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Aging and the aged in Jewish law

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BEYOND METHUSELAH - WHO IS OLD?

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BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

Walter Jacob

Old age has changed for us. One of those transformations has taken place in the Western world in the twentieth century as the elderly have emerged as a class of their own with their own political and economic agenda and, when properly organized, possessed of considerable political power. This is largely the result of the economic prosperity of the West, which has led to retirement, a concept hardly known earlier. It is not altogether altruistic, since it serves to make room for the younger generation in the work place. We now face a series of social, spiritual, political, and economic issues connected with the elderly for which there is little precedent.

Twentieth-century America answers questions about who is old rather directly; contemporary documents are consistently clear on this. Our tax forms indicate that we may take a deduction if we are over 65—a small incentive to age. In many job interviews those above 55 are routinely, albeit illegally, rejected as too old. Medical research papers state that 65–75 is old; 75–85 is very old; and 85 and above is old, old. We accrue specific benefits and penalties by age.

Can the *Halakhah* and Jewish tradition help us? Do they provide definitions and a status for the elderly? We must remember that the traditional texts concern themselves principally with men; women were considered old after menopause. A number of references later in this paper and a responsum in the section presented in this volume discuss menopause. The aggadic literature provides some additional views of older women through its treatment of biblical figures, but that lies beyond the purview of this paper. Not a

bad place to begin is to ask a simple question—Who is old? We shall start with the Bible.

WHO IS OLD IN THE BIBLE?

How does our biblical tradition define age? A cursory reading of Genesis will recall the grand ages of Methuselah as 969 and the rest of his generation (Jered, 962; Seth, 912; and Enosh, 905) without a word of explanation. These ages are slightly more realistic than the tens of thousands of years attributed to some Babylonian figures, but that hardly helps us. We do not know what those numbers mean, but they continue with the patriarchs, who also reached remarkable, but declining, ages: Abraham, 175 (Gen. 25:7); Sarah, 127 (Gen. 23:1); Isaac, 180 (Gen. 35:28; “old and full of days,” 35:29); Rebekah, 133, 143, or 144 (*Midrash Hagadol*, pp. 388f.), 151 (Jubilees 35:27); Jacob, 147 (Gen. 47:28). For Jacob’s wives we must turn to the much later *midrash*. Old age is clearly seen as a sign of blessing. Abraham is praised for his vitality: “He died in a good old age full of years, an old man, and full of years” (Gen. 15:15; 24:1; 25:8). Jacob is confined to bed only at the very end of his life (Gen. 48:2). Moses remains vigorous to the end: “And Moses was 120 when he died; his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated” (Deut. 34:7). A few individuals are portrayed as weak in old age; King David is enfeebled toward the end of his life, but he remains in charge (1 Kings 1).

Moses sets the general pattern: at 120 he is still able to climb a mountain to his death; in our tradition 120 remains an appropriate goal when we wish someone well, although most of us would see it differently, at least when we came close. Years are a sign of

blessing, and the parade of diminishing age in early Genesis represents a biblical view that humanity has declined.

With Moses, our tradition reaches a plateau and has been there ever since. In the biblical period after Moses, only three individuals reach an age higher than 100: Job lives 140 years after his troubles (42:16), but the Talmud expresses some doubt about this (*B.B.* 15b); Johoiadah, the high priest, reaches 130 (2 Chron. 24:15); and Joshua, 110 (Josh. 24:29). None of the nineteen kings of Israel for whom ages are recorded reach 70, and many of them die much earlier. The life span mentioned by the psalmist is "three score years or by reasons of strength, four score years." In summary, we have no biblical definition of "old age." Levites are considered qualified for duty from 25 to 50 (Num. 8:23), but this service involves physical work. Twenty and upward, without a limit, is considered appropriate for military service (Num. 1:3), and 20 to 60 is given as the working life of a male or female for the sake of valuation for vows (Lev. 27:3).

DID THE BIBLE CONSIDER OLD AGE GOOD?

Only occasionally does a biblical figure question the blessing of a long life. The eighty-year old Barzillai, a member of David's household, questions his usefulness:

Now Barzillai was a very old man and he had provided sustenance while he [David] lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man. And the king said to Barzillai: "Come over with me, and I will sustain you with me in Jerusalem." And Barzillai said to the king: "How many are the days of the

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

years of my life that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day four score years old; can I discern between good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or drink? Can I hear anymore the voice of singing men or singing women? Wherefore should your servant therefore be a burden to the lord my king?"¹

The author of Ecclesiastes expresses doubt about age, as might be expected from this pessimistic book. In a poetic fashion, not easily interpreted, the author states:

Remember then your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the evil days come,
And the years draw nigh, when you will say:
"I have no pleasure in them";
Before the sun, and the light, and the moon,
And the stars, are darkened,
And the clouds return after the rain;
In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,
And the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look out shall be darkened in the windows,
And the doors shall be shut in the street,
When the sound of the grinding is low;
And one shall start up at the voice of a bird,
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;
Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high,

WALTER JACOB

And terrors shall be in the way;
And the almond-tree shall blossom,
And the grasshopper shall drag itself along,
And the caper berry shall fail;
Because man goes to his long home,
And the mourners go about the streets;
Before the silver cord is snapped asunder,
And the golden bowl is shattered,
And the pitcher is broken at the fountain,
And the wheel falleth shattered into the pit;
And the dust returns to the earth as it was,
And the spirit returns unto God who gave it.²

These lines have been seen as references to the disabilities of old age. They show a dark picture of old age that differs totally from the view of the rest of the Bible.

DOES THE BIBLE HAVE A TERMINOLOGY FOR THE AGED?

Are there special terms for the aged? Do they imply endearment or disenchantment and rejection? The most general term is *zaken*, also the word for beard. We can take it that the aged looked old; and, of course, this was a male-dominated society. *Sevah* is also used, but sparingly (nineteen times and twice with *zaken*, Gen. 25:8; Ps. 81:18). When we review *zaken* in the Bible we quickly understand that its use will not help us toward a definition of age, and often the word implies something totally different—an “elder” as a counselor, considered mature but not necessarily aged.

We must understand the “elderly” often as advisors. In the Pentateuch³ and in the subsequent books,⁴ Rehoboam, for example,

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

consults the “elders” upon ascending the throne but does not follow their advice (1 Kings 12:6–8; 2 Chron. 10:6–8). We find a class of individuals who assist Moses in the process of governing Israel in the desert. Moses appoints them on the advice of his father-in-law and, later, at God’s command, so that he would be relieved of some tasks. The people direct their requests to the advisors first and only later to Moses. We hear little of this group subsequently, and they are not designated as “elders” (Exod. 18:19ff). Actually, a similar group, designated as *z’kenim*, accompany Moses when he makes his initial presentation to the Israelites in Egypt (Exod. 4:29; 12:21), but then they are no longer mentioned.

The “elders,” as advisors, have no clearly defined role, and their role undoubtedly changes under various rulers. Sometimes the men probably fill honorific positions, and at other times they may share the royal power.

We do not know whether this designation represents a class, an age group, or both. Are they individuals with considerable political experience and so “elder” indicates maturity? or are they senior officials? Only occasionally is the specific age of an “elder” cited, as with Barzillai, whom we mentioned above and who was 80, but that tells us almost nothing.

SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR THE AGED?

When we think of traditional Judaism and the older generation we think of respect and honor. What is the basis of this? Is it correct? The long period stretching from Abraham to Ezra, well over a thousand years, should, of course, be subdivided, but it is impossible to do so with the knowledge we possess. If we general-

ize for the entire period, we can state that the Bible builds its view of the elderly into the framework of the Near East, which demanded respect and reverence, usually placed within the context of family life. That was clearly stated in the Code of Hammurabi: "If a man strikes his father, they shall cut off his forehead" (Law 195). An adopted son of a chamberlain who says, "You are not my father or my mother," they shall cut out his tongue (Law 192). There are biblical parallels: "He who curses his father or his mother shall be put to death" (Exod. 21:15ff). "Cursed be he that dishonors his father or his mother" (Deut. 27:16). This is put in a more positive fashion, "Honor your father and your mother" (Exod. 20:12), and "You shall each revere his father and his mother" (Lev. 19:3). These statements refer to all parents, including those not necessarily elderly. Mother and father are presumably to be honored while they are still quite young: the statements need to be taken more as a source of parental authority.

The long list of laws given in Leviticus deals with many subjects. There we have the statement, "You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and you shall fear your God; I am the Lord." This is the strongest biblical statement of deference toward the aged, but we are not given a definition of who are to be considered old enough to merit such treatment.

We are left in a similar position by the later biblical books, especially the Wisdom literature, which was composed over a long segment of the biblical period. Portions can be traced to Egyptian sources well before 2000 B.C.E., whereas others may have their origin in the Hellenistic World. Wisdom, *hohmah*, when personified, is a female figure and is associated with maturity.⁵ This should be of special interest to us, as the elders (*z'kenim*) are always

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

masculine and have no feminine counterpart. When the Bible speaks of familial authority and honor, however, that is provided for father and mother, both.⁶ In evoking punishment for dishonoring parents, the mother, in fact, is named first; and the rebellious son is to be appropriately punished.

In the wisdom literature, despite its feminine cloak, the picture usually invoked is “My son” and “father,” so the image of family life and the passing of traditions is from the older to the younger male (Prov. 2:1, 4:1, 5:1). In Proverbs 31, however, the son receives his instruction from his mother.

HELP FOR THE AGED IN THE BIBLE

How does the Bible deal with the elderly when they become feeble or disabled? Even the feeble aged are not listed as objects of charity. They are not included with the widow, the orphan, and the stranger.⁷ These three categories are frequently mentioned and become standard, but the aged are never added to them. Old age is not considered a disability, and the aged are not seen as needy.

When King Asa is pictured as old, his diseased feet, presumably caused by gout, are mentioned. He seeks the help of physicians rather than God and then dies (1 Kings 15:23–24; 2 Chron. 16:12). This is the only medical treatment of the aged the Bible mentions.

As we review the biblical period, we can state that age is honored, and the older generation, not necessarily aged, is often in a position of authority. Age is a sign of blessing, but death at a young age is not necessarily attributed to sin.

Scripture contains no complete biographies and only a few that come close; after the events in which the biblical narrator is interested are over, its heroes simply disappear from view until their death. Unlike the ancient Egyptians, birthdays, even those of long-reigning kings, are not celebrated or even mentioned. Although age is considered a blessing, little is made of it with most of the biblical heroes, so we do not know the ages of the various prophets or other biblical figures.

Though the Torah is not shy about presenting precise age definitions on various occasions, it feels no need to do so for the aged. The aged don't represent a special category, we don't know when a person is considered "old," and we don't have any minimal age for those who are to be grouped as "the elders" (*z'kenim*). Retirement or abdication due to age is unknown in the Bible.

The disabilities of age are rarely mentioned, and no need to provide special care for the elderly seems felt. The aged appear to be part of a family that looks after them.

We can conclude that the elderly in the biblical period do not represent a class or special group. They remain part of the general population; they receive respect, but as that is mentioned only once, it does not seem to be an issue. The fact that the term for advisor and elder is the same reflects in both directions. On the one hand, it indicates that the advisors may, at times, be old; and on the other hand, it shows that respect is due to younger advisors also.

RESPECT FOR THE AGED IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

We should also briefly look at the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. These books are often difficult to date but were written in

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

the period from 300 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. In this literature we find elders discussed but not in a way significantly different from the way they are in the Bible.

In 1 Maccabees, we find that Mattathias dies in his 146th or 148th year, undoubtedly an effort to provide him with status equal to that of the patriarchs (1 Maccabees 2:69). Judith, the heroine of her book, lives to 105 (Judith 15:23). Wisdom of Solomon deals with early deaths and states that they need not be seen as a sign of unrighteousness (4:7) but gives no specific years. Ben Sirach deals with the aged more than any other apocryphal book. Many statements are introduced by "my son" (6:7, et al.). Children are to heed their father and mother (3:1ff.) but without reference to age, as are statements about honoring parents (7:27). The aged father is to be helped (3:12), and the advice of the aged is not to be rejected (8:9). Again, no specific ages are cited.

In the tale of Susanna, the elders play a major role, but their age is never specified. As these men were appointed as judges, the designation may simply indicate maturity. Later pictures that show them as old men reflect the artist's imagination, not the text (1:5).

The Mishnah, largely a product of the Hellenistic period, may show some influence of the Greek and Roman world. In that world, elders remain in a position of authority and at times hold considerable power; some say this is especially true of parents, who retained complete authority over their children well into adult life. As one looks at the details of Jewish law, however, both in the Mishnah and in the later Talmud, one can see that the power granted parents is not akin to Roman law. Children owe honor and reverence to the aged and have the obligation to care for parents.

Parents do not have control over the estates or other assets of their children, however, nor do they govern their economic life as within the Roman system. This was never part of Jewish law. If we look at the place of the older generation in the tanaïtic and later amoraic literature, we find older parents continuing to occupy positions of honor and limited power.

We might expect a discussion of old age when the Mishnah deals with the priesthood, particularly the High Priest. Could an aged priest continue to function? This question is not raised. We do hear of the need to keep a sleepy High Priest awake during the night of *Yom Kippur* (*M. Yoma* 1.7), but this is not related to age. A priest who has defiled himself has to be removed from his duties,⁸ but nothing is said of retirement. Blemished and presumably aged priests continue to be supported, whereas those who have defiled themselves are not (*M. Zev* 102a). In some playful discussion of old age, years are not specified (*M. Kid* 4.14). An "old woman" is defined as one for whom "three periods had passed without any flow" (*M. Nid* 1.5), whereas in other places "an old woman" is left undefined.⁹

The term *zaken* describes mature individuals appointed as judges in the court system. Judges hand down their decisions in capital cases with the oldest speaking last (*M. San* 3.2). The judges sit in front, with qualified students arranged behind them to be called if a judge became disqualified, but nothing is said about age (*M. San* 3.4).

When *Pirkei Avot* mentions "elders" it refers to leaders (1.1), as also in *Yoma* (1.3; 1.5) and *Sotah* (9.1). In *Pirkei Avot* two statements juxtapose youth and age:

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

R. José, the son of Judah, of Kephah Babli, said "He who learns from the young, to what is he like? To one who eats unripe grapes or drinks wine from the vat. And he who learns from the old, to what is he like? To one who eats ripe grapes, or drinks old wine." Meir said, "Look not at the flask, but at what it contains: there may be a new flask full of old wine, and an old flask that has not even new wine in it."¹⁰

Both authorities agree that the person, not the years matter. A later section of this chapter, however, divides life into specific periods:

He (Judah ben Tema) used to say: At five years old [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years for the *Mishnah*, at thirteen for [the fulfilling of] the commandments, at fifteen for the *Talmud*, at eighteen for the bride-chamber, at twenty for pursuing [a calling], at thirty for authority, at forty for discernment, at fifty for counsel, at sixty for to be an elder, at seventy for grey hairs, at eighty for special strength, at ninety for bowed back, and at a hundred a man is as one that has [already] died and passed away and ceased from the world. Sixty here was considered old, but life went on and no ailments were noted until 90 and 100.¹¹

Age and sickness are occasionally equated.¹² When the death of a series of scholars is mentioned, along with some accomplishments, ages are not given (*M. Sotah* 9.15).

The inscriptions on the Hellenistic and Roman Jewish tombs have not provided sufficient data to enable us to draw any conclusions. Egyptian mummies from various periods to Roman times demonstrate that the average life span of the common people rarely exceeded thirty years.

We can conclude from this very brief survey that the status of the elderly during this four-hundred-year period remained high; that age was not connected with disability; and that old age remained undefined.

THE TALMUDIC PERIOD

Honor for parents and the obligation to support them both fiscally and psychologically was thoroughly discussed in the talmudic period but without any definition of age.¹³ There are some interesting developments in this literature. We find extensive discussions of the elevated position of elders, principally in the role of judges. A system of judges from the lower courts to the higher is outlined in some detail in *Sanhedrin*. Appointments were made from a lower court to the higher courts according to ability and maturity. The great *Sanhedrin* of seventy made major decisions and was a legislative body. Individuals moved through the ranks by demonstrating their acumen and understanding of the law. No maximum ages are given and no one retired, although if someone "too old" made an incorrect decision, he was not liable for his error (*Hor* 1.4).

The Talmud also recognizes the power of the elderly through a thorough discussion of the rebellious "elder" (*Deut.* 17:12), a matter also discussed in later legal literature. The *zaken mamre* is

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

someone unwilling to defer to the majority decision made through due deliberation; he continues to teach and act according to his own decision and refuses to bow to the will of the majority.¹⁴ Again, we are provided with no definition of age, so we must consider this status as applying to any mature adult. Punishment for such rebelliousness theoretically had to be severe; the death penalty could be invoked, although there is a great deal of discussion of whether it should actually be carried out, as other punishments might be more appropriate. The discussions also concern the question of whether the expression of contrary opinions is enough to be declared "rebellious" or are actions and possibly the incitement to acts by others necessary before punishment can be contemplated. Should such individuals perhaps be considered as sectarians or among those who had rejected Judaism and/or God?

For our purposes, we should note that the rebellious "elder," an older or mature advisor or teacher was considered dangerous; this demonstrates the potential for power within a portion of the older or mature population. Any adult in a position of authority might be so designated.

The talmudic academies that produced the ruling stratum of Jewish society in this period were governed by a group of senior scholars. The apogee of the Jewish semiautonomous community was the Exilarch, an appointee of the Persian government. Age was not a prerequisite for appointment: a few Exilarchs remained in the position until quite old. We also know of some later Gaonic scholars who reached their eighties and nineties and continued to work. The term "elder" is used as earlier to designate community leaders who occupied positions of power. This designation conveys maturity, not necessarily old age.

A long life was considered a blessing; the disabilities, pains, and problems of old age were ignored. That was equally true of later literature in which disabilities were rarely discussed. After the age of forty, however, remedies for ailments might no longer be effective (*San.* 151b). Old age and illness are occasionally identified.¹⁵ The elderly in a traditional Jewish context are seen as healthy, active, mentally and physically alert, and functioning in their chosen field of work. The latter should not strike us as strange, since retirement is a recent innovation, always an option for the wealthy but not for the vast majority, who worked until it was no longer physically or mentally possible.

In *Mo'ed Katan*, when death is discussed, we have some speculation about the significance of an early and a late death:

If one dies [under] fifty year [old]—that is death by *karet*, at fifty-two years—that is the death of Samuel of Ramah; at sixty—that is by the hand of Heaven. (Said Mar Zutra: What is the text [for this]? *You shall come to your grave* in ripe age, as the [numerical value of the] word for “in ripe age” yields sixty.) At seventy, it is the death of the hoary head; at eighty it is the death of a vigorous [old man], for it is written, *The days of our years are three score and ten, or even by reason of strength four score years*. Said Rabbah, From fifty to sixty years [of age], that is death by *karet*, and the reason why this has not been mentioned was out of deference for [the prophet] Samuel of Ramah. R. Joseph, on his attaining the age of sixty, made a festival day for the Rabbis [of the Academy] saying, “I have just

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

passed beyond [the limit of] *karet*." Said Abaye to him: "Granted, Sir, that you have passed the [limit of] *karet* as to years, but as to the [limit of sickening] days have you escaped that?" He replied: "Nevertheless, hold on to the half." Huna's soul went into repose suddenly, and the Rabbis [of the academy] were perturbed [thereat] when Zoga, who hailed from Adiabene, taught them: What we learned applied only when one has not attained the "age of strength" [eighty] but if one has attained the "age of strength" [eighty] a sudden death is dying by the kiss.

Raba said: [Length of] life, children and sustenance depend not on merit but [rather on] *mazal*. For [take] Rabbah and R. Hisda. Both were saintly Rabbis; one master prayed for rain and it came, the other master prayed for rain and it came. R. Hisda lived to the age of ninety-two. Rabbah lived [only] to the age of forty. In R. Hisda's house there were held sixty marriage feasts, at Rabbah's house there were sixty bereavements. At R. Hisda's house there was the purest wheaten bread for dogs, and it went to waste; at Rabbah's house there was barley bread for human beings and that not be had. This, too, Raba said: These three requests I made of Heaven; two were granted me and one was not. [I prayed for] the scholarship of R. Huna and the wealth of R. Hisda, which were granted me; but the modest disposition of Rabbah son of R. Huna, that was not granted me"¹⁶

The rabbinic period adds a bit to our discussion of a definition of old age. We have some discussions of the blessings of age, but along midrashic lines. This is done playfully, without too much serious thought. Although there are potential legal implications owing to the disabilities of aging in the Temple ritual, the court system, and family law, they are largely ignored. We do not find the precise, well-debated limits in the area of aging found so often elsewhere.

The elderly are to be given respect, but much more is made of the honor due teachers and parents. We have a general picture of familial stability in which the older generation continues to function as part of the family and community.

LATER HALAKHIC LITERATURE

The broad pattern the Talmud sets is followed by the later legal literature. The elderly are never discussed as a class in the responsa or in the numerous codes. Honor due parents is defined, and economic as well as various kinds of psychological support are enumerated. The specific decisions reflect the economic and social circumstances of the communities in each age and society, but no significant change takes place.

Maimonides and others who followed understood that a system that encourages respect and reverence for parents as well as elders assures communal stability and the authority of the *Halakhah*. Throughout the medieval period the *zaken mamre* is considered a nuisance, and sometimes a danger, to the Jewish community. This is probably due both to external pressures and to internal rivalries; the *zaken mamre* is discussed more frequently than any

BEYOND METHUSELAH—WHO IS OLD?

other type of elderly person, with references in the responsa literature of every century. The person so designated is not a heretic or an agnostic; other terms are used for such men. The *zaken mamre* remains part of the observant community but disagrees loudly and persistently in some practical or theoretical matters.

The medieval responsa literature does not add to the understanding of the aged in our tradition. It continues the thoughts provided by the talmudic discussions and amplifies them.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Our tradition may help us to a different understanding of the aged. It feels no need for exact definitions and does not segregate the elderly into a separate class that has lost its usefulness to society. The Talmudic tradition sees involvement and learning as continuous throughout life. The value placed on the *zaken* as an advisor indicates that maturity, along with the ability to function, is the measure of continued activity. The fear of the *zaken mamre* demonstrates that it is better to have this able individual within rather than outside the boundaries of the community.

The respect accorded the elderly, parents, and teachers helps promote a stable society. We would, of course, consider the thoughts of the past to apply equally to men and to women. The ambiguity of our tradition on the important question of defining the elderly may actually be helpful, encouraging us, as it does, to be equally flexible.

Notes

1. 2 Samuel 19:33.
2. Ecclesiastes 12:1-7.
3. Genesis 50:7—Egyptian; Exodus 4:29; 12:21; Leviticus 4:15; Numbers 11:16; 22:4 Moabites or Midianites.
4. Joshua 20:4; Judges 11:9; 1 Samuel 11:3; 2 Samuel 17:4; 15; 19:12; 1 Kings 8:3; Jeremiah 29:1; 2 Chronicles 5:2; Ruth 4:4; Ezra 10:14.
5. Proverbs 1:20-33; 8:3-36; 9:1-6; Job 28:12.
6. "Do not despise your mother who is old," Proverbs 23:22.
7. Exodus 22:20ff; Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 26:12; Isaiah 1:17, 23; Jeremiah 7:6; 22:3; 146:9; Zachariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5.
8. *M. Yoma* 1.1; *M. Zev* 12.1; *Sifra Emor* 3.
9. *M. Kel* 24.16; 28.9; 29.1.
10. *Pirkei Avot* 4.20.
11. *Avot*. 5.24.
12. *M. Git.* 3.3; *M.*
13. *Kid.* 30a ff; *Hul.* 110b; *Ket.* 49b; etc.
14. *M. San* 11.2; *San.* 14b; 88b; *Yad Hil Sanhedrin* 5.1ff; Solomon b. Aderet, *Responsa* 1.10; 2.32; Simon ben Zemah of Duran, *Responsa* 2.4.
15. *Arakhin* 19a; *Shab.* 106b.
16. *Moed Kat.* 28a.

Devoted to the memory of Marcus Letter and Maxine Goldmark Jacob, and in honor of their children, who inspired, renewed, and loved them.

Section 1. The Board of Education of the State of Texas, created by Chapter 100, Acts of the 49th Legislature, Regular Session, 1925, is hereby reorganized and its powers and duties are defined as follows: (a) The Board shall consist of nine members, to be appointed by the Governor, one from each congressional district, and one from the State at Large. The members shall hold office for a term of four years, and shall be eligible for reappointment. The Board shall meet at such times and places as it may determine, and shall have the power to adjourn from time to time and to reconvene at such times and places as it may determine.

(b) The Board shall have the honor and privilege of the Senate of the State of Texas, and shall be entitled to such other honors and privileges as may be granted by the Legislature. The Board shall have the right to call and receive before it any person who may have information concerning the administration of the public schools, and to examine and take testimony under oath, and to administer oaths. The Board shall have the right to subpoena and receive before it any person who may have information concerning the administration of the public schools, and to examine and take testimony under oath, and to administer oaths.

(c) The Board shall have the right to make and alter the rules and regulations governing the conduct of its business, and to enforce the same. The Board shall have the right to make and alter the rules and regulations governing the conduct of its business, and to enforce the same. The Board shall have the right to make and alter the rules and regulations governing the conduct of its business, and to enforce the same.

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Approved: _____