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בטח בה' ועשה טוב "Trust to God, and do what is right." Psalms.

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## THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF RICE AND PULSE DURING PASSOVER—MODERN RABBINISM.

THAT the numberless and thickly twined fences with which modern Rabbinitism has hedged in the true law of God, have contributed more to its violation than to its conservation; that, moreover, "the precept upon precept, line upon line," with which a blind zeal, and an excessively refined piety have overburdened the commandment of the Lord, "which is pure, enlightening the eyes;" that these thousands of additional restrictions and prohibitions have engendered the innumerable sects into which Israel is, alas! now divided; that these thousands of hedges, which modern ultra-orthodoxy endeavours to maintain, instead of preserving "the vineyard of the Lord," have led to its decay—are truths which we do not borrow from the traducers of the Talmud, who read it with the object of indiscriminately condemning it, and of foisting upon us other traditions more absurd than those they reject, but they are truths which are forced upon us by an anxious solicitude for maintaining the integrity of, and enhancing the respect for, the testimony of the Lord, "which maketh wise the simple," and for purging the golden principles of our sacred law from that superabundance of dross, with which modern Rabbinitism has alloyed it, which has dimmed the brilliancy of its light, and which has caused many a one, whose mind could not or was not permitted to cleanse the precious metal from the spurious, to abandon the heritage of his fathers in disgust, and to waste his last days in indifferentism and infidelity. These are truths which are urged upon us by our very desire to prevent that apostasy from our faith which the missionaries of conversion seek to justify, with great plausibility, by the endless and frequently senseless additions inflicted by modern Rabbinitism; these are truths with which every one who has imbibed the unalloyed principles of true Judaism, and who feels an ardent love for its statutes, must be deeply impressed.

These reflections are painfully pressed upon us by a recent proclamation, posted at the doors of our London Synagogues, prohibiting the use of rice for food during Passover; and by the prohibition of baking מצות on the middle days (חול המועד) of the Festival. Let us now examine both prohibitions.

Our Chief Rabbi and his coadjutors know as well as we do, that the prohibition of eating rice during the Passover is of

modern—very modern date; they know as well as we do, that there are as many (if not more) Rabbinical authorities in favour of eating it as there are against it; they know as well as we do, that the Sephardim, or Portuguese Jews (and surely they cannot all be condemned as heretics) have from times immemorial used rice and pulse as food during Passover. Notwithstanding these convictions on the mind of the Chief Rabbi and the silent members of our Ecclesiastical Court, they turn a deaf ear to the loud demands of an emergency which arose this season through the scarcity of potatoes, and every other vegetable food, in direct opposition to their Portuguese brethren, their next door neighbours, upon whom they partly look as their seniors, and whom they strictly follow in the laws of commencing the Sabbath; and they issue a proclamation, prohibiting such a kind of food, as, being very cheap and nutritious, would have satisfied the wants of our poorer classes, who are destitute of the means of providing expensive food during nine days for their families.

2. Our Chief Rabbi and his court know as well as we do, that although it is prohibited to bake מצות on חול המועד, as such naturally produces also חמץ, yet, that the eating of חמץ which, when מצות are scarce, must naturally be apprehended, is a more serious transgression than the harbouring of חמץ. Yet, notwithstanding this conviction, and in spite of the numerous applications of the Jewish bakers, who had sold all their stock, in spite of the cries of the people, "give us bread, that we may live and not die," it was prohibited to bake מצות, because one baker happened to have some left; and it was alleged, (which turned out to be untrue) that he had sufficient to supply all the demands of the poor people, who, in fact, had to provide food for two days more.

And what was the consequence of these prohibitions? were they both strictly observed? was their effect a salutary one? Certainly not. We can tell our Ecclesiastical Court, and we are ready to prove it, that in numerous cases, the poor people, who had not the means of purchasing מצות on חול המועד, bought rice; and, convinced of the justness of their case, publicly admitted their having violated the law of the proclamation. Nay, more, we are grieved to say it, but it is nevertheless a fact, which the Beth-din may learn upon inquiry, that many poor people in Middlesex-street and the vicinity, not having the means of paying the exorbitant prices demanded for the מצות on חול המועד, and because of the entire consumption of all the stock in hands of the one baker previous to the 4th day of חול המועד, were compelled to eat חמץ during the latter days.

Our London ecclesiastical authorities may, perhaps, in vindication of their proceedings, reply, "We are bound to abide by the Minhag Ashkenas, which prohibits the use of rice and pulse, nor have we any precedent for the permission of baking מצות on חול המועד." We are prepared to refute both.

As regards the latter, we respectfully remind our Ecclesiastical Court, that no longer than three years ago, when a scarcity of מצות prevailed, the German Beth-din, in conjunction with that of the Portuguese, did permit the baking of מצות on חול המועד. This is an undeniable fact, and speaks for itself.

As regards the former, we also reply with the fact, that the Rev. Dr. Frankel, Chief Rabbi of Dresden, as well as