak, but intuition tells Gornfeld that the “unconscious religiosity of theoretical thought, the exquisite subtlety of the distinctions, the search for moral principles in issues seem of a different order”—“This is what Lazarus tells me about the Jew.”

How will it all end?

Did you never, albeit once, wonder how it will all end? <...> Or did you think there will be no end whatsoever? An endless development, energy that cannot be destroyed, transformation, and so on. But then you are ready to admit that it neither had a beginning. The same endless development. In a word, you prefer to live like that—without a beginning, without an end—right from the middle. But do not you feel that already now something is <...> dying, is ending in you? But what if it already ended a long time ago? That is why you do not feel the end. <...>

Perhaps you do not want to drink from the cup that you were now ordered to drink from? But God said: “Ye shall certainly drink.”³⁷ The same with walking. You walk away *from* the sword, away *from* famine, away *from* death, away *from* captivity, but you will go yonder. For “O Lord, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *It is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah).³⁸ <...>

Whither?

This is the title of a novel by Feierberg. The most painful question for the wondering Jewish mind is: Where to go? It can be said with confidence that the pain of this question destroyed his whole life. But he endured the tragedy of all of us. True, nowadays everybody prefers answers to questions. But many, secretly, so as not to reveal their weakness and uncertainty, would like to know where to go.

And so, secretly:

“If they say unto thee, whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, thus saith the Lord: Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity” (Jeremiah 15:2).

You are not satisfied? But, after all, even without asking you know where to go: some away from death, some away from the sword, some away from famine, some away from captivity. So the only thing to do is to turn around and go in the opposite direction. <...>

M. Chagall

The most terrifying thing he ever painted was *death*. Where did he see it? Among the Jews. In the painting of this name we see a dead man. A stocking or a boot is hanging somewhere. Daily life. A woman threw her head backward. On the roof is a violinist. Jews. The same death we see in his red and green Jews.³⁹ ... “A living death” is the most horrible. The *Dead Souls*, the “Living relics” of Russia are nothing compared to Jewish life, which “died a long time ago.”⁴⁰ From the paintings they look at us as corpses.

Without title

The question is how long you will “halt on both knees”? (serve both Jehovah and Baal)?

Elijah—to serve God means to halt on one knee (1 Kings, chapter 18).⁴¹

God is God of the mountains but not of the valleys (chapter 20).

“The new Jewry will then settle down in the valley. In the valleys they will overcome.”⁴²

The meekness of peoples is a sin

<Isaiah> 14, 34⁴³

This is interpreted in various ways. In Hebrew the sin and the sacrifice that atones for the sin are designated with the same word. This is interpreted as: for peoples, meekness replaces the sacrifice that atones for the sin, which is commanded to the Jews. Fully in the spirit of “the ethics.” “The Ethics.”⁴⁴ But the meaning of this is simple and clear or—more exact—very complex and obscure and does not allow such interpretations. The meekness of peoples is a sin. This means that if they are meek to Israel, this is a sin. God raised their anger, aroused it against Israel. And their meekness is a sin. You always thought there is one law for all, but even to Israel it is commanded: “Remember what Amalek did unto thee.”⁴⁵ And against Israel and Saul meekness was counted as a sin more than once. But you think that meekness is always a virtue? Hillel? But do you know that Hillel is a sin of the Jewry, like the meekness of peoples is a sin. And the commandment of the Jewry is Shamai.⁴⁶

About honor

The triumphant march of the new Jewry first stumbled across pogroms, across reality. Here the march was interrupted and fell apart. Gordon is the singer of the inalienable human rights, <the plaintiff> who demands from God and the rabbis the human happiness of the rabbis⁴⁷—he complains that he fell from heaven upon earth, that his soul is empty, that he felt like a sheep (*Eder Adonai*).⁴⁸ Bialik cannot get over the meaninglessness of the impotence and the pogrom: The Jew was killed together with his dog, like mice, like bugs, no... the Jew was never considered human.⁴⁹ Shylock’s famous monologue about the humanity of the Jew would be funny and elementary if it meant what is written in it.⁵⁰ But if he exposes the lie of humanism for which a human being is that which laughs when it is tickled, has pain when it is stabbed, etc.—god...

The meaning of Shylock’s [monologue]: A Yid is a dog, not a *homo*.

The same in Russian literature: Gogol, with his humanism, a Yid is not a human being (*Dead Souls*), *Taras Bulba*—the pogrom.⁵¹ He [Yankel] is really ridiculous, pitiful <faces>, funny legs, like a chicken, if it is a Yid it is not a human being⁵² Zhabotinskiy’s indignation is in vain!).⁵³

Dostoevsky [about the Jew]—a pet, a parrot, a chicken, but not a human being.⁵⁴ Turgenev—execution, smile, challenge.⁵⁵ Gogol—the pogrom. A Yid is not human. The idea of a “Yid” is correct. It is the same as a Jew but with a minus sign. After all, the Jew is neither a *homo* but a transformation, he is higher, a *homo +*. The Yid is a belittling, a distortion, a *homo-*. Pushkin’s “despicable Jew” is the

necessary seal of contempt.⁵⁶ I have always felt this attitude that is so horrible to a man, the seal of contempt. Just these words, dropped in passing, burn brighter in memory than all pages in the literature. And I cannot reread them for the hundredth time without strong emotion, even if read it for a scientific work, etc.

Nowadays they propagate *pride* for the human Jew, [they wish to] straighten his curved back, deliver him from slavery, inculcate human dignity. Zhabotinsky, who is proud of his Jewishness, Gidoni, who challenged someone to a duel.⁵⁷ But the possibility of human dignity has been taken away: We turn impotence into something funny. Gidoni's challenge was not accepted. Or did Bialik talk about self-defense? R. Yu. solves the question as follows: If the Jews had been proud, they would not have survived.⁵⁸ Is it not courageous of Yankel to live amidst the Cossacks? But the healthy part of their relationship is that Yankel despises Taras Bulba; for him he is not a human being but part of nature, a beast. We must hide like bugs, etc. How would such a man survive with Bialik's psychology?

But this means that the problem is not solved. Fully European: If the Jew were a worthy man, honor would be the same as in Europe: *Besser Ehre ohne Leben als Leben ohne Ehre*.⁵⁹ But—correction—he is not human. Wrong: Yankel does not recognize Taras as a person; he licks his boots: This is still funnier. No: Either we must acknowledge the cowardice of bugs, or...

And more in general, in this interpretation humiliation is abolished, but it is not explained how we must bear it. This "abolished sorrow of the Jews" is one of many. R. Yu.: I did not bear my Jewishness as a humiliation, as a defilement of my honor. You cannot live that way. It was demoralizing, yes. But *between the peoples* I always bore my Jewishness *as a humiliation*. And it cannot be denied that the Jews always knew that this is humiliation, this has been clearly said. Proud Jews do not hide. R. Yu.: To hide and not see it as humiliation. Bialik: To hide and see it as humiliation, to sob and tear one's hair and see the immense shame. This is all wrong. We must hide and demean ourselves. Or more correct: If he did not hide, they would kill the Yid with his dog. To hide is unimportant. But we must bear the most ordinary humiliation, to feel it precisely as humiliation. Or do you doubt that? Well, try not to bear it. If Kohen, who is happy with his Jewishness, is "defiled in his honor"... But Kohen dreams of assimilation. Insofar as he is hurt he set his hope on the state. The Jews answered with isolation, separation from the world. Insofar as they form part of the world they are "dogs," and they accepted the humiliation and accepted that "the meekness of peoples is a sin."

About honor. In Nordau's drama a Christian, who had called the Jews "cowards," is killed in a duel by a Jew.⁶⁰ A proud Jew? Simple: no honor. We must borrow it somewhere. Ahad Ha'am condemns it: According to the ethics of Judaism, human blood is worth more.⁶¹ And honor? This problem Ahad Ha'am does not know. Although he is proud, too: slavery in freedom!!! <...>

And Mendelssohn with his "be a man in the street and a Jew at home."⁶² This is separating the man and the Jew. Moreover, being a Jew is something for at home, something intimate. This separating and combining of the man and the Jew in oneself is perhaps even less feasible than *treu und frei*. Humanism never made peace with the Jewry nor the Jewry with humanism. <...> And the Jew demanded to regard himself, a *homo*, as *nothing*. <...>

About politicians. *Contradictio in adjecto*⁶³

It never amazed you that there are so many Jewish politicians in the European chaos? Beaconsfield, Winawer, Lassalle, yes any Jew in the synagogue between *mincha* and *maariv* is an excellent politician on a European scale, but the Jewish politics themselves are so talentless!⁶⁴ Sometimes this means that Jewish politics are unrealizable, that a Jew can be a politician but that Jewish politics are impossible. Or do you connect it with the fact that there are many Jewish thinkers, artists, scientists, musicians, writers in Europe but that there is no Jewish philosophy, literature, art? I am even ready to admit that Jewish philosophy, literature, and music are impossible, just like Jewish politics. It sounds like “dry water” and a “round square,” a *contradictio in adjecto*. But now we talk about the Jewish politician. The Jew is an object of politics, not a subject. The meaning of Jewish history is the atrophy of politics. Katzenelson says that it was precisely religion that caused the political weakness of the Jews.⁶⁵ We can talk about it with sadness or joy, let it be blessed weakness or a curse, but Jewish history crushed the Jewish politicians, the State, independence. The zealots were the last politicians.⁶⁶ This is a historical fact of crucial importance: There never were Jewish politicians in Jewish history after the destruction of the state; the apolitical nature of Jewish history is a fact. But you wish to turn back the wheel of Jewish history, to correct the historical mistake, to begin from scratch, to rationally make your life yourself? And while in the eyes of the “Jews the passive observation of a history that was not created by us was the best of political systems,” you wish “to actively participate in history,” take it into your own hands.⁶⁷ We must destroy Jewish politics because it is, like all the new Jewry, “frolicking.” Now you understand the secret of its lack of talent.

“The history of the Jews was not the history of what they did but the history of what was done to them” (Heman).⁶⁸ Must politics become our religion?⁶⁹ These words of Feuerbach you know. Marx: The philosophers unfettered the world enough; it is time to undertake its reorganization.⁷⁰ Your politics is to reorganize the Jewry, to give it a “substitute for a state-like structure,” to politically organize its will. You wish to realize the political Jewry? But you yourself with the words of the poet speak about the dust and ashes of the Jewry.⁷¹ Its impotence and lack of will—this is its entire history. “Without the sword of its power.”⁷² Powerlessness. Jewish politics: “Stand ye still and see”... (the Bible).⁷³ For politics there is nothing to hold on to in Jewry. The Jews are so far from what moves the world and the world is so far from the Jews. But you wish to overcome Jewishness to make it political. The *adjectum* is so dear to you that you sacrifice the Jewishness. But you should know that political Jewry stops being a *contradictio in adjecto* when it stops being Jewry. <...>

About life and death

It never struck you that the enigma of Jewish immortality is that the Jews have *died* long ago? The *tallis* and the shroud, life and death in one.⁷⁴ During their lifetime the Jews wear the *tallis*, a shroud. They are dead. This is the secret of the immortality of mummies, as Heine said.⁷⁵ The immortal died. This is why the Bible calls death the

return to one's people. The living life will die, but what is dead no longer dies. It decays, disintegrates. You are not filled with horror at a certain thought? You never felt that because you are a Jew—you're dead? This is why paganism [and daily] life say that the Bible severs you from your people. We cannot see God and live.⁷⁶ Did you see God face to face? *Ergo*. So, the Jews will not die for the simple reason that they are dead already: The Talmud is the killing of everything— <years>, passions—all that is alive is *destroyed*—that is its meaning. In the Shulchan Aruch it is said about someone that he with such fear and horror went to his wife, that he seemed bent by a hump.⁷⁷ This is an example. No communication, no restriction, no asceticism, but destruction.

Do not all peoples know that their future life will be a bathhouse with spiders?⁷⁸ No. The Jews. Horrifying is the “bobok” of the Jews (Dostoevsky), i.e., that *nothing* has changed for the “bobok” of the Jews.⁷⁹ What is poetically alive in the Jewry is disgusting; it is “bobok.” How repulsive are the conversations of the dead about passion, women, etc. The same with the Jews. But one thing you have noticed; that death is *not just* the destruction of life but something else. That death is not just denial; that it has something positive, that *death exists*. But you already know the next question: What comes after life—no, beyond death, after death—decay, disintegration?

[Written in pencil:]

Bialik

None of the monastic rules has such “trifling” (leaving out none of the trifles of life) subtlety. Everything—from big to small—is regulated; it is ordered *how* to act. No questions whatsoever. Who is exhausted by the burden of “himself,” who waits for or seeks a yoke, comes here. Here we have no longer life, here we have the discharge of life, here we have no freedom but submission to the law, here they do not live but execute life, for here they do not come to know, to understand, to ask but to execute life. And the rebellious and cheerful Bialik: “We bow our neck: Where are the iron yoke and the stretched hand.”⁸⁰

Laws! Everything is in need of the Talmud, Shulchan Aruch, Halakha, Hammer's Law.⁸¹ To the monastery, to the monastery—just this pushes to Judaism under the terrible power of the law. Go there yourself as well.

Take your life there—instead of ghastly and ineffable sin. For it does not belong to *you*. Get to know the sweetness of the monastery, the idea of “you may not” and the law, for “here is the *whole person*,” in the monastery.

About the monastery (Gogol)

To my sister. Your monastery is Judaism. Its walls (Shulchan Aruch) are separated from the world more than walls of the most impenetrable stone. Not one sound of the world passes these walls. In the monastic cells they read, there are scholars; here we have the renunciation of the whole world.⁸²

[Written in ink:]

Who is wise?

Jewry as a problem of biography, of personal destiny. Rozanov: Nationality is destiny.⁸³ The Christian Bible adds that Someone, while struggling with Israel, replied when the latter asked his name: Why do you ask for my name? It is secret.⁸⁴ But the Jew does not know this. The Jew likes to answer a question with a question. Yes, I think that you can answer a question with just a question. But then Someone was also a Jew? And he does not have a name? The Jew = Someone? But also this question I answer with a question. Why you want His name?

The Jews are in general unquestioning. There is no Book or people more unquestioning than this one. [They have no] strivings. Seek and you will find? No: They discovered me without enquiring about me, they found me without seeking for me. Thus, if you wish that you as well will discover—Do not enquire, if you wish to find, do not seek. Do not ask—the Jews never ask. ... And not because they know. The Jews knew more about not knowing. What is secret is just for God, and what is revealed is for us and our children. But do not ask because “thou doest not enquire wisely of this thing.”⁸⁵ Thus: Do not enquire. What to do? You know the Jewish virtue: “Blessed is he who waits...”⁸⁶ What is commanded? To wait, fear God, multiply and breed, do not kill, not a small matter... a whole life is not enough for that. And, after all, the most important is: Do not ask about birth, about death. Why enquire: God did not answer <his sons>, question him (Ezekiel 20).⁸⁷ But answer all questions with a question and thereby expose their vanity.

Notes

1. Matthew 5:3.
2. Gifts to the poor when a person harvests his field based on the Torah: Pe’ah (“corner”), the portion of the crop that must be left standing for the poor; Leket (“gleanings”), ears of grain that fell from the reaper’s hand or the sickle while the grain is being gathered during the harvest; Shich’chah (“forgotten sheaves”), sheaves left and forgotten in the field while the harvest is being brought to the threshing floor.
3. Vasily Vasilyevich Rozanov (1856 to 1918). Russian literary critic, journalist, and philosopher of religion. Rozanov’s writings were often paradoxical and sparked controversy. He readily passed from praise of Judaism to unabashed anti-Semitism. Although Rozanov himself denied that he was an anti-Semite, Vygotsky analyzed his writings in this context.
4. Solomon Naumovich Rabinovich (pen name “Sholem Aleichem”) (1859 to 1916). Ukranian Jewish novelist and playwright who later moved to the USA; one of the founders of modern Yiddish literature. Sholem Asch (1880 to 1957). Polish Jewish novelist and playwright who wrote in Yiddish and eventually became an American citizen.
5. Ashrei (Hebrew) (“Happy are they who dwell in Your house; they will praise You, always!; Happy is the people for who it is so; Happy is the people whose

God is Adonai”) is a prayer that is recited at least three times daily. The prayer is composed primarily of Psalm 145. Vygotsky cites and discusses the second part with the words “for who it is so.”

6. Point of departure (French).
7. Vygotsky lists some of the important movements in the national Jewish movement around the turn of the century and the best Jewish writers of his time: Bialik (see note 11 in chapter 2); Saul Gutmanovich Chernikhovskiy (1873 to 1943). Russian Jewish translator and poet who wrote about the renaissance of Jewry through Zionism; Micha Josef Berdichevskiy (1865 to 1921). Ukrainian Jewish writer who urged the Jews to free themselves of religious dogmas and collected and popularized Jewish legends and folktales.
8. Quoted from Dostoevsky’s paper “The Jewish question” (1877), which was also discussed in Vygotsky’s early work “The Jews and the Jewish question in the writings of F.M. Dostoevsky” (Feigenberg 2000, p. 89).
9. Plato, *The State*, II 358e (Glaucón’s argument and Socrates’ reply).
10. The missionists of the 19th century believed that Israel as a people was dead but that the Jewish church had the mission to live on until its religion was spread all over the world.
11. Israel Isidor Elyashev (pen name “Bal-Makhshoves”) (1873 to 1924). Lithuanian Jewish neurologist, Yiddish literary critic, newspaper editor, translator and pioneer of the Zionist movement.
12. Vygotsky’s cousin, David Isaakovich Vygodsky (1893 to 1943), a philologist and translator, was of a similar opinion. In 1915, the journal *The Jewish Student* published his review of Bialik’s volume *Songs and Poems*. David Vygodsky wrote that “Bialik is a deeply national, popular poet but absolutely not in the usual sense of the word. He does not talk about his love for the people, about their needs and sorrows, he curses his people, curses it for the misfortunes that befall it, for its disgrace, for the unquesting obedience with which all terrible things are accepted. This he does to stir up, to arouse the people.” According to Vygodsky the poet was a “prophet, who longs for God” and it seemed to him that “in Bialik revived one of the ancient prophets of Judeah” and that his curses were caused by his “immense love” (cf. Kotik-Friedgut & Friedgut 2008).
13. Mordecai Ze’ev Feierberg (1874 to 1899). Russian Jewish writer of short stories and journalist who died from tuberculosis. His long story “Le’an?” (“Whither?” 1899), about a young Jew who fights orthodoxy but at the same time suffers because of his loss of faith, left a strong impression on Vygotsky (cf. the fragment of the same name in this document). Beis ha-midrash (Beth midrash) (Hebrew). House of learning. Place of Torah study.
14. These apocalyptic words seem loosely based on the Book of Revelation.
15. Ezekiel 2:10.
16. Ezekiel 3:3.
17. Joseph Gedaliah Klausner (1874 to 1958). Lithuanian Jewish historian, linguist, and specialist in literature, who later emigrated to Israel. Vygotsky probably refers to his *Ziyyun la-Meshorer Gordon* (1895). Yehudah Leib Gordon (1830 to 1892) was a Lithuanian Jewish poet who wrote in Hebrew and Yiddish and also was an active proponent of the Enlightenment among the Russian Jews.

18. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844 to 1900). German philosopher, cultural critic, poet, composer, and Latin and Greek scholar. Vygotsky refers to his *The Gay Science* (1895, §125).
19. This may refer to John 10:16: “and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”
20. Refers to Heine (1838) where he discusses Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*.
21. Aphorism from Rabbi Hillel (cf. note 45): “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?”
22. A theomachist is a person who fights or resists God or the Divine will.
23. Semyon Markovich Dubnov (1860 to 1941). Historian and journalist. In his papers and poems, Gordon criticized the traditional way of life of the Jews, their lack of education, the dogmatism of the Rabbis, and the oppression of the poor. Cf. his volume of short stories *The World as it is* (1876).
24. Genesis 23: 3–4: “And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” Genesis 18:27: “And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.”
25. Isaiah 40:6–8.
26. James Darmesteter (1849 to 1894). French Jewish orientalist and philologist. Argued that the Jewish monotheistic religion fits best with the idea of progress in human development and that it can serve as the foundation of a religion of justice and peace, which would combine the achievements of both religious faith and scientific knowledge. Cf. his *Coup d’oeil sur l’histoire du peuple juif* (1881) and *Les prophètes d’Israël* (1892).
27. Patent of nobility (German).
28. Vygotsky often misspelled foreign names and words, and there is every reason to believe that he is still discussing Hermann Cohen and not some Kohen. The editors went through the three volumes of Cohen’s Jewish writings—not exactly page-turners—and could not find the text Vygotsky is referring to, but the themes touched upon are very much like those of Cohen.
29. Moritz Lazarus (1824 to 1903). German Jewish philosopher and psychologist and founder, along with Hermann Steinthal, of comparative psychology (*Völkerpsychologie*).
30. Loyal and free (German).
31. Cites p. 70 of Lazarus (1887).
32. Cites pp. 78–79 of Lazarus (1887).
33. The Lord [Jehova, Adonai] is my banner (Hebrew). Cf. Exodus 17:15–16: “And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”
34. Cites pp. 150–151 of Lazarus (1887).
35. Arkadiy Georgiyevich Gornfeld (1867 to 1941). Russian literary scholar and critic, translator, and author of many papers about the Jewish question. Attended Lazarus’ course on psychology in Berlin and wrote an extensive introduction to the Russian translation of his *Die Ethik des Judenthums* (1898). Vygotsky extensively cited Gornfeld’s writings in both *The Tragedy of Hamlet* and the *Psychology of Art*. The present citations have not been located.

36. From 1932 to 1997 the Soviet Russian passport mentioned Jewish descent as one of the possible nationalities (e.g., Armenian, Jew, Russian, Tartar).
37. Jeremiah 25:28.
38. Jeremiah 10:23.
39. Marc Chagall (Moishe Khatskelevich Shagal) (1887 to 1985). Russian–French Jewish painter. Vygotsky refers to his paintings “The death” (1908), “Jew in bright red” (1915), and “Jew in green” (1914).
40. Refers to Gogol’s novel *The Dead Souls* and to Turgenev’s story “A living relic” in *A Sportman’s Sketches. Vol. 2* (1874).
41. 1 Kings 18:21: “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.”
42. 1 Kings 20:28: “The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys.” 1 Kings 20:23: “And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.”
43. Cf. Matthew 5:5.
44. Probably refers to Lazarus’ *Die Ethik des Judenthums [The ethics of Jewry]* (1898).
45. Deuteronomy 25:17. Jews are supposed to think of this phrase regularly. For Amalek, see note 23 to chapter 2.
46. Hillel and Shamai (first century BC to first century AD). Jewish sages who founded opposing schools of thought. Their discussions were instrumental in shaping the oral law.
47. A puzzling sentence.
48. “The pogroms of the early 1880s caused a marked deterioration in Gordon’s mental health. “Nothing is left, he complained in 1882, of all my dreams... And after the great catastrophe and the enormous sufferings I immediately fell from heaven to earth... My soul is empty (Naphschi reka),” the poet often complained.” (*Jewish Encyclopedia, Evreyskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1910, entry 695) (in Russian). In this connection, Gordon wrote the bitter poem “Eder Adonai” (“The Flock of the Lord”), in which he excoriated the Jews for their weakness and resignation (Vital 1999).
49. The reference is to Bialik’s poem “The legend of the pogrom” in his volume *In the City of Carnage* (1904) where he describes the scenes of horror after the pogrom (with piles of dead Jews together with their dead pets lying in the streets).
50. Refers to Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (1596) where Shylock says: “He hath disgraced me... and what’s his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany

you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.”

51. Nikolay Vasilyevich Gogol (1809 to 1852). Russian writer, playwright and literary critic. Vygotsky refers to chapter 4 of his novel *Taras Bulba* when the cossacks throw the Jews into the Dnepr: “They seized the Yids by the arms and began to hurl them into the waves. Pitiful cries resounded on all sides; but the stern Zaporozhians only laughed when they saw the Jewish legs, cased in shoes and stockings, struggling in the air.”
52. Vygotsky refers to Yankel’s words in chapter 10 of *Taras Bulba*: “for everyone takes a Jew for a dog; and they think he is not a man, but only a Jew.”
53. Ze’ev Jabotinsky (Vladimir Yevgen’evich Zhabotinskiy) (1880 to 1940). Russian Jewish writer, poet, translator, and Revisionist Zionist leader. Co-founder of the Jewish legion. In his paper “Russian kindness” (1913), Zhabotinskiy commented on the previously mentioned scene in *Taras Bulba*: “Such cruelty exists in none of the other literary traditions. It cannot even be called hatred or sympathy with the Cossack’s violence against the Jews, it is worse: it is thoughtless, unadorned festivity, unobscured by even the slightest thought that those funny legs kicking in the air were the legs of living human beings, it is an incredible simple and wholesale contempt for an inferior race, not even worthy of animosity.”
54. Cited from chapter 10 of Dostoevsky’s *Notes from the Dead House* (1860 to 1861): “Luka, who had known many little Yids when he was at liberty, often teased him, less from malice than for amusement, as one plays with a dog or a parrot.”
55. Ivan Turgenev (1818 to 1883). Russian writer of novels, short stories and plays. Vygotsky refers to Turgenev’s story, “The Yid” (1847), and the scene of Hirschel Tropman’s execution: “He was really ludicrous in spite of all the horror of his situation. The intense anguish of the forthcoming parting with life, his daughter, his family showed itself in the unhappy Yid in such strange and grotesque gesticulations, shrieks and wriggles, that we could not help smiling, however sad the scene.”
56. Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin (1799 to 1937). Russian poet and prose writer. Vygotsky refers to a line from his verse “The black shawl” (1820): “A despicable Jew knocked my door.” See also pp. 74–98 of Feigenberg (2000).
57. Refers to the following event related in *The Jewish Chronicle* (June 10, 1914): “At St. Petersburg, a Jewish lawyer, M. Gidoni, has challenged Prince Kochubey to a duel for referring to the Jews as timid people. The Prince was afraid to accept the challenge.” Internet sources provide more detail and state that the incident took place in a restaurant between Prince Mikhail Mikhailovich Kochubey and Aleksandr Iosifovich Gidoni. Gidoni (1885 to 1943?) was a Russian Jewish lawyer, art critic, playwright, and prose writer who later emigrated to France.
58. R. Yu. (R. Yu. E.). Vygotsky’s co-author and mentor with whom he corresponded in the early 1920s. Cf. chapter 4.

59. Death with honor is better than life with dishonor (in German).
60. Max Simon Nordau (Simon Maximilian Südfeld) (1859 to 1923). German Jewish Zionist leader and writer. Vygotsky refers to his play *Doctor Kohn* (1898).
61. We were unable to find this reference.
62. Moses Mendelssohn (1729 to 1786). German Jewish philosopher and translator of the Bible into German who co-founded the Jewish enlightenment movement, the Haskalah. The text “Sei ein Mensch in den Strassen und ein Jude zu Hause!” (“Be a man in the street and a Jew at home!”) has often been attributed to Mendelssohn but actually comes from Yehudah Leib Gordon’s poem “Erwache, mein Volk!” (“Wake up, my people!”) (1863).
63. Contradiction between parts of an argument, self-contradiction, oxymoron (Latin).
64. Benjamin Disraeli, earl of Beaconsfield (1804 to 1881). British conservative politician and prime minister. Maxim Moiseyevich Winawer (1863 to 1926). Russian lawyer and politician, co-founder of the Constitutional-Democratic Party. Ferdinand Lassalle (1825 to 1864). German philosopher, lawyer, politician. *Mincha* and *maariv* (Hebrew). Afternoon and evening prayer.
65. Yehuda Leib Katzenelson (pen name “Buki Ben Yogli”) (1846 to 1917). Ukrainian military doctor, writer, and publicist of Hebrew Literature who grew up in Gomel. Vygotsky seems to be paraphrasing a text on the Zealots.
66. The Zealots were a radical political movement in Judaea that sought to incite the people to rebel against the Roman Empire, most notably during the First Jewish-Roman War (66 to 70). The Zealots were of the opinion that only the Messiah could rule Jerusalem.
67. Vygotsky cites Zhabotinskiy’s introductory article “On Bialik” in Bialik’s (1911) volume *Songs and Poems*. The same citation, but this time without quotation marks, appeared in Vygotsky’s (1917) article “Avodim hoinu.”
68. Refers to p. 2 of Heman (1908) where the author writes that Jewish history is “less a history of what the Jews have done, but much more of what was done to them.” Cf. Vygotsky’s (1917) paper “Avodim hoinu” (“The will of the Jewry”) was connected with the history of the Jewry, says P. Heman, “seldom the history of actions, but more often the history of sufferings, much less the history of what the Jews did, and much more the history of what was done to them.” (In the paper Vygotsky quotes the preceding sentence as well and he writes P. Heman because he made a mistake with the Gothic capital letter “F,” which resembles a capital letter “P”).
69. Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1804 to 1872). German materialist philosopher and anthropologist. The aphorism is from his *Vorläufige Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie* (1842).
70. Karl Marx (1818 to 1883). German philosopher, economist, and socialist. His *Capital* (1867) was for many years the uncontested number one on the list of famous unread books until it was eclipsed by *Ulysses* (1922). Vygotsky refers to the 11th thesis of his *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845/1888): “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”

Actually, where we have the word “unfettered,” Vygotsky used the nonexistent verb *pereraskovyvat*, which may be understood as repeated, unsuccessful unfettering.

71. Refers to Judah Halevi’s *Kitab al Khazari (Kuzari)*, which was completed around 1140. Halevi accused the Jews of a lack of will and predicted that “The building of the Holy City will be finished only when our sons want that so passionately that its stones and its dust will become dear to them.”
72. An expression taken from Rozanov (1901): “Until now the Jews are the only people, who can be called preserved by God, for it already lives and rules some 2000 years without the sword and is preserved thanks to its Love of God; the Jews’ faith really saves them!”
73. 2 Chronicles 20:17: “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.”
74. Prayer shawl (Yiddish). The tallis or tallit (Hebrew) is worn over the outer clothes during the morning prayers.
75. We were unable to find this citation.
76. According to the Old Testament, God was neither to be seen nor was his name to be pronounced: “Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.” (Judges 13:21–22). One rare exception was the case of Jacob: “for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” (Genesis 32:30, cf. note 83).
77. Shulchan Aruch (Hebrew for “set table”). Code of Jewish Law authored by Yosef Karo in 1563. Together with its commentaries, it is the most widely accepted compilation of Jewish law. We proved unable to find the episode described by Vygotsky.
78. In Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* (Part IV, Chapter 1), Svidrigaylov wonders why a future life must be vast and suggests it might be “one little room, like a bath house in the country, black and grimy and with spiders in every corner.”
79. Refers to Dostoevsky’s short story “Bobok” (1873) where the protagonist overhears the indecent conversations of the recently deceased on a cemetery. The word “bobok” stands for the last word that a dead person can say before he or she, after some 2 or 3 months of posthumous life, is completely decomposed.
80. The exact reference has not been found.
81. Halakha (Hebrew). Collective body of Jewish religious laws derived from the written and oral Torah. It is unclear what Hammer’s Law (*Molota zakona*) refers to and it may be a mistranslation.
82. Refers to a letter by Gogol to count A. P. Tolstoy (1801 to 1873) (“It is necessary to travel through Russia”) in the volume *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (1847): “There is no higher title than that of monk, and God honors some of us with a day when we can don the humble black chasuble, which is so desired by my soul that the very thought of it is a joy for me. But it cannot be done without the call of God... No, for you as for

me the doors of this desired cloister are locked. Your monastery is Russia! Mentally clothe yourself in the black chasuble and, completely mortifying yourself for yourself, but not for her, go forward to work within her.” In “Advice to my sisters,” in the same volume, he writes: “If my sisters do not marry, they will turn their house into a monastery and build a shelter for poor homeless girls in the courtyard.”

83. Vygotsky cites Rozanov (1913): “For each nation nationality is its destiny, its fate; perhaps its dark fate. Fate rules. ‘You do not escape your destiny’: and neither can you escape the ‘fetters of your people.’”
84. Genesis 32:24–29: “And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day... And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. Or Judges 13:18: “And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?”
85. Ecclesiastes 7:10: “Say not thou, Why is it that the former days were better than these? For thou doest not enquire wisely of this thing.”
86. Daniel 12:12: “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.”
87. See the epigraph taken from Ezekiel 20 in chapter 4.

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