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The Implications of a Jewish Virtue Ethic

In 1958, the British philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe launched a major trend in recent moral philosophy when she argued that the ethical philosophy of the previous few centuries had been mistakenly preoccupied with rules and laws.¹ This law-centered approach, she argued, is an anachronistic remnant of a society that believed in a Divine law-giver. In the contemporary agnostic culture, Anscombe called for a return to the ethics of the Greeks in general and of Aristotle in particular. Aristotle's classic work on ethics, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, plays down specific rules and obligations. Rather, Aristotle writes of the character traits which belong to the virtuous individual or flourishing person. From this perspective, ethics represents the attempt to become temperate, courageous, magnanimous, and so on. The Anscombe/Aristotle approach has become known among philosophers as "virtue ethics."

Alasdair MacIntyre's 1981 book *After Virtue* brought this view into greater prominence and developed it with a higher degree of sophistication.² MacIntyre claims that it was the loss of a clear notion of a flourishing human being which had led modern philosophers away from Aristotle to their focus on a rule-based ethic. Like Anscombe, MacIntyre advocates a return to the Aristotelian view. However, unlike Anscombe, MacIntyre explicitly endorses the need for some rules within his ethical system.

Some writers describe the shift from a rule-based system to a virtue ethic as a movement from "act morality" to "agent morality." Indeed,

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Aristotle makes this difference clear when he distinguishes between the arts and the virtues. “The products of the arts have their goodness in themselves . . . but if the acts that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately. . . . [The agent’s actions must] proceed from a firm and unchangeable character.”³ Here, Aristotle shifts the focus of ethics from the act to the agent.

A Jewish Virtue Ethic

This recent trend in modern philosophy has led Jewish thinkers to inquire whether virtue ethics belongs within a Jewish world view. It would, of course, be absurd to claim that Judaism advocates that we do away with rules and laws altogether, as the Halakhah is full of concrete demands in both the personal and interpersonal spheres. However, the Halakhah may combine a notion of law together with a virtue ethic. In a series of articles and in his book, *Ethics of Responsibility*, Rabbi Walter Wurzburger forcefully advances just such a thesis.⁴

Wurzburger argues that Jewish law includes a virtue ethic derived from the *mizvah of ve-halakhta bi-derakhav, imitatio Dei* (Deut. 28:9).⁵ *Ḥazal* offer two descriptions of how to perform this *mizvah*. Some sources say that just as God clothes the naked, visits the sick and comforts the bereaved, so must we (*Sotah* 14a, *Tanḥuma Va-Yishlah* 10). Other sources say that just as God is merciful and compassionate, so must we be (*Shabbat* 133b, *Sifrei to Deut. 11:22*). While the first set of sources focus on imitating God’s actions, the latter set focus on imitating His attributes.⁶

Rambam serves as the linchpin of Wurzburger’s thesis. In *Sefer ha-Mizvot*, Rambam sees this *mizvah* as requiring imitation of both actions and attributes.⁷ However, in *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam cites only the source which demands particular character traits.⁸ Indeed, Rambam discusses the acts of kindness in a completely different section of *Mishneh Torah*.⁹ Wurzburger suggests that Rambam split the two components of ethical life in order to emphasize that the *mizvah of imitatio Dei* refers specifically to emulating attributes.¹⁰

Wurzburger offers a number of other supporting texts for his understanding of Rambam. Rambam demands that we repent from bad traits, which seems to point to the traits being a value in themselves.¹¹ Furthermore, Rambam prefers the giving of a thousand individual coins to different paupers to the giving of a thousand coins to one poor per-

son, as the repeated acts of charity have a greater impact on the personality of the giver than does the single large donation.¹² Again, the traits have value independently of the acts.

A striking theory in Rambam's *Shemonah Perakim*, his introduction to *Avot*, also coheres with this understanding. Rambam asks who is greater: the *hasid* who naturally wants to do the right thing, or the *kovesh yezer* who overcomes his inclinations to do evil? Rambam sets up an apparent contradiction between the view of the Greek philosophers together with the simple reading of the biblical verses which both portray the *hasid* as ideal, and statements in the literature of *Hazal* which seem to prefer the *kovesh yezer*. Rambam resolves the contradiction by distinguishing between conventionally accepted *mizvot* such as murder and theft and *mizvot* that come only from God (such as the prohibitions against eating *basar ve-halav* and wearing *sha'atnez*). With regard to the former, a *hasid* ranks higher; with regard to the latter, the *kovesh yezer* reigns supreme.¹³

While Rambam does not mention *imitatio Dei* in the above analysis, such a notion provides halakhic justification for the distinction he offers. On the one hand, no *mizvah* is fulfilled in disliking *sha'atnez* clothing and therefore, the *kovesh yezer's* devotion to the Halakhah is superior. On the other hand, becoming the type of person who has no desire to steal fulfills the Divine directive of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* and represents the highest form of service.¹⁴

Wurzbürger emphasizes that the virtue ethic does not argue for feelings of compassion on the pragmatic grounds that the benevolent person will then most likely fulfill his or her interpersonal obligations.¹⁵ Rather, the virtue ethic views the cultivation of such traits as a value in its own right, irrespective of its impact on practice. Our *kiyyum ha-mizvah* of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* grants such cultivation intrinsic rather than instrumental value.¹⁶

The teachings of the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, may have stimulated Rabbi Wurzbürger's thinking regarding this issue. The Rav describes *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* as not just another *mizvah* but as the "foundation of Jewish ethics."¹⁷ Furthermore, the Rav clearly sees the emulation of character traits as intrinsic to the *mizvah*: "When a person visits the sick, he must join in with their pain; when he comforts the mourners, he must mourn with them in his heart; and when he gives a person charity, he must bear that person's burden and empathize with his pain."¹⁸

Wurzbürger's argument represents a shift from the understanding

of previously published material on Rambam's writings. Shalom Rosenberg,¹⁹ Leon Roth,²⁰ and Herbert Davidson²¹ all read Rambam as advocating an *imitatio Dei* of action and not attributes. They point out that according to Rambam's doctrine of negative attributes, nothing positive can be said about God's nature. We can describe only God's actions but not His attributes.²² If so, imitation of God can include only actions and not character traits. This is the notion of *imitatio Dei* as Rambam expounds it in his *Guide of the Perplexed*.²³

For Wurzburger, however, the above problem precisely explains why Rambam employs the text of the *Sifrei* on *imitatio Dei* rather than the more standard text of the Babylonian Talmud. Rambam eschewed the talmudic text (*Shabbat* 133b) that says "*mah Hu raḥum*" ("just as He is merciful") in favor of the *Sifrei* which says "*mah Hu nikra raḥum*" ("just as He is called merciful") because the doctrine of negative attributes renders it impossible to satisfy the quest to emulate Divine properties. The addition of the word "*nikra*" allows Rambam to accept imitation of how we perceive the Divine.²⁴

In agreement with Wurzburger, I see no reason to reject the view presented in *Mishneh Torah* in favor of the view presented in the *Guide*. Rambam's *Sefer ha-Mizvot* explicitly acknowledges the philosophic problem animating the *Guide*—that one cannot attribute positive attributes to God—and yet Rambam still demands emulating attributes. Rambam writes that we are commanded "to emulate God's actions and attributes with regard to which God is depicted by way of analogy."²⁵ Furthermore, as we have seen, the focus on attributes is a consistent theme of numerous passages in both *Mishneh Torah*²⁶ and the *Commentary on the Mishnah*.²⁷ Finally, the ensuing years of Jewish scholarship have revealed many sources which concur with the view expressed in *Mishneh Torah*.

A perusal of medieval *sifrei ha-mizvot* reveals that both positions have their adherents. Some authors of *sifrei ha-mizvot* differentiated between *mizvot ha-teluyot ba-guf* and *mizvot ha-teluyot ba-lev*. R. Isaac of Corbeille's *Sefer Mizvot Ketannot* places *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* in the category of physically performed *mizvot*,²⁸ while R. Eliezer Azkiri's *Sefer Haredim* locates this *mizvah* in the category of the *teluyot ba-lev*.²⁹ While R. Isaac would say that the *mizvah* demands clothing the sick and burying the dead, R. Eliezer would see it as mandating the cultivation of an ethical personality.

Logical Implications of the Virtue Ethic

In discussing the implications of a Jewish incorporation of the virtue ethic, Wurzburger focuses on the expanded sphere of ethical activity.³⁰ A rule-oriented ethic might limit virtuous behavior to a set of prescribed laws. Conversely, a virtue-based morality demands that the agent constantly be animated by ethical character traits. Thus, the virtue ethic prevents a narrow halakhic legalism that views anything not explicitly forbidden by the Halakhah as ethically neutral.

As we shall soon see, rabbinic sources do indeed employ *imitatio Dei* frequently, to expand the parameters of ethical action. However, the significance of the virtue ethic need not be limited to expanding the realm of ethical activity. The virtue ethic also impacts on the very actions mandated by the Halakhah in terms of the motivation for their performance. In order to understand this point, we must survey some of the philosophical discussion regarding the proper motive for ethical behavior.

Discussions of the optimum motivation for ethical acts often begin with the striking position of Immanuel Kant. According to Kant, one must act ethically not in order to produce a particular result, and not out of feelings of compassion, but rather as a fulfillment of duty. Kant denies moral worth to the individual who is motivated to act ethically either out of self-interest or out of feelings of sympathy.³¹

Scholars debate what the Kantian position says about cases of multiple motives, where a person acts ethically both because of adherence to duty and due to feelings of sympathy. Friedrich Schiller, the German poet, understands Kant to mean that the sympathetic feelings detract from the performance of duty and points out the resulting absurdity that such a view ascribes greater moral virtue to a person who despises his or her friends than a person who likes those friends.³² Recently, several philosophers have argued that Kant would have had no problem with a secondary motive as long as the will to fulfill one's duty could have sufficed as an independent motive. However, even the latter group concedes that sympathy plays a minor role in the Kantian scheme.³³

Conversely, according to Aristotle, the virtuous man acts ethically because such is his nature. Contrary to Kant, Aristotle viewed pleasure in doing the right thing as a positive and even necessary component of the moral personality.³⁴ If we view virtue as a state of character, then pleasure in acting virtuously reveals a correct character. The charitable individual delights in assisting the destitute and requires no compulsion in order to do so.

Yeshayahu Leibowitz argues that the proper motivation for conduct according to Jewish law most closely resembles the Kantian ethic. Of course, Kant saw autonomous human reason as the source for determining our duty, while a Jewish Kantian sees the Divine command as the source. Nevertheless, the common denominator is that both value a particular motivation for behaving morally, namely the performance of one's duty.³⁵

However, according to a Jewish virtue ethic, the cultivation of a benevolent personality reflects the fulfillment of a Divine directive. If so, one who successfully develops the trait of benevolence will want to give charity or comfort a mourner irrespective of the specific *mizvah* to do so. A person's need to consistently struggle against inclination in order to adhere to these *mizvot* would indicate that such a person has not adequately fulfilled *imitatio Dei*.³⁶

Two examples may help illustrate the point. Imagine a father asking an older brother to take care of his younger sibling out of love for a family member. If the older brother thinks that he must look out for the younger brother solely because his father said so, he fails to fulfill the parental directive. His father requested that the elder son feel loving familial ties with the younger brother, and not merely that the elder perform the actions of consideration toward the younger.

Friendship provides another analogy. Smith and Jones, two old friends, separate for a brief period. During that time, Jones becomes friendly with Lewis. Jones introduces Smith to Lewis in the hope that they will feel a similar bond. Unfortunately, Smith does not like Lewis, and he shows friendship to Lewis only to make Jones happy. When Jones finds out, he expresses his disappointment, as he had wanted his two friends to truly feel friendship for each other. Jones may even ask Smith to cultivate feelings of friendship toward Lewis.

In both of the above examples, the instructor, the father or Jones, wanted the listener to feel the same feelings toward a third party as he did. In an analogous fashion, God desires that we care for the rest of humanity as He does: not out of compulsion to comply with a commandment, but out of an independent will to achieve this result. However, the older brother need not forget the father's role in commanding him to cultivate feelings of brotherhood. Thus, the virtue ethic does not obliterate the sense of duty.

The Rav utilizes the notion of *imitatio Dei* as the bridge between two conflicting impulses of the religious personality. On the one hand, a religious person desires the ethical freedom to create his own norms.

On the other hand, he or she yearns for complete subjugation to the Divine Will. Cultivation of the ethical personality in imitation of God allows for maintaining both sides of the dialectic. As Wurzbarger explains the Rav's position, "once commandments are internalized, they are no longer experienced as heteronomously imposed imperatives. Instead, at this level human beings become partners with God in the creation of the norm."³⁷

Until now, we have mentioned cases in which both the ethic of duty and the ethic of virtue lead to the same result: helping others. Now we shall turn to the more controversial case of a clash between the ethic of duty and the ethic of virtue. The Halakhah at times demands actions that conflict with our feelings of compassion.

David Shatz analyzes situations in which a person does the morally wrong thing as an expression of virtuous character traits.³⁸ For example, four people risk their lives in a foolhardy attempt to save the life of someone with little chance of survival. According to Shatz, most non-Jewish ethical theories praise such people because the expression of virtue creates a "halo effect" which clouds over the moral wrongdoing. Judaism, with its heavily legalistic stress, rejects such a "halo effect."

Even if Judaism does not allow the ethic of virtue to override halakhic principles, it may allow for a different interaction between legal duty and the virtue ethic. Whenever a clash exists, Judaism demands that duty, in the form of adherence to the governing *halakhah*, take precedence. However, the ethic of virtue will still find expression as it will determine the feelings of the person as he or she performs that duty.

If we adopt a virtue ethic, a feeling of compassion must pervade all aspects of a person's life, as that feeling reflects his or her essence. Unlike an ethic of duty which can be limited by the parameters of that duty, an ethic of virtue must always express itself. The virtue ethic relates to the core of a person's personality and that core does not change from act to act. As MacIntyre writes, "although the virtues are just those qualities which tend to lead to the achievement of a certain class of goods, nonetheless unless we practice them irrespective of whether in any set of contingent circumstances they will produce those goods or not, we cannot possess them at all. We cannot be genuinely courageous or truthful and be so only on occasion."³⁹ Therefore, the virtuous (and compassionate) personality should experience a difference between his or her feelings toward constructive and destructive *mizvot*. He or she performs the former willingly and the latter reluctantly. Thus, the *mizvot* of destroying

Amalek and the seven nations would require a fight against our natural inclinations, and we would have to marshal our sense of duty as the sole motivation.

We have now argued on logical grounds for three implications of the virtue ethic. First, such an ethic will expand the parameters of halakhic ethical behavior. Second, such an ethic will encourage a desire to perform interpersonal *mizvot* for reasons other than their being commanded. Third, the performance of destructive *mizvot* will be motivated solely by the Divine command. We will now discuss the accuracy of these three claims in classic rabbinic sources.

One caveat deserves mention prior to analyzing sources supporting the first claim. While *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* could serve as the source for a virtue ethic and thereby expand the realm of halakhic ethical behavior, it could just as easily create a similar expansion by demanding an imitation of benevolent actions (the view of the *gemara* in *Sotah* and R. Isaac of Corbeille). In other words, we must help others in situations not explicitly mandated either because Halakhah demands that we be compassionate in nature or because we emulate God, whose actions are always compassionate. If so, rabbinic utilization of *imitatio Dei* to generate new obligations illustrates the significance of *imitatio Dei*, but does not prove the virtue ethic. Nevertheless, such source material may reflect a halakhic virtue ethic.

Expanding the Parameters of Ethics

The notion of *imitatio Dei* as an expanding force may help solve the perennial problem of the seeming inadequacy of elements of the Jewish ethic. For example, the halakhah that lost objects of gentiles need not be returned (*Bava Kamma* 113b) appears to be beneath the Torah's high standards. However, if *imitatio Dei* demands that people behave ethically beyond the explicit halakhic commands, then the Torah does mandate much more than it initially appears to.

A large number of sources testify to the fact that halakhists throughout Jewish history employ a general command to be ethical as a creator of new obligations. Their usage of the phrases "*mah Hu af attah*" and "God's mercies are on all His works" (Psalms 145:9) clearly reveals *imitatio Dei* as the source of these obligations. If God's mercy extends to all, then in our imitation, our mercy must likewise extend even to the wicked, the undeserving, gentiles, slaves, and animals.⁴⁰ Let us focus on these briefly, in turn.

The Wicked: According to the “Alter of Slabodka,” R. Natan Zevi Finkel, Abraham’s praying for Sodom was an expression of “*mah Hu af attah.*” Just as God cares for the wicked, so must man. In a strikingly powerful formulation, the Alter claims that not stepping forward on behalf of the Sodomites would have represented a lacuna in Abraham’s *middat ha-ḥesed*—for which he would have been punished. Other twentieth-century *ba’alei musar*, such as R. Avraham Grodzinski⁴² and R. Ḥazkel Levenstein,⁴³ also saw *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* as creating a mandate for mercy toward the wicked.

The Undeserving: R. Aharon Lichtenstein deals with the question of whether to give charity to poor people who make no effort of their own to obtain a livelihood. R. Lichtenstein distinguishes between two sources of *gemilut ḥasadim*: *ve-ahavta le-re’akha kamokha* and *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav*. While the former would not mandate charity to those who do not help themselves, the latter would. Man must emulate God’s care for the non-deserving (*Berakhot* 7a).⁴⁴

Gentiles: We support the gentile poor and visit their sick because of “*darkei shalom*” (*Gittin* 61b). Some interpret *darkei shalom* to reflect a pragmatic consideration, similar to “*mi-shum eivah.*”⁴⁵ Rambam, however, explicates *darkei shalom* using the verse “God’s mercies are on all His works.”⁴⁶ This proof-text clearly implies that, according to Rambam, *darkei shalom* is derived from the ethical mandate of *imitatio Dei*.

Many authorities argue further that Jews are in fact commanded to love gentiles. This list includes people as diverse as R. Ḥayyim Vital,⁴⁷ R. Pinḥas Horowitz (author of *Sefer ha-Berit*),⁴⁸ R. Simḥa Zissel Ziv,⁴⁹ R. Yaakov Emden,⁵⁰ R. Zvi Yaakov Mecklenberg⁵¹ and R. Avraham Yizḥak Kook.⁵² R. Kook emphasizes this love for all beings as a fundamental component of the religious personality. The above authorities do not all explicitly link loving gentiles with *imitatio Dei*, but such a linkage would provide halakhic ground for the bold step they take.⁵³ Furthermore, if the love demanded relates to an emotional state and not just behavior, then only the imitation of character traits could provide halakhic justification for such a demand.

Slaves: While there exist many *halakhot* which protect the Jewish slave, the *eved kena’ani* receives less care in explicit halakhic sources. Rambam’s closing halakhah in *Hilkhot Avadim* addresses this issue powerfully:

It is permitted to work a heathen slave with rigor. Though such is the rule, it is the quality of superlegal piety and the way of wisdom that a man be merciful and pursue justice and not make his yoke heavy on the slave or distress him, but give him to eat and drink of all foods and

drinks. . . . Cruelty and effrontery are not frequent except with the heathen who worship idols. The children of our father Abraham, however—i.e., the Israelites—upon whom the Holy One, Blessed Be He, bestowed the favor of the law and laid upon them statutes and judgments, are merciful people who have mercy upon all. Thus also it is declared by the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed Be He, which we are enjoined to imitate: And His tender mercies are over all His works.⁵⁴

As R. Yosef Karo already notes in his *Kesef Mishneh*, Rambam did not base this statement on a clear talmudic source. R. Karo writes, “These are the words of the master and they are appropriate for him.”⁵⁵ In fact, as the final sentence of the text makes clear, Rambam does have a more general talmudic basis: he simply applies the *mizvah* of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav*.

Animals: The Talmud (*Bava Mezi’a* 32b) suggests that the prohibition against *za’ar ba’alei hayyim*, causing pain to animals, is biblical, but does not reveal its biblical source. R. Menaḥem ha-Meiri traces the source back to the prohibition against muzzling an animal working the field.⁵⁶ Both R. Elazar Azkiri⁵⁷ and R. Mosheh Sofer⁵⁸ employ “God’s mercy is on all His works” as the source. This echoes a talmudic story about R. Yehudah ha-Nasi in which kindness to animals emerges from that same verse (*Bava Mezi’a* 85a). A similar spirit may have animated R. Yeḥezkel Landau’s declaration that hunting for sport, though not necessarily technically forbidden, is “not the way of the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”⁵⁹

As mentioned above, the expansion of obligations created by *imitatio Dei* can help deal with some of the apparent moral lacunae of the Halakhah. However, a critic may still ask why the Torah did not demand ethical behavior more directly, without need of this general *mizvah*. R. Avraham Yiḥḥak ha-Kohen Kook offers a startling explanation in a letter to R. Mosheh Zeidel. R. Kook argues that making an explicit *mizvah* for every ethical requirement would actually destroy ethics because it would cut off the possibility of voluntary ethical choices. He writes, “That which is added by good intention and the spirit of giving must be [counted as] *middat ḥasidut*, and if these exalted virtues were set as fixed obligations, the harm suffered by humanity would be immeasurable.”⁶⁰ R. Kook adds a powerful statement on the need for autonomous moral sentiments.

Admittedly, R. Kook’s idea fails to address the problem fully, since a critic may still ask why particular items were left open for voluntary realization while others were explicitly mandated. God could have

commanded return of lost objects to gentiles and left other matters open to individual choice. Be that as it may, R. Kook's position illustrates the major significance that an important rabbinic thinker granted to man's ethical striving beyond the letter of the law.

Another significant point emerges if we adopt R. Kook's analysis. The obligations created by *imitatio Dei* are not universally obligatory, as explicit *mizvot* are; otherwise, the voluntary spirit would be lacking. Apparently, imitating God provides a general directive but not specific obligations. A practical ramification is found in the case of competing claims between two different ethical demands. One might choose to fulfill an explicit obligation rather than a specific manifestation of emulating God, given that the latter *mizvah* can be fulfilled in more than one way.

The preceding analysis raises the question: to what degree can we reconcile this aspect of R. Kook's view with the sources cited above (such as *Sefer Haredim* on causing pain to animals), which argue that *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* can generate concrete, specific obligations? Perhaps there are two levels of *imitatio Dei*: one that creates obligations and another that provides a general directive without introducing specific demands.

Motivation for Mizvot

As our caveat stated, the previous section reveals the major impact of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav*, but does not clearly establish a Jewish virtue ethic. The expanded ethical realm referred to in numerous rabbinic sources may reflect an *imitatio Dei* of actions and not of attributes. We now turn to rabbinic discussions of motivation for *mizvot*, which should highlight the distinctiveness of virtue ethics as it directly relates to the character traits of the person performing *mizvot*.

Mizvot of kindness: The classic starting point for a discussion of motivation is the sixth chapter of Rambam's *Shemonah Perakim* cited above. Rambam preferred the *hasid* for conventionally accepted *mizvot* and the *kovesh yezer* for *mizvot* we would not know of without revelation. We mentioned Wurzburger's interpretation that fulfillment of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* explains the preference given to the *hasid* in the ethical realm. In addition, this distinction has a good deal of intuitive appeal. Few of us would view the desire to eat a cheeseburger or to wear *sha'atnez* as character flaws, assuming that desire need not lead to action. Yet most of us would look askance at a person with an inclination to steal or to murder but who somehow controls himself. We view the desire to murder as revealing something negative about the person.

Many later authorities assume the correctness of Rambam's position. R. Menaḥem ha-Meiri,⁶¹ R. Mosheh Trani,⁶² R. Ḥayyim Halberstam of Sanz,⁶³ R. Yisrael Lipshutz,⁶⁴ R. Barukh ha-Levi Epstein,⁶⁵ R. Meir Simḥah ha-Kohen of Dvinsk,⁶⁶ and R. Eliyahu Lopian⁶⁷ all adopt Rambam's distinction. R. Yaakov Emden, however, rejects Rambam because of several rabbinic statements. R. Emden believes that "according to the effort is the reward" (*Avot* 5:23) and "in the place where the penitent stand, the wholly righteous cannot" (*Berakhot* 34b), giving preference to the *kovesh yezer* across the board.⁶⁸

Rambam himself cites those statements of *Ḥazal* and limits them to what Saadyah called the *mizvot shim'iyot*, the *mizvot* that we know of only from God. Even if we follow R. Emden and apply *Avot* 5:23 and *Berakhot* 34b to all *mizvot*, we might come to a conclusion similar to that of Rambam. But R. Yiẓḥak Arama distinguishes between two criteria for a "higher" individual: reward and stature. While the *kovesh yezer* deserves more reward than the *ḥasid* does, the *ḥasid* remains the ideal for which to strive.⁶⁹ A weak student who receives a grade of 90% might deserve more praise than a bright student with a grade of 95%—but the latter mark still ranks higher.

The *Sefer ha-Berit* contains a related distinction. R. Horowitz argues that in terms of *teva rishon* (one's inborn inclinations), the *kovesh yezer* reigns supreme. No reward belongs to an individual for being born with a benevolent disposition. However, in terms of *teva sheni* (characteristics acquired through habit), the *ḥasid* deserves preeminence. The *teva rishon* perspective focuses on reward for the effort involved. The *teva sheni* measurement illustrates the desired goal.⁷⁰

Thus, the overwhelming majority of positions outlined so far would agree that indeed one should naturally want to act ethically. Rambam, Meiri and the others listed above would argue such for all conventionally accepted *mizvot*. *Akedat Yiẓḥak* and *Sefer ha-Berit* extend this to all *mizvot* as an eventual goal. All of the above discuss broadly the optimum motivation for *mizvot* in general. Some *aḥaronim* state a similar idea with regard to an individual *mizvah bein adam la-ḥavero*.

Maharal (R. Judah Loew of Prague) demands a virtuous disposition when one performs the *mizvah* of lending money. Rashi points out that in three places, the Torah employs the word "*im*," implying a voluntary *mizvah*, despite the obligatory nature of the act in question.⁷¹ Maharal, in his supercommentary on Rashi, asks why the Torah does this. He explains that the Torah says "if you lend money" to highlight that we

should lend money out of our own free will and not just because the Torah demands it.⁷²

R. Isser Yehudah Unterman, former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, draws a distinction between the specific *mizvah* of lending money and the general *mizvah* of *gemilut hesed* as derived from *ve-halakhta biderakhav*. The specific *mizvah* is result-oriented, and therefore any motivation suffices. The general *mizvah* focuses on the personality of the giver and must emerge from a feeling of love for the other.⁷³ Maharal finds a focus on virtue in the specific *mizvah* of lending money; R. Unterman traces the virtue ethic back to the more general *mizvah* of *imitatio Dei*.

R. Ḥazkel Levenstein provides additional biblical support for this position. He cites the description of those who donated to the *Mikdash*, “*kol ish asher yiddevennu libbo*” (Ex. 25:1), as well as Micah’s statement that God demands “*ahavat hesed*,” as indicators of the ideal charity. God asks not only that we give charity, but that we love giving charity.⁷⁴

Until now, we have mentioned sources which argue that people should feel independent motivation to perform the interpersonal *mizvot*. None of the sources indicates that the sense of duty should not accompany the independent desire to help a person in distress. Some sources even move one step further in arguing that the sense of duty must be pushed aside in *hesed* contexts. When R. Zalman Katz said *le-shem yihud* prior to performing *mizvot ben adam la-ḥavero*, other *ba’alei musar* objected. The objection rested on two arguments. R. Simḥah Zissel offered a novel interpretation of “love your neighbor as yourself”: just as one has a natural love for oneself, so must one naturally love the other. Others objected that treating the recipient of an act of *hesed* as a *hefez shel mizvah* negates the positive feeling generated by the act.⁷⁵

A number of halakhic differences between *mizvot bein adam la-Makom* and *mizvot bein adam la-ḥavero* give credence to R. Simḥah Zissel’s claim. The gemara never applies the debate over whether *mizvot zerikhot kavvanah* to *bein adam la-ḥavero*. This leads one *aḥaron* to suggest that these *mizvot* certainly do not require intention for fulfillment.⁷⁶ Also, no *mizvah bein adam la-ḥavero* requires a *berakhah*. Perhaps the rabbis did not want people to think about *hesed* as coerced from above.

Rashba argues that we do not make a blessing prior to giving charity because the poor person might not accept the gift and the *berakhah* would then be *le-battalah*.⁷⁷ R. Yeḥiel Yaakov Weinberg questions the application of this principle to *mishloah manot*, as some *shittot* maintain that one fulfills the *mizvah* even if the recipient refuses the gift. R.

Weinberg suggests that if the point of *mishloah manot* is to increase love and brotherhood, then a person must give them out of his own desire to do so, and not because of Divine compulsion. For the same reason, argues R. Weinberg, we do not recite a blessing on charity and honoring parents.⁷⁸

Arguing against prefacing interpersonal *mizvot* with a *berakhah* or *le-shem yihud* seems to move us to a stronger claim. Such a position not only highlights the need for independent human motivation, but pointedly downplays the accompanying sense of duty. Perhaps these rabbis were afraid that the sense of duty might come to overshadow the need for spontaneous compassion. On educational grounds, it becomes imperative to minimize the element of command when performing acts of kindness. The fact that the notion of duty finds expression with regard to *mizvot bein adam la-Makom* may have enabled the rabbis to feel free to de-emphasize that element in the interpersonal sphere.

Alternatively, the rabbinic downplaying of the command may reflect the previously mentioned concern of some *ba'alei musar*—that giving out of compulsion infringes on the good feelings of the recipient. Michael Stocker, a contemporary philosopher, points out that Smith's sick friend feels less comforted if Smith visits him only out of a sense of duty.⁷⁹ This may be what the Talmud means when it says, "the true reward of charity is for the kindness exhibited in it" (*Sukkah* 49b). As Coleridge wrote, "and he that works me good with unmov'd face/ does it but half: he chills me while he aids/ my benefactor not my brother man."⁸⁰

Coleridge's poem goes on to offer an important counterbalance to this interim emphasis: "Yet even this cold beneficence/ praise praise it O my soul! Oft as thou scann'st/ the sluggard pity's vision weaving tribe/ who sigh for wretchedness yet shun the wretched/ nursing in some delicious solitude/ their slothful love and dainty sympathies." The virtue ethic's focus on the inner state must not obviate the need for moral action. Only action will reveal the authenticity of the inner state.

Thus, many sources indicate that Judaism demands autonomous ethical feelings in addition to a sense of duty, and some sources emphasize the autonomous motivation even to the exclusion of the motivation of duty. It is true that authorities such as R. Simḥah Bunim of Pesischa⁸¹ and R. Ḥayyim Shmuelevitz⁸² take the contrary position that charitable deeds to other people should be motivated by a sense of Divine command and not individual charitable feelings. However, one cannot deny the prominence of the names listed above who reject that position. At the very least, the position presented in this article reflects a strong ele-

ment within our tradition. Moreover, I believe the position outlined in this article to be the majority position in the rabbinic tradition.

Destructive Mizvot: We now turn to the other side of the coin: *mizvot* that command the destruction of human life. Both *Hazon Ish* (R. Avraham Karelitz) and R. Avraham Grodzinski emphasize that destroying Amalek and the seven nations runs contrary to Jewish nature. *Hazon Ish* states that despite the repulsive nature of the seven nations and the fact that these nations rejected a peace offer, the Jews fought them “because of the Divine decree, not as lovers of war and conquest, God forbid.”⁸³ R. Grodzinski stresses the high spiritual level required to fulfill the *mizvah* of destroying Amalek with the right intentions.⁸⁴

According to an opinion cited in *Kaf ha-Hayyim*, we refrain from making a blessing on *zekhirat Amalek* because we do not make a *berakhah* on acts of destruction.⁸⁵ The Gra (R. Eliyahu of Vilna, the Vilna Gaon) employs a similar explanation for the absence of a *berakhah* when the Beit Din fulfills “*u-bi’arta ha-ra mi-kirbekha*” through capital punishment.⁸⁶ R. Shelomo Alkabez⁸⁷ and R. Mosheh Avigdor Amiel⁸⁸ explain that the Jews in the time of Esther celebrated the first Purim on the day of rest following the war and not on the day of the actual victory because God does not rejoice in the fall of the wicked, and we should “walk in His ways.” *Imitatio Dei* implies a reluctance to destroy and a lack of enthusiasm toward destruction.

R. Meir Simḥah of Dvinsk extends this theme through all the Jewish holidays. Just as on Purim, we celebrate the day of rest rather than the day of war, on Ḥanukkah, we emphasize the miracle of the oil in place of the military victory. In the same vein, the Torah commands the celebration of the seventh day of Passover prior to the drowning of the Egyptians on that very day, so that the celebration not be linked with suffering and destruction.⁸⁹

R. Amiel states this theme with bold clarity:

There are some *mizvot* regarding which the *simḥah shel mizvah* would actually be an *averah*. For example, if the *Beit Din* rejoices when fulfilling the *mizvah* of administering the death penalty, it would be a serious transgression. On the contrary, they need to feel the pain of the *mizvah*, the pain of destroying a Jewish soul, and they only do so as a result of a Divine command.⁹⁰

As we noted above, the religious virtue ethic presented here does not justify ignoring an explicit Divine command, despite our own moral misgivings. An honest reading of Jewish sources includes a strong element of adherence to duty. However, even a humble submission before the wisdom

of the Divine does not change the fact that a compassionate individual will not feel independent motivation to engage in acts which conflict with the very core of his or her personality. Indeed, rabbis who properly feel legally compelled to forbid the marriage of an *agunah* or a *mamzer* usually express a great deal of regret.

Thus, ample rabbinic support exists for the three claims stated above. *Ve-halakhta bi-derakhav* expands the scope of halakhic ethical activity. It does so either as an “act morality” or as an “agent morality.” According to many authorities, *imitatio Dei* also mandates independent motivation to act ethically and a reduced enthusiasm for acts with a destructive quality. The latter two ramifications relate to the personality of the performer and point directly to an ethic of virtue. In the concluding section, we shall investigate the significance that an important rabbinic writer granted to emulating God.

R. Kook and the Ethical Personality

Perhaps more than any other rabbinic writer, R. Avraham Yizhak ha-Kohen Kook emphasizes the need to develop man’s autonomous moral sentiments. As is usually the case with his ideas, R. Kook’s theory of ethics is nuanced and complex. On the one hand, he writes of the shallowness of secular ethics and of its inability to stand up against the temptations of human desire.⁹¹ On the other hand, R. Kook interprets the ethical strivings of atheists as being unconsciously motivated by the Divine. According to him, “the very striving for justice, whatever form it takes, is itself the most luminous Divine influence.”⁹² This allows him to reject the philosophies of secular ethics and still grant worth to the ethical striving of secularists.⁹³

R. Kook demands of religious individuals that they express autonomous moral feelings. In a number of different contexts, he stresses that a religious world view incorporates rather than excludes natural morality.⁹⁴ He also writes of the need to love all of humanity. A close reading of R. Kook’s writings reveals *imitatio Dei* as one of the foundations for his moral outlook. These three themes—natural morality, love of all, and *imitatio Dei*—receive extensive treatment in R. Kook’s works:

It is forbidden for the fear of heaven to push aside man’s natural morality, for then it would no longer be pure fear of heaven. There is a sign showing that the fear of heaven is pure, when the natural morality, planted in man’s honest nature, ascends through it (the fear of heaven) to higher levels than it would attain without it.⁹⁵

The love of people must break out from the source of compassion; it must come to us not as a prescribed statute. Otherwise it will lose its most luminous element. It must come as a spontaneous movement of an inner soul force.⁹⁶

This last citation echoes the theme we saw earlier in R. Kook's explanation of why *mizvot* do not cover all of morality. The Torah wants morality to come from human intuition and not as a "prescribed statute."

R. Kook's reading of a difficult passage in Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* underscores this point. Rambam limits *olam ha-ba* to gentiles who perform the seven Noahide commandments out of submission to God's command. Those gentiles who fulfill these *mizvot* based on purely human considerations are not "*me-ḥasidei umot ha-olam ve-lo me-ḥakhameihem.*"⁹⁷ Many commentators argue that the correct text of Rambam substitutes an *alef* for a *vav* and reads "*ela me-ḥakhameihem.*" Gentiles who refrain from theft and murder and so forth may not be *ḥasidei umot ha-olam*, but they are wise.⁹⁸

R. Kook takes this correction one step further. In his view, Rambam not only terms the gentiles who naturally refrain from theft as wise; Rambam actually ranks them higher than those who refrain due to the Divine call. This dramatic reversal indicates how strongly R. Kook felt about natural morality.⁹⁹

Man's natural moral inclinations do not differentiate between Jew and gentile. Thus, R. Kook demands love for all beings:

The highest position in the love of people must be taken by the love of man, and it must extend to all men, despite all differences of opinion, religion and faith, despite all distinctions of race and climate. . . . The narrow-mindedness that leads one to see whatever is outside the bounds of the unique people, even the bounds of Israel, only as ugly and defiled, is a terrible darkness that causes general destruction to the entire edifice of spiritual good, the light of which every refined soul hopes for.¹⁰⁰

The love of people must be alive in the heart and in the soul, the love of every man specifically, and the love of all nations, the desire for their elevation and spiritual and material welfare; hatred must be directed only toward wickedness and filth in the world. It is totally impossible to attain the lofty spiritedness of "Praise God, call upon His Name, proclaim among the nations His wonders" [Ps. 105:1], without an inner love, from the depths of heart and soul, to benefit all nations, to improve their estate, to ameliorate their lives.¹⁰¹

What provides the conceptual basis for R. Kook's positions on natural morality and love for all mankind? In a number of places, R. Kook

employs *imitatio Dei* as the foundation. “It is an art of great enlightenment to purge anger from the heart entirely, to look at all with a benevolent eye, with compassionate concern, without reservation. *It is to emulate the eye of God that focuses only on the good.*”¹⁰²

When the passionate desire to be good to all prevails, then man knows that light has come to him from the upper world . . . let him lift up his understanding from afar *to seize hold of the attributes of God who is good to everyone* and whose mercies are upon all of His works.¹⁰³

There are some righteous individuals who are very great and powerful, who cannot limit themselves to *Keneset Yisrael* alone, and they are always concerned for the good of the entire world. . . . These *zaddikim* cannot be nationalists in the external sense of the term because they cannot stand any hatred, or iniquity, or limitation of good and mercy, *and they are good to all, as the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for He is good to all and His compassion is over all of His works.*¹⁰⁴

With some trepidation, I would like to suggest that R. Kook offers a model of *imitatio Dei* which differs from the one previously presented in this paper. We wrote of a Divine command to cultivate certain character traits, and in that scheme, the ultimate source of authority remains God. Such an ethic cannot truly be called autonomous. In R. Kook’s writings, the loving individual deserves credit regardless of whether he or she acknowledges the Divine command to become such a person. The gentile who acts ethically purely due to the promptings of his own conscience receives R. Kook’s lavish praise.

Robert Merrihew Adams, one of the prominent academic figures in the philosophy of religion today, describes two possible reasons for granting religious value to an autonomous component in ethics:

We are told that God commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves. But we do not love them at all unless we care about them at least partly for their own sakes. The believer aspires to be filled with God’s Spirit. But God presumably loves truthfulness, fairness, kindness, mercy, and other good qualities for their own sakes, and not just because He has commanded them. And one who is filled with God’s Spirit ought to love them in some measure as God loves them.¹⁰⁵

In the first part of the citation, Adams argues that God commands people to establish feelings of love toward others. In the concluding section, he claims that the believer infers from God’s love for certain traits that those traits are worthwhile in their own right irrespective of the Divine command. According to the latter approach, even an atheist who “loves truthfulness, fairness, kindness, mercy and other good qualities”

emulates God without knowing it. In other words, imitation of God might not hinge on the specific *mizvah* of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav*. This second approach could provide a basis for explicating R. Kook's ideas.¹⁰⁵

While R. Kook reflects a particularly strong manifestation of the implications of *ve-halakhta bi-derakhav*, many other rabbinic leaders also employed this *mizvah* to great effect. That we develop our internal moral strivings and that we look compassionately on all of the world are concerns that many others share with R. Kook. Indeed, in light of the tendencies currently found in some parts of the Jewish community to reduce ethical behavior to a set of explicitly prescribed norms, this message demands R. Kook's powerful formulations.

Notes

I thank Shalom Carmy, David Shatz, Joel Wolowelsky, Aaron Liebman, Anne Gordon, and an anonymous reviewer for their help in preparing this essay.

1. G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1-17. The most significant articles on virtue ethics are collected in *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (Oxford, 1997).
2. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, 1981).
3. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford, 1990), Book 2, chapter 4, p. 34.
4. See Walter Wurzburger, *Ethics of Responsibility: Pluralistic Approaches to Covenantal Ethics* (Philadelphia, 1994) and the many articles by Dr. Wurzburger cited in the bibliography to that book. For a review that touches briefly on virtue ethics, see David Shatz, "Beyond Obedience: Walter Wurzburger's Ethics of Responsibility," *Tradition* 30, 2 (1996): 74-95.
5. Wurzburger, 71-78.
6. Both sources apply imitation of God to Divine benevolence and not to Divine punishment. Midrashim explicitly state that humans cannot emulate *nekamah*. See David S. Shapiro, "The Doctrine of the Image of God and *Imitatio Dei*," in his *Studies in Jewish Thought* (New York, 1975), 19-21, 27.
7. *Sefer ha-Mizvot*, positive commandment 8.
8. *Hilkhhot Deot* 1:6.
9. *Hilkhhot Evel* 14:1.
10. R. Elimelekh Bar Shaul, former chief rabbi of Rehovot, essentially anticipated Dr. Wurzburger's thesis, although he did not use philosophical terminology. R. Bar Shaul points out the two aspects of *imitatio Dei* and sees the emulation of *middot* as more significant than the imitation of actions. He writes "this *mizvah* demands not *rahamim* but that man be a *raham*, not *haninah* but that man be a *hanun*." See R. Elimelekh bar Shaul, *Mizvah va-Lev* (Israel, 1992), 185.

11. *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 7:3.
12. *Commentary on the Mishnah, Avot* 3:18.
13. *Shemonah Perakim*, chapter 6.
14. Wurzbürger, 70-71.
15. A different pragmatic argument on behalf of virtue ethics appears in Lawrence Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (London, 1980), chapter 6. Blum points out the advantages of empathy in response to those who argue that the Kantian ethicist will prove more reliable than his virtue counterpart. Blum argues that the sympathetic individual will perceive another's distress more readily than the Kantian. While the Kantian remains committed to fulfillment of duty, his lack of compassion might prevent him from apprehending the situations in which that duty arises.
16. Wurzbürger, 69.
17. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Shi'urim le-Zekher Abba Mori z"l* (Jerusalem, 5745), 8-9.
18. *Ibid.*, 170. The translation is my own.
19. S. Rosenberg, "Ve-Halakhta bi-Derakhav," *Pilosofeyah Yisraelit*, ed. A. Kasher and M. Hallamish (Tel Aviv, 1983), 72-92.
20. L. Roth, *Ha-Hiddamut la-Kel ve-Ra'ayon ha-Kedushah* (Jerusalem, 1931).
21. H. Davidson, "The Middle Way in Maimonides' Ethics," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 54(1987), 32-72.
22. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, 1:54.
23. *Ibid.* 1:54, 3:54.
24. Walter Wurzbürger, "Imitatio Dei in Maimonides' *Sefer ha-Mizvot* and the *Mishneh Torah*," *Tradition and Transition: Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits to Celebrate Twenty Years in Office*, ed. Jonathan Sacks (London, 1986), 321. It should be noted that, in some of his other writings, Dr. Wurzbürger provides alternative explanations for Rambam's choice of the *Sifrei*.
25. *Sefer ha-Mizvot*, positive commandment 8.
26. See notes 7 and 9 above.
27. See notes 10 and 11 above.
28. *Mizvah* 46.
29. Chapter 9, *Mizvah* 18.
30. See Wurzbürger, 79.
31. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (London, 1964), 65-67.
32. Cited in Sir David Ross, *Kant's Ethical Theory* (Oxford, 1954), 16.
33. Cf. Marcia Baron, "The Alleged Repugnance of Acting From Duty," *Journal of Philosophy* 81(April 1984), 197-220; Richard Henson, "What Kant Might Have Said: Moral Worth and the Overdetermination of Dutiful Action," *Philosophical Review* 88(1979), 39-54; Barbara Herman, "Acting From the Motive of Duty," *Philosophical Review* 40(1981), 359-382.
34. *Nicomachean Ethics*, II: 3, pp. 31-33 in the edition cited in note 3.
35. Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Yahadut, Am Yehudi u-Medinat Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1979), 294. Leibowitz does not explicitly mention Kant in that discussion but his approach clearly overlaps with the Kantian notion of motivation. On the parallels between these two thinkers, see Naomi Kasher, "Tefisat ha-Yahadut shel Leiboviz le-Umat Tefisat ha-Musar shel Kant," in *Sefer*

- Yeshayahu Leiboviz*, ed. A. Kasher and Y. Levinger (Tel Aviv, 5737), 21-34.
36. An argument for multiple motives toward ethical behavior appears in Avi Sagi and Daniel Statman, *Dat u-Musar* (Jerusalem, 1993), 223-231.
 37. See R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “*U-Bikkashtem mi-Sham*,” in *Ish ha-Halakhah—Galuy ve-Nistar* (Jerusalem, 1989), 180. The Wurzbürger quote comes from “*Imitatio Dei* in the Philosophy of Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik,” in *Hazon Nahum: Studies in Jewish Law, Thought and History Presented to Dr. Norman Lamm on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Yaakov Elman and Jeffrey Gurock (New York, 1997), 574.
 38. David Shatz, “As Thyself: The Limits of Altruism in Jewish Ethics,” *Reverence, Righteousness, and Rahmanut: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung*, ed. Jacob J. Schacter (Northvale, NJ, 1992), 251-275.
 39. *After Virtue*, 198.
 40. We will not include among these sources any decisions based on “*hillul Ha-Shem*” or “*mi-shum eivah*” as the former protects God’s honor and the latter is purely pragmatic. Only the ethical demand as such shall concern us.
 41. *Or ha-Zafun* (Jerusalem, 5738), 259.
 42. *Torat Avraham* (Jerusalem, 5737), 470.
 43. *Or Yehezkel on middot* (Bnei Brak, 1988), 144-148.
 44. R. Aharon Lichtenstein, “*Sa’od Tis’od Immo: Hishtattefut ha-Mekabbel bi-Gemilut Hasadim*,” in *Sefer Zikaron le-Avraham Spiegelman* (Jerusalem, 1979), 86-89.
 45. R. Moshe Isserles, *Darkei Moshe* on *Yoreh De’ah* 251:1 cites an opinion that we only give charity to gentiles together with Jewish recipients. This implies the pragmatic approach.
 46. *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Melakhim* 10:12. This inference is explicated in R. Shimon Sofer’s *Responsa Hitorerut Teshuvah*, 78 and R. David Fraenkel’s *Shayyarei Korban, Yerushalmi Gittin* 5:10. See R. Isser Yehudah Unterman, “*Darkei Shalom ve-Hagdaratam*,” *Morasha* 1 (1971): 5-10 and Walter Wurzbürger “*Darkei Shalom*,” *Gesher* (1978): 80-86.
 47. R. Hayyim Vital, *Sha’arei Kedushah, helek* 1, *sha’ar* 5.
 48. R. Pinhas Horowitz, *Sefer ha-Berit* (Jerusalem, 1960), 340-342, 380.
 49. *Hokhmah u-Musar* (Jerusalem, 1964), part 2, 6-7.
 50. R. Yaakov Emden, *Lehem Shamayim*, commentary on *Avot* 1:12.
 51. R. Mecklenburg, *Ha-Ketav ve-ha-Kabbalah, Vayikra* 19:18.
 52. See the citations from R. Kook in the concluding section of this paper.
 53. While in one place (see note 48), R. Simḥah Zissel argues on more pragmatic lines that humanity loving one another will result in a more productive society, in another place (*Hokhmah u-Musar*, part 2, 193-194), he claims that compassion for *resha’im* emerges from emulating God.
 54. *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Avadim* 9:8.
 55. *Kesef Mishneh, Avadim* 9:8.
 56. R. Menaḥem ha-Meiri, *Beit ha-Beḥirah, Bava Mezi’a* 32b.
 57. R. Elazar Azkiri, *Sefer ha-Haredim* (Jerusalem, 1990) chapter 14, 82.
 58. R. Moshe Sofer, commentary on *Bava Mezi’a* 32b.
 59. R. Yehezkel Landau, *Responsa Noda bi-Yehudah, Yoreh Deah* 1:#10.
 60. R. A. Y. Kook, *Iggerot ha-Ra’ayah* (Jerusalem, 1985) Vol. 1, letter 89. The translation is from Tzvi Feldman, *Rav A. Y. Kook: Selected Letters* (Maaleh Adumim, 1985), 179.

61. R. Menaḥem ha-Meiri, *Ḥibbur ha-Teshuvah, ma'amar 1, perek 2* (Jerusalem, 1976), 56.
62. R. Mosheh Trani, *Beit Elokim, "Sha'ar Teshuvah,"* chapter 4 (Jerusalem, 1984), 114.
63. *Divrei Hayyim al ha-Torah* (Brooklyn, 1962), 68.
64. R. Yisrael Lipshutz, *Tiferet Yisrael*, Commentary on *Avot 2:9, Yakhin 86*.
65. R. Barukh Epstein, *Tosefet Berakhah*, Commentary on *Vayikra 19:31*.
66. R. Meir Simḥah ha-Kohen, *Meshekh Ḥokhmah*, commentary on *Vayikra 19:31*.
67. R. Elyahu Lopian, *Lev Eliyahu*, Vol. I (Jerusalem, 1972), 155-161.
68. R. Emden's glosses to the *Shemonah Perakim* appear in the standard edition of the *Vilna Shas*.
69. R. Yizḥak Arama, *Akedat Yizḥak* on *Nizavim, sha'ar 100*, pp. 104-107.
70. *Sefer ha-Berit*, 290-292.
71. Rashi, *Shemot 20:22*.
72. R. Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh, Shemot 20:22*. A similar explanation appears in R. Moshe Feinstein's *Darash Mosheh* (New York, 1988), 56 and 77. However, R. Moshe argues on the instrumental grounds that a compassionate person will more readily perform *mizvot*. In contrast, Maharal seems to view the spontaneous gesture as inherently worthwhile.
73. R. I. Unterman, "Dargot shel kedimah be-Hazalot Nefashot, be-Pidyon Shevuyim u-be-Halva'ah le-fi ha-Halakhah," in *Yad Shaul*, memorial volume for R. Shaul Weingart (Tel Aviv, 5713), 56-61.
74. *Or Yehezkel* on *middot*, 216-220.
75. See Dov Katz, *Tenu'at ha-Musar* Vol. 3, 138-139, Vol. 5 (Tel Aviv, 5723), 167-168.
76. R. Aharon Levine, *Responsa Avnei Hefez* (Munich, 1948), 31.
77. Responsa of R. Solomon Ibn Aderet, 1:#18, #254.
78. Responsa *Seridei Eish*, 2:#46.
79. Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *Journal of Philosophy* 83 (August, 1976): 443-66.
80. See Coleridge's poem, "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement," in *The Portable Coleridge*, ed. I. A. Richards (New York, 1971), 67-69.
81. *Yo'ez Kayyam Kaddish, Siah Sarfei Kodesh*, 84, no. 278.
82. R. Hayyim Shmuelevitz, *Sihot Musar* (Israel, 1980) Pt. I, ch. 17.
83. R. A. Y. Kareliz, *Hazon Ish, Taharot* (Bnei Brak, 1974), 299.
84. *Torat Avraham*, 78-81.
85. R. Yaakov Sofer, *Kaf ha-Ḥayyim, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 685:29*.
86. See *Be'ur ha-Gra, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 8:1, s.v. va-yevarekh*.
87. R. Shelomoh Alkabez, *Manot ha-Levi*, commentary on *Esther 9:21-22*.
88. R. M. A. Amiel, *Derashot el Ammi*, Vol. 3, *Derashah 14*, 138-139 (Antwerp, 1929).
89. *Meshekh Ḥokhmah, Shemot 12:16*.
90. R. M. A. Amiel, *Hegyonot el Ammi*, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 5696), 93. The translation is by the author.
91. *Orot ha-Kodesh*, 3:2.
92. *Iggerot ha-Ra'ayah*, 1, p. 45. The translation is taken from Michael Nehorai, "Halakhah, Metahalakhah and the Redemption of Israel: The Rabbinic Rulings of Rav Kook," trans. Jon Levisohn, in *Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and*

- Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Lawrence J. Kaplan and David Shatz (New York, 1995), 149.
93. On R. Kook's views on ethics, see R. Yehudah Amital, "The Significance of Rav Kook's Teaching for Our Generation" and Yoel ben Nun, "Nationalism, Humanity and Knesset Yisrael" in *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*, ed. B. Ish-Shalom and S. Rosenberg, trans. Shalom Carmy and Bernard Casper (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 423-35 and 207-54 respectively.
 94. R. Kook frequently employs the term "natural morality." The term "natural" does not exclude the need for cultivating moral feelings, but rather indicates an autonomous ethic rather than an ethic wholly defined by explicit Divine commands.
 95. *Orot ha-Kodesh*, vol. 3, *rosh davar*, 27. The translation is taken from *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*, 423.
 96. *Orot ha-Kodesh*, 3:318. The translation is from Ben Zion Bokser, *Abraham Isaac Kook: The Lights of Penitence, The Moral Principles: Lights of Holiness, Essays, Letters and Poems* (New York, 1978), 238.
 97. *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Melakhim* 8:11.
 98. On this debate, see Eugene Korn, "Gentiles and the World to Come: The Odyssey of a Rabbinic Text," *Modern Judaism* 14 (1994): 265-87.
 99. *Iggerot ha-Ra'ayah*, 1:100.
 100. "Ahavah" in *Musar Avikha* (Jerusalem, 1985), 58, trans. in *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*, 212.
 101. *Ibid.*, 57. Trans. *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*, 212.
 102. *Orot ha-Kodesh*, 3:326.
 103. *Ibid.*, 3:316, trans. Bokser, 235-236.
 104. *Ibid.* 3:349.
 105. Adams, *The Virtue of Faith* (Oxford, 1987), 126.
 106. I am not claiming that other models could not look positively on the ethical acts of atheists. I am arguing that Adams's second model leads more easily in that direction.