

JUDAISM - A PERSONAL VIEW

In our age of confidence in the literal, the quantifiable and the scientific, and skepticism about the intuitive, the moral and the spiritual, religion has a difficult time defending its case. Within the broad spectrum of approaches to Judaism today, however, I believe that a thinking person in the 21st century can find a comfortable home. As one at the liberal end of the Reform Jewish scale, I hope to demonstrate why.

Even the least sentimental and imaginative individuals find a need for form and structure in their lives, for goals toward which they can aim, for standards by which they can measure their progress. Many wrestle with questions about the meaning and purpose of life; at the end of the day, they seek a philosophic underpinning for their actions more satisfying than nihilism, the cult of nothingness.

They respond to the aesthetic and emotional impact of ritual and incantation at life's important junctures — birth, death, marriage; and they take satisfaction and comfort in identification with something larger and more significant than self-serving activities. Awed by the Parthenon, Chartres Cathedral, or the Kamakura Buddha, dazzled by Bach's B Minor Mass or Handel's Messiah, they recognize the impact of religious inspiration. God's finger approaching Adam's on the Sistine Chapel ceiling moves everyone.

Yes, superstition, wishful thinking, and traditional practices whose origins are long forgotten are part of all religions. Thoughtful adherents of all faiths select those which they accept, reject, or choose to ignore.

Most who identify themselves as religious believe in some form

of Divine Revelation, with varying degrees of personal mystical experience. Others, like the Deists, believe that spirituality and reverence do not necessarily require the existence of a personal God.

Between fundamentalists who feel they know what the Creator said to whom, where, and when, and those who ponder the Unmoved Mover or Uncaused Cause that preceded the universe's Big Bang, there is a broad range.

For those who consider themselves Jews, a particular cluster of attitudes and mindsets, a body of customs and traditions and a characteristic way of looking at life have been a source of philosophic and emotional support over the ages; as an individual, I feel comfortable with that identification.

Theoretically, each of us is born with a clean slate and consciously chooses a religious orientation. In practice, Baptists are the children of Baptists, Buddhists are the children of Buddhists, and Jews say that birth automatically enrolls one in their faith.

By the act of Bat or Bar Mitzvah, however, a youngster on the brink of maturity consciously stands before family and friends and announces a personal desire to become a member of the congregation.

In my case, a liberal Reform rabbi presented a concept of Judaism as a compelling moral and ethical code conveyed by eloquent allegories and metaphors, by beautiful and moving ceremonies, and by life-enhancing practices consistent with human reason. What was communicated to me was the vision of a well-lived life, and I accepted that view without reservation.

In a post-Enlightenment world, however, we should try to understand the "why," as well as the "what," of our beliefs and by reason or rationalization, that effort should be rewarding.

Many religions focus on life after death; liberal Judaism concerns itself with life before death. A sense of "here-ness" and "now-ness" and "ought-to-ness" pervades Jewish thinking. The sage Hillel expressed it in his questions, "If I am not for myself, who is for me? If I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?"

Some religions see salvation granted to those with ‘appropriate’ religious faith or those blessed by God-given grace; liberal Judaism emphasizes acts over beliefs. You are what you do; and Jews believe unequivocally in “free will,” which permits you to be precisely the kind of person you wish to be.

Some religions feel that salvation is possible only for their believers; Judaism believes that anyone — regardless of religious belief — who lives morally will “share in the world to come.” Judaism has no equivalent of “extra Ecclesiam nulla salus” (outside the Church there is no Salvation) and no predestined “saved” or “damned.” There is no Jewish equivalent of Jonathan Edwards’ sermon, “Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God.”

“Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place?” asks the Book of Psalms. “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and hath not sworn deceitfully.” In another formulation, the prophet Micah asks, “What doth the Lord require of thee?” and the answer echoes over the millennia, “To do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with thy God.”

Other religions believe that God created a world to which we must adjust; Judaism believes that God created the world but deliberately did not finish it so that mankind could help Him finish it. *Tikun Olam* — “repairing the world” — is a responsibility for each of us. Some interpret this as a call to improve the lot of all mankind, some, as a challenge to be the best individual one can. (“The nightingale sings to the world; the skylark sings to her nest. Who is there among us who can say which song is best?”)

Many religions have multiple dogmas and mandatory core beliefs; liberal Judaism gives individuals leeway on most issues, except for the general acceptance of our relationship to God. As Hillel said, “Do not do unto others what you do not wish them to do unto you. That is the Law; the rest is commentary. Go now and study!”

Most other religions proselytize, but Judaism has not been a missionary faith for over fifteen hundred years and the Orthodox even try to dissuade conversion. Jews feel, however, that they have been

given a universal message to convey to the world, and that while “it is not for you to complete the task, neither are you free to stand aside from it.”

Some religions are xenophobic, hostile or suspicious of strangers. The Hebrew Testament, on the contrary, has 36 separate references to “love the stranger, for you were strangers in Egypt.” And when the patriarch Abraham welcomed strangers, he discovered they were angels in disguise.

The sanctity of human life, fundamental to Jewish thought, is expressed in the ceremonial toast “l’chaim” (“to life”), and in the belief that “saving one life is like saving the whole world.” Al Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah spokesmen claim that they will win because, “You love life, while we are unafraid of death.” We must hope that they are wrong.

Judaism's pragmatic approach to philanthropy is reflected in the “tzedakah” (“righteousness” or “justice”) of the Old Testament rather than the “caritas” (“love”) of the New Testament. Jews are called upon to do the right thing to their fellow man, whether they love him (or even like him) or not. According to Maimonides, Judaism's greatest philosopher, the highest form of charity is to help someone earn a living so as not to require further help and to maintain self-respect and independence.

Study and learning are lifelong Jewish moral imperatives; the synagogue, however modest, is a place of study and prayer. The rabbi is not an intermediary between God and the communicant, but a teacher and scholar; both teacher and student are continually learning. Continuing involvement with the community is another moral imperative; and, yes, you are your brother's keeper.

Home and child-focused family are the settings for most Jewish religious observance, particularly the Sabbath with its expressions of gratitude for what we have received. Life is a joyful experience, appropriate sex is holy (not only for procreation but also to cement the relationship between husband and wife). Jews are admonished that in the afterlife they will be held accountable for every legitimate pleasure and delight

that God put on earth of which they did not take advantage.

Asceticism and self-denial have little place in Jewish spirituality; community is built upon the willingness to let the “I” be shaped by the “we”; education is seen as a conversation between the generations. Jews traditionally see themselves as heirs of those who came before and guardians of those who come after, with that attitude reflected in the story of the old man planting a sapling by the roadside with the comment, “I plant for my children as my father planted for me.”

Yiddish, the colloquial mixture of German and Hebrew that served as the common tongue of Eastern European Jews, gives insights into the character of its speakers. For example, just as “fair play” exists only in English, “joie de vivre” only in French and “schadenfreude” only in German, so the phrase “schepping nachas” (delighting in the success of others) reflects Jewish values.

In addition to the Torah, which Ultra-Orthodox Jews consider the literal word of God, the Talmud—clearly the work of man—plays an important role in the codification of Jewish practice. With its commentaries (and commentaries on commentaries), the Talmud is Judaism’s effort to interpret and make accessible the sometimes opaque, gnomic, sometimes harsh literal statements of the Torah.

Differing interpretations of religious texts are highly valued, and to this day Talmudic students study the opposing views of the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai.

Judaism is a religion in which human beings talk to, argue with and remonstrate with God, as Abraham did before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Argument (called “pilpul,” or pepper) is the primary form of religious discourse—Rabbi “X” says this; Rabbi “Y” says that; what do you think? The Passover Seder emphasizes “The Four Questions.”

Talmudic commentaries are sometimes wise, sometimes disputes about questions the non-Orthodox would consider trivial. For centuries, however, these exercises have sharpened the minds and focused the insights of generations of students. Albert Einstein, asked how Jewish students flooded the German universities of the 19th century

shortly after Napoleon released them from the isolation of the ghetto, replied, "They had been preparing for their entrance examinations for centuries."

At every Bat or Bar Mitzvah, proud parents and family wait expectantly for the child to discuss the day's biblical text with some fresh insight, some thoughtful comment that displays a creative mind. If Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, perhaps some Nobel prizes have been won at the Bar Mitzvah pulpit.

Experience shows that observance of religious rituals bears no relationship to morality or ethics. Taliban fanatics are not better parents, neighbors or citizens than their secular Muslim neighbors. The same is true of the Haredi (Ultra Orthodox Jews). I think of myself not as a "lax" Orthodox Jew but as one trying to be an "authentic" Reform Jew.

Of course, there are questions:

- Is Judaism a universal religion or a tribal cult?
- Must an ethic and a moral system be based on Divine Revelation, or can it be based on logic and experience?
- How do we account for evil and for the suffering of innocents if a personal God is both omniscient and omnipotent?
- What do we know of life after death, about which the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) says almost nothing?
- Is thoughtful meditation as acceptable as prayer to a personal God?

Jewish tradition provides some replies, but some questions (such as those raised by the Book of Job or by the Holocaust) we pass in silence. Maimonides states that there is much we do not know and cannot know because we are as unable to read God's mind as a blind person is to imagine the color blue.

Contemplating the fate of the Hittites or the Philistines, the followers of Zeus or Jupiter, and others over the centuries, even skeptical Jews may wonder what distinguishes them from so many others. Some

aspects of the Judaic tradition must be so life-enhancing, or have such survival value, or encourage a tenacious communal bonding.

All religions share basic elements — a doctrine concerning God and man and the universe; a moral code for the individual and for society; a regimen of ritual and custom; laws; sacred literature; institutions; and worshippers.

Judaism, in addition, is a religion of memory. It has a sense of history, a distinctive language, and a memory of location that, without parallel in world history, have “brought them home.” Two millennia after their political state was swept away, their Temple twice destroyed, their priesthood dissolved and their population dispersed, Jews scattered across the face of the earth still ponder the Jewish experience and reflect on where we have been, where we are and where we are going.

The sense of “chosenness” mentioned in the Hebrew Bible is considered by Jews as a call for us to set an example, to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” and “a light unto the nations.” Since God used the Jewish people as His vehicle for communicating His will, Jews feel that more is expected of them.

As to why God chose the Jews specifically, Maimonides said merely that we do not know. Some jokes suggest that after the Jewish experience of the last four millennia, it may be time for Him to choose someone else. In reply to the rhyme, however, “How odd of God to choose the Jews,” someone wrote, “It isn’t odd; the Jews chose God.”

The various branches of Judaism comprise:

ORTHODOXY (which claims to be the most authentic transmitter of the faith), whose approaches range from Ultra-Orthodox (such as those who oppose the State of Israel because men, not God, created it) to Modern Orthodox, who reflect a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between tradition and Biblical injunctions on the one hand and the exigencies of the modern world on the other.

By and large, however, the Orthodox accept the Torah’s 613 commandments by which a good Jew should live, including those called “Hukim,” for which no known reason is discernible, but which they follow as an act of faith; many are silent about those commandments

(such as ones relating to animal sacrifice, smiting the Amalekites, living in agrarian society, etc.) which have lost relevance. In Orthodox practice, women are precluded from participation in much ritual observance and cannot join the Rabbinates; and acceptable co-religionists include only those stemming from Jewish matrilineal descent or from the demanding Orthodox formal conversion.

Ultra-Orthodoxy requires detailed observance of prayer, clothing, dietary restrictions and household practices that are difficult to follow in modern life and whose relevance has been questioned by other Jews. Modern Orthodox identify with Hebrew tradition and theology without feeling the need to dress like 18th century Polish nobles, or to follow many other Ultra-Orthodox practices.

The 93% of American Jews who are not strictly Orthodox regard the Orthodox in varying lights; but the disproportionately large political power the Orthodox wield in Israel (because of its parliamentary system) and the intransigence of Ultra-Orthodox views on many political questions there, are a source of concern to many other Jews. That Reform and Conservative rabbis are not permitted to perform marriages in Israel is a continuing irritant, and the Orthodox desire to control all religious conversions is another.

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM accepts many of Orthodoxy's strictures with modifications permitting adaptation to mainstream culture. It maintains that "halacha" (religious law) is open to reinterpretation. For example, the Conservative movement has in recent years accepted women into the rabbinate. Today, the movement appears to be moving in two directions, one closer to Reform practices and one back to tradition.

REFORM JUDAISM accepts the spiritual autonomy of the individual. It welcomes women as full religious participants, including membership in the rabbinate. It accepts the concept of patrilineal descent and has different requirements for conversion to Judaism. Significantly, it believes that the Hebrew Bible was written by humans, not God, and that many of its strictures (such as dietary laws) and rituals are not binding today.

RECONSTRUCTIONISM, a 20th century formulation created by Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, emphasizes Judaism's evolving cultural and communal aspects and repudiates concepts such as "choseness" and a personal messiah. Rabbi Kaplan also struggled against a supernatural view of God.

SECULAR JUDAISM is a recent development that regards Judaism as a culture rather than a theology, and reflects the growing number of unaffiliated Jews and those who identify themselves as Jewish but non-observant.

Orthodox Jews feel that they represent the prophet Isaiah's 'saving remnant' who will constitute Jewish survival, maintaining the continuity of Jewish tradition and theology. They fear that Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Secular and unaffiliated Jews are on a downhill slide to assimilation and disappearance.

Given the tone of contemporary American life, in which effortless acculturation is a fact of life and Jews have open access to the society at large, in which anti-semitism is declining and the percentage of Jewish intermarriage is over 50%, fears for Jewish continuity are not groundless. Affiliation is a matter of choice today, and some may choose "out."

Absent a virulent domestic anti-semitism which draws people together for self-protection, or the communal fervor and self-taxation called for to restore a homeland in the Holy Land, will extended periods of peace, prosperity, social acceptance and intermarriage accomplish what hatred and pogroms could not?

Is a 'circling of the wagons' exclusionary approach indicated, or should a welcoming hand be extended to the spouses and children of intermarried couples and to the unaffiliated? To maintain Jewish continuity, is renewed emphasis on traditional ritual and observance called for or is the answer adaptation to contemporary life with full acceptance of women and gays in the religious life of the community, less emphasis on ritual and more on good works, etc?

The Ultra-Orthodox approach looks inward and backward, hoping to continue the traditions of the past; the liberal approach looks

outward and forward, basing its position on the merits of its case for life enhancement.

- a) By any objective index or form of measurement, Judaism's culture helps its practitioners lead productive, satisfying and fulfilling lives;
- b) Jewish customs, traditions and religious rituals are emotionally, philosophically and aesthetically satisfying;
- c) Liberal Judaism's tenets do not run counter to the logic or experience of the 21st century mind.

The Ultra-Orthodox approach assumes perpetual "otherness" (and the presumed hostility of others), and a sense of "choseness" for obligations that cannot be dismissed. Some Orthodox, such as the Lubovitch Hasidim, believe that the Messiah may arrive shortly and human action can speed His arrival. The creation of the State of Israel is seen by some Ultra-Orthodox as an intrusion by men on the work of God, but by most Orthodox as a manifestation of Divine fulfillment.

Liberal Jews feel that Jews in an integrated, pluralistic society can be good neighbors who demonstrate their values by good works and good lives, that Jewish customs, traditions and beliefs are life-enhancing and beneficial to society.

Liberal Jews consider the State of Israel the creation of people restoring a homeland which provides a haven for oppressed Jews worldwide. They work and contribute generously toward its well-being and share its aspirations. They are concerned about its welfare and proud of its achievements, but distressed by its failings and flaws (among which is the absence of a written constitution).

American Jews of the post WWII generation identified with Israel's "founding fathers." Abba Eban, Golda Meir, and Teddy Kollek were friends and colleagues with similar outlooks and values. If American Jews today wonder how Israel's founders would regard the country's current leadership, they may also wonder how John Adams, James

Madison and Alexander Hamilton would regard the current U.S. Congress.

With every decade, however, American Jews and the Israeli public seem to be heading along different paths. American Jews are confident about the prospects of Jewish life in America, with which they identify. Many find it difficult to understand Israeli politics, and fear that modern zealots might be working against Israel's best long-term interest.

Like relatives reluctant to criticize family, American Jews often do not discuss their misgivings openly. The chief reasons are that they (and their children) are not exposed to the constant dangers Israelis face and they do not want to give comfort to Israel's enemies, who are numerous, worldwide and implacable.

Liberal and Orthodox views differ markedly in many respects. For example, whereas liberals refer to "Israel's West Bank" (real estate that can be traded for peace), the Orthodox refer to Judea and Samaria (a gift from God). The Orthodox see Israel as central to Jewish existence and consider the Diaspora as exile. The liberal American Jew sees Israel as a significant factor of Jewish life, but regards life in a sympathetic Diaspora as independently sustainable.

"By the waters of Babylon, we sat and wept," says the Psalmist. By the waters of the Hudson, this particular Jew is grateful to his ancestors who came to America, the modern "land of milk and honey," where each can "sit under his own vine and his own fig tree and none will make him afraid."

The Orthodox position holds that the Judaism which has survived for millennia should be maintained unchanged "in doing God's work." The liberal Jew says that a Judaism adapted to the exigencies of the modern world can continue because of its life-enhancing value for its believers. As a liberal Reform Jew, I note that in the past 900 years, Judaism in the ghetto or in isolation (whether enforced or self-imposed) produced little of interest to the non-Orthodox Jewish world. The mysticism and numerology of the Kabbalah, for example, which absorb many ultra Orthodox, are considered by liberal Jews in the category of astrology.

In interaction with the rest of the world, however, the 13,000,000 Jews worldwide, less than 1/5 of 1% of the world's population, have won nearly 30% of all Nobel prizes; have produced towering figures such as Einstein, Freud and Marx (Karl or Groucho, take your pick) and have contributed to western civilization, and to American cultural life in particular, out of proportion to their number.

It is true that Jews have been hated by some in the classical world, in the medieval world and in the modern world. They have been disdained by some conservatives, like T.S. Eliot, and despised by some liberals, like Voltaire. Some of the haters, like Martin Luther, hated the individuals because they would not convert; others, like the humanist Erasmus, hated what they stood for. Some of the haters are content to ostracize us socially, others to pillage and victimize us, others to try to remove us from the face of the earth.

The causes of anti-semitism in history are complex: in some cases, it is theological; in some cases, 'fear of the other' who holds himself apart; in some cases, it is demagogic, trumped-up fear of political conspiracy; often, it is resentment at Jewish success, with Jews being scapegoats for the problems or failures of others.

Traditionally forbidden to own land or to farm, Jews were hated as city dwellers; traditionally prohibited from many ways of earning a living, they were hated as money-lenders or as merchants and peddlers.

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler charged Jews with being a biologically inferior race who were defiling Germany's superior Aryan race and succeeding in life by unfair means. At the time, Jews were 1% of the German public, but 16% of German lawyers, 10% of German doctors and dentists, 17% of German bankers, and 10% of the musicians in the Berlin Philharmonic. The Jews' passion for education and their exclusion from other fields of endeavor were ignored. Jews also won a disproportionately high number of Iron Crosses in the German Army in World War I. And in Austria, where Hitler was raised, the percentage of Jews in the arts, sciences, and professions was even higher than in Germany.

Self-hate and self-mockery, which usually reflect the internalization of others' disdain, are recurring facts of Jewish life. Throughout history, some of the worst anti-Semites have been of Jewish descent—Torquemada of the Spanish Inquisition, Pfefferkorn in medieval Germany, and many, many others.

In New Left circles in Europe and America today, many anti-Semitic Jews can be distinguished from those merely critical of specific Israeli policies or actions by the “Three D’s”—Demonization of everything Israeli; Double Standards applied to Israel in the international arena; and Delegitimization of the Israeli state.

Self-deprecating Jewish humor is a healthier response to anti-Jewish feeling. For example, Vice Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater replied, when denied access to a ‘restricted’ golf course, “Can I play the first nine, since I am only half Jewish?” or Groucho Marx’s comment “I wouldn’t want to belong to any club that would have me as a member.” When faced with negative feelings about Jews, I recall Benjamin Disraeli’s reply to Daniel O’Connell’s attack on his ancestry: “When the ancestors of the right honorable gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon.”

The recrudescence of international anti-semitism, expressed in such madness as Holocaust denial, I find bewildering and cannot explain. The fact that a significant portion of the American public does not accept Darwin’s theory of evolution or that millions throughout the world still believe the CIA or the Israelis were responsible for the Twin Towers bombing on 9/11, I also cannot explain.

The sad fact is that Jew hatred has existed, does exist and probably will continue to exist, so long as paranoia, envy, resentment and a need for scapegoats and rationalizations for personal or group failure exist. American Black anti-Semitism, in light of consistent Jewish pro-Black support, and current anti-Semitism in Japan, where there are no Jews, are puzzling.

On balance, it is better to be resented for success than pitied for failure; and Jews have traditionally done well thanks to cultural pat-

terns that exalt education, curiosity, independent thinking and competitive achievement.

Are there downsides to traditional Jewish culture? If the ancient Greeks' morally dysfunctional heroes and their lustful, violent and duplicitous gods and goddesses are quintessentially non-Jewish, so, too, are the Greek sense of balance and "moderation in all things" and the Renaissance gentleman's code of graceful, effortless achievement. Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* advocated 'sprezzatura' and thought it bad form to try too hard, but the Vilna Gaon and other prominent rabbis were proud of their exhausting twelve hour days of study and debate.

Plato and Aristotle disdained manual labor and commerce, but the Hebrew Bible emphasizes the inherent dignity of labor and the value Judaism sets on work. The great rabbis themselves were laborers, businessmen or professionals, just as Hillel was a wood-cutter, Rashi a vineyard worker, Maimonides a practicing physician and Spinoza a lens grinder. While the Greeks perfected the art of tragedy, it was Judaism that created a theology not of "optimism" but of "hope."

As American Jews become more acculturated and assimilated, they, too, will act effortlessly and gentlemanly and, presumably, become proportionately less productive. In A.J. Gurney's play *Love Letters*, the WASP father warns his son, "If you keep getting all those A's, people will think you are Jewish!" That may not be the case in the future, since highly motivated Asians increasingly displace Jews in meritocratic rankings. Social grace, manners and etiquette are acquired at a price.

Will Hamans and Hitlers recur eternally? If so, is the price for maintaining Jewish values too steep to pay? Or is America, wonderful America, different? In a nation in which the majority consists of minorities and in which legal walls exist between church and state, one hopes so.

For Jews, America has proven to be the Golden Land of immigrant dreams. Do I hope that my descendants will be part of the continuing American story and that they will remain active and identifiable members of its Jewish community? I do. The challenge

is to engage with the world constructively without losing the identity that reflects the best of Jewish tradition.

I hope that as full-fledged Americans, they will attend High Holiday services and Passover Seders, celebrate Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and be knowledgeable about Jewish history, customs and traditions as well as Jewish memories and values such as moral obligation and duty toward the community, reciprocity and trust. I hope that they will care about Israel and its historical associations, that they will be public-spirited, family-conscious, charitable and compassionate, and that they will share the Jewish mindset of curiosity, literacy, individualism and a passion for social justice. (Martin Luther King noted that Jews had provided some 90% of the contributions over \$1,000 that he ever received.)

Some laugh at the old saw that “Jews earn like Episcopalians but vote like Puerto Ricans,” but many are proud of it; and Jews have always led in liberal causes. For example, until “Black Power” advocates demanded their removal in the late 1960s, the NAACP (founded 1909) was a largely Jewish-dominated organization, with Joel Spingarn Chair from 1914 to 1934, with early financial support underwritten by men like Jacob Schiff and Julius Rosenwald, and its early legal efforts supervised by NAACP Board Member Louis Marshall, and later by Jack Greenberg.

Will my form of Judaism be able to survive? I hope so, especially if the intermarried, their children, and the presently disaffected are re-attracted and welcomed by the Jewish community.

Will Judaism continue to encourage a fuller, more satisfying life for its adherents, one that is productive for them as well as for the society of which they are a part? I believe so, and have lived my life accordingly.

One modern definition of “a good Jew” is one whose grandchildren are “good Jews,” and I hope my own take note.

To my descendants, I say, along with the Book of Proverbs,
“Behold, a good doctrine has been given unto you. Forsake it not...Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace.”

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