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The fourth document about
the Maccabees

Introduction

The Fourth Document about the Maccabees is a sustained argument about faith, clear thinking, and self-control. The writer asks whether reason guided by devotion to God can govern desires and emotions such as greed, anger, fear, and pain. The point isn't that faithful people feel nothing, but that they can choose to obey God's instructions even when their feelings pull them strongly in another direction.

After explaining this argument and giving examples, the writer retells the suffering of Eleazar, seven brothers, and their mother under King Antiokos (Antiochus). These are the people whose deaths are also described in chapters 6–7 of *The Second Document about the Maccabees*. Here their speeches and endurance become the main examples supporting the argument.

The closing chapters dwell on the brothers' love for one another and their mother's love for them. The writer praises their faithfulness, presents their endurance as a victory over the king's cruelty, and encourages readers to follow their devotion to God. This is a reflection on the meaning of their suffering, with the argument and the account woven together throughout.

The Fourth Document about the Maccabees appears in an appendix to the Greek Septuagint. It is considered to be apocrypha by most church traditions. It is preserved here for its supplementary historical value.

Makabi (from which the term Maccabee is derived) is an acronym formed from the first letters of Exodus 15:11: "Mi kamokha ba'elim YHWH" — "Who is like you among the gods, Yahweh?"

Main components of this document

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Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Faith and reason can govern our emotions

1:1 As I'm going to demonstrate a most philosophical proposition, namely, that religious reasoning is absolute master of the emotions. I'd willingly advise you to give the utmost heed to philosophy. **2** Because reason is necessary to everyone as a step to science. In addition, it embraces the praise of self-control, the highest virtue. **3** If, then, reasoning appears to hold the mastery over the emotions which stand in the way of temperance, such as gluttony and lust, **4** it surely also and manifestly rules over the affections which are contrary to justice, such as malice, and of those which are hindrances to courage, such as anger, pain, and fear. **5** Perhaps some may ask, "How is it, then, that reasoning, if it rules the emotions, isn't also master of forgetfulness and ignorance?" They attempt a ridiculous argument. **6** Because reasoning doesn't rule over its own emotions, but over those that are contrary to justice, courage, temperance, and self-control; and yet over these, so as to withstand, without destroying them.

7 I might prove to you from many other considerations, that religious reasoning is sole master of the emotions; **8** but I'll prove it with the greatest force from the fortitude of Eleazar, and seven kindred, and their mother, who suffered death in defence of virtue. **9** Because all these, treating pains with contempt even to death, by this contempt, demonstrated that reasoning has command over the emotions. **10** Because their virtues, then, it's right that I should commend those men who died with their mother at this time on behalf of nobility and goodness; and for their honours, I may count them blessed. **11** Because they, winning admiration not only from men in general, but even from the persecutors, for their courage and endurance, became the means of the destruction of the tyranny against their nation, having conquered the tyrant by their endurance, so that by them their country was purified. **12** But we may now at once enter on the question, having commenced, as is our custom, with laying down the doctrine, and so proceed to the account of these people, giving glory to the all-wise God.

Reason, wisdom, and the emotions

13 Therefore the question whether reasoning is absolute master of the emotions. **14** Let's determine, then, what reasoning is and what emotion is, and how many forms of emotion there are, and whether reasoning rules over all of these. **15** Reasoning is intellect accompanied by a life of righteousness, putting foremost the consideration of wisdom. **16** Wisdom is a knowledge of divine and human things, and of their causes. **17** This is contained in the education of the law, by means of which we learn divine things reverently and human things profitably. **18** The forms of wisdom are self-control, justice, courage, and temperance. **19** The leading one of these is self-control, by whose means, indeed, it's that reasoning rules over the emotions. **20** Of the emotions, pleasure and pain are the two most comprehensive; and they also by nature refer to the soul. **21** There are many attendant affections surrounding pleasure and pain. **22** Before pleasure is lust; and after pleasure, joy. **23** Before pain is fear; and after pain is sorrow. **24** Anger is an affection, common to pleasure and to pain, if any one will pay attention when it comes on him. **25** There exists in pleasure a malicious disposition, which is the most complex of all the affections. **26** In the soul, it's arrogance, love of money, thirst for honour, contention, faithlessness, and the evil eye. **27** In the body, it's greediness, indiscriminate eating, and solitary gluttony.

28 As pleasure and pain are, therefore, two growths out of the body and the soul, so there are many offshoots of these emotions. **29** Reasoning, the universal farmer, purging and pruning each of these, tying up, watering, and transplanting, in every way improves the materials of the morals and affections. **30** Because reasoning is the leader of the virtues, but it's the sole ruler of the emotions.

Observe then first, through the very things which stand in the way of temperance, that reasoning is absolute ruler of the emotions. **31** Now temperance consists of a command over the lusts. **32** But of the lusts, some belong to the soul and others to the body. Reasoning appears to rule over both. **33** Otherwise, how is it that when urged on to forbidden meats, we reject the gratification which would come from them? Isn't it because reasoning is able to command the appetites? I believe so. **34** Hence it is, then, that when craving seafood, birds, four-footed animals, and all kinds of food which are forbidden to us by the law, we withhold ourselves through the mastery of reasoning. **35** Because the affections of our appetites are resisted by the temperate understanding, and bent back again, and all the impulses of the body are reined in by reasoning.

Controlling desire and anger

2:1 Is it any wonder? If the lusts of the soul, after participation with what's beautiful, are frustrated, **2** on this ground, therefore, the temperate Yosef (Joseph) is praised in that by reasoning, he subdued, on reflection, the indulgence of the senses. **3** Because, although young, and ripe for sexual intercourse, he nullified by reasoning the stimulus of his emotions. **4** It isn't merely the stimulus of sensual indulgence, but that of every desire, that reasoning is able to master. **5** For example, the law says, "You mustn't desire your neighbour's wife, nor anything that belongs to your neighbour." **6** Now, then, since it's the law which has forbidden us to desire, I'll much the more easily persuade you, that reasoning is able to govern our lusts, just as it does the affections which are impediments to justice. **7** Since in what way is a solitary eater, a glutton, and a drunkard reclaimed, unless it's clear that reasoning is lord of the emotions? **8** Therefore, a man who regulates his course by the law, even if he's a lover of money, immediately puts pressure on his own disposition by lending to the needy without interest, and cancelling the debt on the seventh year. **9** If a man is greedy, he's ruled by the law acting through reasoning, so that he doesn't glean his harvest crops or vintage. In reference to other points we may perceive that it's reasoning that conquers his emotions. **10** Because the law conquers even affection towards parents, not surrendering virtue on their account. **11** It prevails

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over love for one's wife, rebuking her when she breaks the law. 12 It lords it over the love of parents towards their children, for they punish them for vice. It domineers over the intimacy of friends, reproving them when wicked. 13 Don't think it's a strange assertion that reasoning can on behalf of the law conquer even enmity. 14 It doesn't allow cutting down the fruit trees of an enemy, but preserves them from the destroyers, and collects their fallen ruins. 15 Reason appears to be master of the more violent emotions, like love of empire, empty boasting, and slander. 16 Because the temperate understanding repels all these malignant emotions, as it does anger; for it masters even this. 17 Thus Mosheh (Moses), when angered against Datan and Aviram, did nothing to them in anger, but regulated his anger by reasoning. 18 Because the temperate mind is able, as I said, to be superior to the emotions, and to correct some and destroy others. 19 Because why else did our most wise father Ya'akov (Jacob) blame Shim'on (Simeon) and Levi for having irrationally slain the whole race of the Shechemites, saying, "Cursed be their anger!"? 20 Because if reasoning didn't possess the power of subduing angry affections, he wouldn't have said this. 21 Because at the time when God created man, he implanted within him his emotions and moral nature. 22 At that time he enthroned the mind above all as the holy leader, through the medium of the senses. 23 He gave a law to this mind, by living according to which it'll maintain a temperate, just, good, and courageous reign. 24 How, then, a man may say, if reasoning is master of the emotions, has it no control over forgetfulness and ignorance?

3:1 The argument is extremely ridiculous, for reasoning doesn't appear to rule over its own affections, but over those of the body, 2 in such a way as that any one of you may not be able to root out desire, but reasoning will enable you to avoid being enslaved to it. 3 One may not be able to root out anger from the soul, but it's possible to withstand anger. 4 Any one of you may not be able to eradicate malice, but reasoning has force to work with you to prevent you yielding to malice. 5 Because reasoning isn't an eradicator, but an antagonist of the emotions.

David's example of self-control

6 This may be more clearly comprehended from the thirst of King David. 7 Because after David had been attacking the Pelishtim the whole day, he with the soldiers of his nation killed many of them; 8 then when evening came, sweating and very weary, he came to the royal tent, around which the entire army of our ancestors was encamped. 9 Now all the rest of them were at supper; 10 but the king, being very much thirsty, although he had numerous springs, couldn't by their means quench his thirst; 11 but a certain irrational longing for the water in the enemy's camp grew stronger and fiercer on him, undid and consumed him. 12 Therefore his bodyguards being troubled at this longing of the king, two valiant young soldiers, respecting the desire of the king, fully armed themselves, and taking a pitcher, got over the ramparts of the enemies. 13 Unperceived by the guardians of the gate, they went throughout the whole camp of the enemy in quest. 14 Having boldly discovered the fountain, they filled out of it the drink for the king. 15 But he, though parched with thirst, reasoned that a drink regarded of equal value to blood would be terribly dangerous to his soul. 16 Therefore, setting up reasoning in opposition to his desire, he poured out the drink to God. 17 Because the temperate mind has power to conquer the pressure of the emotions, to quench the fires of excitement, 18 and to wrestle down the pains of the body, however excessive, and through the excellency of reasoning, to spurn all the assaults of the emotions. 19 But the occasion now invites us to give an illustration of temperate reasoning from history. 20 Because at a time when our fathers were in possession of undisturbed peace through obedience to the law and were prosperous, so that Seleukos (Seleucus) Nikanor, the king of Asia, both assigned them money for divine service, and accepted their form of government, 21 then certain people, bringing in new things contrary to the public harmony, in various ways fell into calamities.

Corruption and conflict in Yerushalem

4:1 Because a certain man named Shim'on (Simon), who was in opposition to an honourable and good man who once held the high priesthood for life, named Honyo (Onias). After slandering Honyo in every way, Shim'on couldn't injure him with the people, so he went away as an exile, with the intention of betraying his country. 2 When coming to Apolonios, the military governor of Aram (Syria), Foinikai, and Kilikia, he said, 3 "Having good will to the king's affairs, I've come to inform you that tens of thousands in private wealth is laid up in the treasuries of Yerushalem (Jerusalem) which don't belong to the temple, but belong to King Seleukos." 4 Apolonios, acquainting himself with the particulars of this, praised Shim'on for his care of the king's interests, and going up to Seleukos informed him of the treasure. 5 Getting authority about it, and quickly advancing into our country with the accursed Shim'on and a very heavy force, 6 he said that he came with the king's commands that he should take the private money of the treasury. 7 The nation, indignant at this proclamation, and replying to the effect that it was extremely unfair that those who'd committed deposits to the sacred treasury should be deprived of them, resisted as well as they could. 8 But Apolonios went away with threats into the temple. 9 The priests, with the women and children, asked God to throw his shield over the holy, despised place, 10 and Apolonios was going up with his armed force to seize the treasure, when angels from heaven appeared riding on horseback, all radiant in armour, filling them with much fear and trembling. 11 Apolonios fell half dead on the courtyard which is open to all nations, and extended his hands to heaven, and implored the Ivrim (Hebrews), with tears, to pray for him, and take away the anger of the heavenly army. 12 Because he said that he'd sinned, so as to be consequently worthy of death, and that if he were saved, he'd proclaim to all people the blessedness of the holy place. 13 Honyo the high priest, induced by

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these words, although for other reasons anxious that King Seleukos wouldn't suppose that Apolonios was slain by human device and not by Divine punishment, prayed for him; 14 and he being thus unexpectedly saved, departed to report to the king what had happened to him. 15 But on the death of Seleukos the king, his son Antiokos (Antiochus) Epifanes (Epiphanes) succeeded to the kingdom—a terrible man of arrogant pride.

Yason and Antiokos undermine God's law

16 He, having deposed Honyo (Onias) from the high priesthood, appointed his brother Yason to be high priest, 17 who'd made a covenant, if he'd give him this authority, to pay yearly three thousand and six hundred and sixty talents. 18 He committed to him the high priesthood and rulership over the nation. 19 He both changed the manner of living of the people, and perverted their civil customs into all lawlessness. 20 So that he not only erected a gymnasium on the very citadel of our country, but neglected the guardianship of the temple. 21 Because of that, Divine vengeance was grieved and instigated Antiokos himself against them. 22 Because being at war with Ptolemaios (Ptolemy) in Mitsrayim (Egypt), he heard that on a report of his death being spread abroad, the inhabitants of Yerushalem (Jerusalem) had greatly rejoiced, and he quickly marched against them. 23 Having subdued them, he established a decree that if any of them lived according to the ancestral laws, he should die. 24 When he could by no means destroy by his decrees the obedience to the law of the nation, but saw all his threats and punishments without effect, 25 for even women, because they continued to circumcise their children, were flung down a precipice along with them, knowing beforehand of the punishment. 26 When, therefore, his decrees were disregarded by the people, he himself compelled by means of tortures every one of this race, by tasting forbidden meats, to renounce the Jewish religion.

Antiokos pressures Eleazar to disobey God's law

5:1 The tyrant Antiokos, therefore, sitting in public state with his assessors on a certain lofty place, with his armed troops standing in a circle around him, 2 commanded his spearbearers to seize every one of the Ivrim (Hebrews), and to compel them to taste swine's flesh and things offered to idols. 3 Should any of them be unwilling to eat the accursed food, they were to be tortured on the wheel and so killed. 4 When many had been seized, a foremost man of the assembly, a Hebrew, by name Eleazar, a priest by family, by profession a lawyer, and advanced in years, and for this reason known to many of the king's followers, was brought near to him.

5 Antiokos, seeing him, said, 6 "I'd counsel you, old man, before your tortures begin, to taste the swine's flesh, and save your life; for I feel respect for your age and hoary head, which since you've had so long, you appear to me to be no philosopher in retaining the superstition of the Yehudim (Jews). 7 Because therefore, since nature has conferred on you the most excellent flesh of this animal, do you loathe it? 8 It seems senseless not to enjoy what's pleasant, yet not disgraceful; and from notions of sinfulness, to reject the gifts of nature. 9 You'll be acting, I think, still more senselessly, if you follow vain conceits about the truth. 10 You will, moreover, be despising me to your own punishment. 11 won't you awake from your trifling philosophy, give up the folly of your notions, and regaining understanding worthy of your age, search into the truth of an expedient course? 12 won't you respect my kindly admonition and have pity on your own years? 13 Because bear in mind that if there's any power which watches over this religion of yours, it'll pardon you for all transgressions of the law which you commit through compulsion."

Eleazar refuses to eat forbidden food

14 While the tyrant incited him in this manner to the unlawful eating of meat, Eleazar begged permission to speak. 15 Having received permission to speak, he began to address the people as follows: 16 "We, Oh Antiokos (Antiochus), who are persuaded that we live under a divine law, consider no compulsion to be so forcible as obedience to that law. 17 Therefore we consider that we ought not to transgress the law in any way. 18 Indeed, were our law (as you suppose) not truly divine, and if we wrongly think it divine, we'd have no right even in that case to destroy our sense of religion. 19 Don't think that eating unclean meat is a trifling offence. 20 Because transgression of the law, whether in small or great matters, is of equal importance; 21 for in either case the law is equally slighted. 22 But you deride our philosophy, as though we lived in it irrationally. 23 Yet it instructs us in self-control, so that we're superior to all pleasures and lusts; and it trains us in courage, so that we cheerfully undergo every grievance. 24 It instructs us in justice, so that in all our dealings we render what's due. It teaches us piety, so that we properly worship the one and only God. 25 That's why we don't eat the unclean; for believing that the law was established by God, we're convinced that the Creator of the world, in giving his laws, sympathises with our nature. 26 Those things which are suitable for our souls, he's directed us to eat; but those which aren't, he has forbidden. 27 But, tyrant-like, you not only force us to break the law, but also to eat, that you may ridicule us as we thus profanely eat. 28 But you won't have this cause of laughter against me, 29 nor will I transgress the sacred oaths of my forefathers to keep the law. 30 No, not if you pluck out my eyes, and consume my entrails. 31 I'm not so old, and void of courage as to not be youthful in reason and in defence of my religion. 32 Now then, prepare your wheels, and kindle a fiercer flame. 33 I won't so pity my old age, as on my account to break the law of my country. 34 I won't play false to you, Oh law, my instructor, or forsake you, Oh beloved self-control! 35 I won't put you to shame, Oh philosopher Reason, or deny you, Oh honoured priesthood and knowledge of the law. 36 Mouth! You mustn't disgrace my old age, nor the full stature of a perfect life. 37 My ancestors will receive me as pure, not having feared your compulsion, even to death. 38 Because you'll rule like a tyrant over the ungodly, but you won't lord it over my thoughts about religion, either by your ar-

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guments, or through actions."

Eleazar endures torture

6:1 When Eleazar had in this manner answered the exhortations of the tyrant, the spearbearers came up, and rudely dragged Eleazar to the instruments of torture. 2 First, they stripped the old man, adorned as he was with the beauty of piety. 3 Then tying back his arms and hands, they disdainfully flogged him. 4 A herald opposite cried out, "Obey the king's commands!"

5 But the high-minded and truly noble Eleazar, as one tortured in a dream, ignored it. 6 But raising his eyes on high to heaven, the old man's flesh was stripped off by the scourges, and his blood streamed down, and his sides were pierced through. 7 Falling on the ground from his body having no power to endure the pains, he still kept his reasoning upright and unbending. 8 Then one of the harsh spearbearers rushed at him and began to kick him in the side to force him to get up again after he fell. 9 But he endured the pains, despised the cruelty, and persevered through the indignities. 10 Like a noble athlete, the old man, when struck, vanquished his torturers. 11 His face sweating, and he panting for breath, he was admired even by the torturers for his courage.

Eleazar refuses to pretend

12 Therefore, partly in pity for his old age, 13 partly from the sympathy of acquaintance, and partly in admiration of his endurance, some of the attendants of the king said, 14 "Why do you unreasonably destroy yourself, Oh Eleazar, with these miseries? 15 We'll bring you some meat cooked by yourself, and you can save yourself by pretending that you've eaten swine's flesh."

16 Eleazar, as though the advice more painfully tortured him, cried out, 17 "Let us who are children of Avraham not be so evil advised as by giving way to make use of an unbecoming pretence. 18 Because it'd be irrational, if having lived up to old age in all truth, and having scrupulously guarded our character for it, we'd now turn back 19 and ourselves become a pattern of impiety to the young, as being an example of eating pollution. 20 It'd be disgraceful if we'd live on some short time, and that scorned by all men for cowardice, 21 and be condemned by the tyrant for cowardice by not contending to the death for our divine law. 22 Therefore you, Oh children of Avraham, die nobly for your religion. 23 You spearbearers of the tyrant, why do you linger?"

Eleazar's final prayer and death

24 Listening him so high-minded against misery, and not changing at their pity, they led him to the fire. 25 Then with their wickedly contrived instruments they burnt him on the fire, and poured stinking fluids down into his nostrils.

26 He being at length burnt down to the bones, and about to expire, raised his eyes Godward, and said, 27 "You know, Oh God, that when I might have been saved, I'm slain for the sake of the law by tortures of fire. 28 Be merciful to your people, and be satisfied with the punishment of me on their account. 29 Let my blood be a purification for them, and take my life in exchange for theirs." 30 Thus speaking, the holy man departed, noble in his torments, and even to the agonies of death resisted in his reasoning for the sake of the law. 31 Confessedly, therefore, religious reasoning is master of the emotions. 32 Because had the emotions been superior to reasoning, I'd have given them the witness of this mastery. 33 But now, since reasoning conquered the emotions, we befittingly award it the authority of first place. 34 It's only fair that we should allow that the power belongs to reasoning, since it masters external miseries. 35 It'd be ridiculous if it weren't so. I prove that reasoning hasn't only mastered pains, but that it's also superior to the pleasures, and withstands them.

Eleazar's example of faith and self-control

7:1 The reasoning of our father Eleazar, like a first-rate pilot, steering the vessel of piety in the sea of emotions, 2 and flouted by the threats of the tyrant, and overwhelmed with the breakers of torture, 3 in no way shifted the rudder of piety until it sailed into the harbour of victory over death. 4 No besieged city has ever held out against many and various war machines as that holy man did when his pious soul was tried with the fiery trial of tortures and rackings and moved his besiegers through the religious reasoning that shielded him. 5 Because father Eleazar, projecting his disposition, broke the raging waves of the emotions as with a jutting cliff. 6 Oh priest worthy of the priesthood! You didn't pollute your sacred teeth, nor make your appetite, which had always embraced the clean and lawful, a partaker of profanity. 7 Oh harmoniser with the law, and sage devoted to a divine life! 8 Of such a character ought those to be who perform the duties of the law at the risk of their own blood, and defend it with generous sweat by sufferings even to death. 9 You, father, have gloriously established our right government by your endurance; and making of much account our past service, prevented its destruction, and by your actions, have made credible the words of philosophy. 10 Oh aged man of more power than tortures, elder more vigorous than fire, greatest king over the emotions, Eleazar! 11 Because as father Aharon (Aaron), armed with a censer, hastening through the consuming fire, vanquished the flame-bearing angel, 12 so, Eleazar, the descendant of Aharon, wasted away by the fire, didn't give up his reasoning. 13 What's most wonderful is that though he was an old man, though the labours of his body were now spent, his muscles were relaxed, and his sinews worn out, he recovered youth. 14 By the spirit of reasoning, and the reasoning of Yitshak (Isaac), he rendered powerless the many-headed rack. 15 Oh blessed old age, and reverend hoar head, and life obedient to the law, which the faithful seal of death perfected. 16 If, then, an old man, through religion, despised tortures even to death, then certainly religious reasoning is ruler of the emotions. 17 But perhaps some might say, "It isn't all who conquer emotions, as not all possess wise reasoning." 18 But those who've meditated on religion with their whole heart, these alone can master the emotions of the flesh: 19 they who believe that to God they don't die; for, as our forefathers, Avraham, Yitshak, and Ya'akov (Ja-

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cob), they live to God. 20 This circumstance, then, is by no means an objection, that some who have weak reasoning are governed by their emotions, 21 since what person, walking religiously by the whole rule of philosophy, and believing in God, 22 and knowing that it's a blessed thing to endure all kinds of hardships for virtue, wouldn't, for the sake of religion, master his emotion? 23 Because only the wise and brave man is lord over his emotions. 24 This is why even boys, trained with the philosophy of religious reasoning, have conquered still more bitter tortures; 25 for when the tyrant was manifestly vanquished in his first attempt, in being unable to force the old man to eat the unclean thing,

Seven brothers face the king's threats

8:1 then, indeed, vehemently swayed with emotion, he commanded to bring others of the adult Ivrim (Hebrews), and if they'd eat of the unclean thing, to let them go when they'd eaten; but if they objected, to torment them more grievously. 2 The tyrant having given this charge, seven kindred were brought into his presence, along with their aged mother. They were handsome, modest, well-born, and altogether comely. 3 When the tyrant saw them encircling their mother as in a dance, he was pleased with them. Being struck with their becoming and innocent manner, smiled at them, and calling them near, said, 4 "O youths, with favourable feelings, I admire the beauty of each of you. Greatly honouring so numerous a band of kindred, I not only counsel you not to share the madness of the old man who's been tortured before, 5 but I beg you to yield, and to enjoy my friendship; for I possess the power, not only of punishing those who disobey my commands, but of doing good to those who obey them. 6 Put confidence in me, then, and you'll receive places of authority in my government, if you forsake your national way of life, 7 and, conforming to the Greek way of life, alter your rule and revel in youth's delights. 8 Because if you provoke me by your disobedience, you'll compel me to destroy every one of you with terrible punishments by tortures. 9 Have mercy, then, on your own selves, whom I, although an enemy, am compassionate for your age and attractive appearance. 10 won't you consider this: that if you disobey, there'll be nothing left for you but to die in torture?"

11 When he'd said this, he ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward, that fear might prevail on them to eat unclean meat. 12 When the spearman brought forward the wheels, the racks, the hooks, racks, cauldrons, pans, finger-racks, iron hands and wedges, and bellows, the tyrant continued: 13 "Fear, young men, and the righteousness which you worship will be merciful to you if you transgress because of compulsion."

14 Now they having listened to these words of persuasion, and seeing the fearful instruments, not only weren't afraid, but even answered the arguments of the tyrant, and through their good reasoning destroyed his power. 15 Now let's consider the matter. Had any of them been weak-spirited and cowardly among them, what reasoning would they've employed but these? 16 "O wretched that we are, and extremely senseless! When the king exhorts us, and calls us to his bounty, shouldn't we obey him? 17 Why do we cheer ourselves with vain counsels, and venture on a disobedience bringing death? 18 Shouldn't we fear, Oh kindred, the instruments of torture and weigh the threatenings of torment and shun this vain-glory and destructive pride? 19 Let's have compassion on our age and relent over the years of our mother. 20 Let's bear in mind that we'll be dying as rebels. 21 Divine Justice will pardon us if we fear the king through necessity. 22 Why withdraw ourselves from a most sweet life, and deprive ourselves of this pleasant world? 23 Let's not oppose necessity, nor seek vain-glory by our own torture. 24 The law itself wouldn't arbitrarily put us to death because we dread torture. 25 Why has such angry zeal taken root in us, and such fatal obstinacy approved itself to us, when we might live unmolested by the king?"

26 But the young men didn't say or think anything of this kind when about to be tortured. 27 Because they were well aware of the sufferings, and masters of the pains. 28–29 So that as soon as the tyrant had ceased counselling them to eat the unclean, they all with one voice, as from the same heart said,

9:1 "Why do you delay, Oh tyrant? Because we're more ready to die than to transgress the injunctions of our fathers. 2 We'd be disgracing our fathers if we didn't obey the law, and take knowledge for our guide. 3 Oh tyrant, counsellor of law-breaking, don't, hating us as you do, pity us more than we pity ourselves. 4 Because we consider your escape to be worse than death. 5 You try to scare us by threatening us with death by tortures, as though you'd learnt nothing by the death of Eleazar. 6 But if aged men of the Ivrim (Hebrews) have died in the cause of religion after enduring torture, more rightly should we younger men die, scorning your cruel tortures, which our aged instructor overcame. 7 Make the attempt, then, Oh tyrant. If you put us to death for our religion, don't think that you harm us by torturing us. 8 Because we through this ill-treatment and endurance will gain the rewards of virtue. 9 But you, for the wicked and despotic slaughter of us, will, from the Divine vengeance, endure eternal torture by fire."

The first two brothers are killed

10 When they'd said this, the tyrant wasn't only exasperated against them for being disobedient, but enraged with them for being ungrateful. 11 So, at his bidding, the torturers brought the oldest of them, and tearing through his tunic, bound his hands and arms on each side with straps. 12 When they'd laboured hard without effect in scourging him, they hurled him on the wheel. 13 The noble youth, extended on this, became dislocated. 14 With every member disjointed, he denounced the tyrant, saying, 15 "O most accursed tyrant, and enemy of heavenly justice, and cruel-hearted, I'm no murderer, nor sacrilegious man, whom you torture, but a defender of the Divine law."

16 And when the spearmen said, "Consent to eat, that you may be released from your tortures," 17 he answered, "Not so powerful, Oh accursed lackeys, is your wheel, as to stifle

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my reasoning. Cut my limbs, and burn my flesh, and twist my joints. 18 Because through all my torments I'll convince you that the children of the Ivrim (Hebrews) are alone unconquered on behalf of virtue."

19 While he was saying this, they heaped up fuel, and setting fire to it, strained him on the wheel still more. 20 The wheel was defiled all over with blood. The hot ashes were quenched by the droppings of gore, and pieces of flesh were scattered about the axles of the machine. 21 Although the framework of his bones was now destroyed, the high-minded and Abrahamic youth didn't groan. 22 But, as though transformed by fire into immortality, he nobly endured the rackings, saying, 23 "Imitate me, Oh kindred. Never desert your station, nor renounce my brotherhood in courage. Fight the holy and honourable fight of religion, 24 by which means our just and paternal Providence, becoming merciful to the nation, will punish the pestilent tyrant." 25 Saying this, the revered youth abruptly closed his life.

26 When all admired his courageous soul, the spearmen brought forward him who was second oldest, and having put on iron gauntlets with sharp hooks, bound him to the rack. 27 When, on enquiring whether he'd eat before he was tortured, they heard his noble sentiment. 28 After they with the iron gauntlets had violently dragged all the flesh from the neck to the chin, the panther-like animals tore off the very skin of his head, but he, bearing with firmness this misery, said, 29 "How sweet is every form of death for the religion of our fathers!" Then he said to the tyrant, 30 "Don't you think, most cruel of all tyrants, that you're now tortured more than I, finding your arrogant conception of tyranny conquered by our perseverance in behalf of our religion? 31 Because I lighten my suffering by the pleasures which are connected with virtue. 32 But you're tortured with threatenings for impiety. You won't escape, most corrupt tyrant, the vengeance of Divine anger."

The third and fourth brothers remain faithful

10:1 Now this one endured this praiseworthy death. The third was brought along, and exhorted by many to taste and save his life. 2 But he cried out and said, "Don't you know that the father of those who are dead is my father also, and that the same mother bore me, and that I was brought up in the same way? 3 I don't renounce the noble relationship of my kindred. 4 Now then, whatever instrument of vengeance you have, apply it to my body, for you aren't able to touch my soul, even if you want to." 5 But they, highly incensed at his boldness of speech, dislocated his hands and feet with racking engines, and wrenching them from their sockets, dismembered him. 6 They dragged around his fingers, his arms, his legs, and his ankles. 7 Not being able by any means to strangle him, they tore off his skin, together with the extreme tips of his fingers, and then dragged him to the wheel, 8 around which his vertebral joints were loosened, and he saw his own flesh torn to shreds, and streams of blood flowing from his entrails. 9 When about to die, he said, 10 "We, Oh accursed tyrant, suffer this for the sake of Divine education and virtue. 11 But you, for your impiety and blood shedding, will endure unceasing torments."

12 Thus having died worthily of his kindred, they dragged forward the fourth, saying, 13 "Don't share the madness of your kindred, but respect the king and save yourself."

14 But he said to them, "You don't have a fire so scorching as to make me play the coward. 15 By the blessed death of my kindred, and the eternal punishment of the tyrant, and the glorious life of the pious, I won't repudiate the noble brotherhood. 16 Invent, Oh tyrant, tortures, that you may learn, even through them, that I'm the brother of those tormented before."

17 When he'd said this, the blood-thirsty, murderous, and unholy Antiokos (Antiochus) ordered his tongue to be cut out. 18 But he said, "Even if you take away the organ of speech, God still hears the silent. 19 Listen, my tongue is extended, cut it off; for in spite of that you won't silence our reasoning. 20 We gladly lose our limbs on behalf of God. 21 But God will speedily find you, since you cut off the tongue, the instrument of divine melody."

The fifth and sixth brothers face death

11:1 When he'd died, disfigured in his torments, the fifth leapt forward, and said, 2 "I don't intend, Oh tyrant, to get excused from the torment which is on behalf of virtue. 3 But I've come of my own accord, that by my death you may owe heavenly vengeance and punishment for more crimes. 4 Oh you hater of virtue and of men, what have we done that you thus revel in our blood? 5 Does it seem evil to you that we worship the Founder of all things, and live according to his surpassing law? 6 But this is worthy of honours, not torments, 7 if you'd been capable of the higher feelings of men, and possessed the hope of salvation from God. 8 Listen now, being alien from God, you make war against those who are religious towards God."

9 As he said this, the spearbearers bound him and drew him to the rack, 10 to which binding him at his knees, and fastening them with iron fetters, they bent down his loins on the wedge of the wheel; and his body was then dismembered, scorpion-fashion. 11 With his breath thus confined, and his body strangled, he said, 12 "A great favour you bestow on us, Oh tyrant, by enabling us to manifest our adherence to the law by means of nobler sufferings."

13 He also being dead, the sixth, quite a youth, was brought out. On the tyrant asking him whether he'd eat and be delivered, he said, 14 "I'm indeed younger than my brothers, but in understanding I'm as old; 15 for having been born and reared to the same end. We're bound to die also on behalf of the same cause. 16 So that if you think it's proper to torment us for not eating the unclean, then torment!"

17 As he said this, they brought him to the wheel. 18 Extended on this, with limbs racked and dislocated, he was gradually roasted from beneath. 19 Having heated sharp spits, they approached them to his back; and having transfixed his sides, they burnt away his entrails. 20 He, while tormented, said, "O good and holy contest, in which for the sake of religion, we kindred have been called to the

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arena of pain, and haven't been conquered. 21 Because religious understanding, Oh tyrant, is unconquered. 22 Armed with upright virtue, I also will depart with my kindred. 23 I, too, bearing with me a great avenger, Oh inventor of tortures, and enemy of the truly pious. 24 We six youths have destroyed your tyranny. 25 Because isn't your inability to overrule our reasoning, and to compel us to eat the unclean, your destruction? 26 Your fire is cold to us. Your racks are painless, and your violence harmless. 27 Because the guards not of a tyrant but of a divine law are our defenders. Through this we keep our reasoning unconquered."

The youngest brother refuses to give in

12:1 When he, too, had undergone blessed martyrdom, and died in the cauldron into which he'd been thrown, the seventh, the youngest of all, came forward, 2 whom the tyrant pitying, though he'd been dreadfully reproached by his kindred, 3 seeing him already encompassed with chains, had him brought nearer, and endeavoured to counsel him, saying, 4 "You see the end of the madness of your kindred, for they've died in torture through disobedience. You, if disobedient, having been miserably tormented, will yourself perish prematurely. 5 But if you obey, you'll be my friend, and have a charge over the affairs of the kingdom." 6 Having thus exhorted him, he sent for the boy's mother, that, by showing compassion to her for the loss of so many sons, he might incline her, through the hope of safety, to render the survivor obedient.

7 He, after his mother had urged him on in the Hebrew tongue, (as we'll soon relate) said, 8 "Release me that I may speak to the king and all his friends." 9 They, rejoicing greatly at the promise of the youth, quickly let him go. 10 He, running up to the pans, said, 11 "Impious tyrant, and most blasphemous man, were you not ashamed, having received prosperity and a kingdom from God, to kill His servants, and to rack the doers of godliness? 12 Therefore the divine vengeance is reserving you for eternal fire and torments, which will cling to you for all time. 13 Weren't you ashamed, man as you are, yet most savage, to cut out the tongues of men of like feeling and origin, and having thus abused to torture them? 14 But they, bravely dying, fulfilled their religion towards God. 15 But you'll groan as you deserve for having slain without cause the champions of virtue. 16 Therefore," he continued, "I myself, being about to die, 17 won't forsake my kindred. 18 I call on the god of my fathers to be merciful to my race. 19 But you, both living and dead, he'll punish." 20 Thus having prayed, he hurled himself into the pans; and so expired.

The brothers' faith overcomes suffering

13:1 If then, the seven kindred despised troubles even to death, it's admitted on all sides that righteous reasoning is absolute master over the emotions. 2 Because just as if they'd eaten of the unholy as slaves to the emotions, we'd have said that they'd been conquered by them. 3 Now it isn't so. But by means of the reasoning which is praised by God, they mastered their emotions. 4 It's impossible to overlook the leadership of reflection, for it gained the victory over both emotions and troubles. 5 How, then, can we avoid according to these men mastery of emotion through right reasoning, since they didn't withdraw from the pains of fire? 6 Because just as by means of towers projecting in front of harbours men break the threatening waves, and thus assure a still course to vessels entering port, 7 so that seven-towered right-reasoning of the young men, securing the harbour of religion, conquered the tempest of emotions. 8 Because having arranged a holy choir of piety, they encouraged one another, saying, 9 "Brothers, may we die brotherly for the law. Let us imitate the three young men in Ashur (Assyria) who despised the equally afflicting furnace. 10 Let's not be cowards in the manifestation of piety." 11 One said, "Courage, brother!" and another, "Nobly endure!" 12 Another said, "Remember of what stock you are;" and by the hand of our father Yitshak (Isaac) endured to be slain for the sake of piety. 13 One and all, looking at each other serene and confident, said, "Let's sacrifice with all our heart our souls to God who gave them, and employ our bodies for the keeping of the law. 14 Let's not fear him who thinks he kills; 15 for great is the trial of soul and danger of eternal torment laid up for those who transgress God's commandment. 16 Let's arm ourselves, therefore, in the self-control, which is divine reasoning. 17 If we suffer like this, Avraham, Yitshak, and Ya'akov (Jacob) will receive us, and all the fathers will commend us. 18 As each one of the kindred was hauled away, the rest exclaimed, "Don't disgrace us, Oh brother, nor falsify those who died before you!"

19 Now you aren't ignorant of the charm of brotherhood, which the Divine and all wise Providence has imparted through fathers to children, and has engendered through the mother's womb. 20 In which these brothers having remained an equal time, and having been formed for the same period, and been increased by the same blood, and having been perfected through the same principle of life, 21 and having been brought forth at equal intervals, and having sucked milk from the same springs, hence their brotherly souls are reared up lovingly together, 22 and increase the more powerfully because of this simultaneous rearing, and by daily companionship, and by other education, and exercise in God's law.

23 Brotherly love being thus sympathetically constituted, the seven kindred had a more sympathetic mutual harmony. 24 Because being educated in the same law, and practising the same virtues, and reared up in a just course of life, they increased this harmony with each other. 25 Because the same ardour for what's right and honourable increased their goodwill and harmony towards each other. 26 Because it acting along with religion, made their brotherly feeling more desirable to them. 27 And yet, although nature, companionship, and virtuous morals increased their brotherly love, those who were left endured to see their kindred, who were mistreated for their religion, tortured even to death.

14:1 More that this, they even urged them on to this mis-

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treatment; so that they not only despised pains themselves, but they even got the better of their affections of brotherly love. 2 Reasoning is more royal than a king, and freer than freemen! 3 What a sacred and harmonious concert of the seven kindred as about piety! 4 None of the seven youths turned cowardly or shrank back from death. 5 But all of them, as though running the road to immortality, hastened on to death through tortures. 6 Because just as hands and feet are moved sympathetically with the directions of the soul, so those holy youths agreed to death for religion's sake, as through the immortal soul of religion. 7 Oh holy seven of harmonious kindred! Because as the seven days of creation, about religion, 8 so the youths, circling around the number seven, annulled the fear of torments. 9 We now shudder at the recital of the affliction of those young men; but they not only saw, and not only heard the immediate execution of the threat, but undergoing it, persevered; and that through the pains of fire. 10 What could be more painful? Because the power of fire, being sharp and quick, speedily dissolved their bodies.

A mother's love and faith

11 Don't think it wonderful that reasoning ruled over those men in their torments, when even a woman's mind despised more manifold pains. 12 Because the mother of those seven youths endured the rackings of each of her children.

13 Consider how comprehensive is the love of offspring, which draws every one to sympathy of affection, 14 where irrational animals possess a similar sympathy and love for their offspring with men. 15 The tame birds frequenting the roofs of our houses defend their fledglings. 16 Others build their nests, and hatch their young, on the tops of mountains and in the precipices of valleys, and the holes and tops of trees, and keep away the intruder. 17 If not able to do this, they fly circling round them in agony of affection, calling out in their own note, and save their offspring in whatever manner they're able. 18 But why should we point attention to the sympathy towards children shown by irrational animals? 19 Even bees, at the season of honey-making, attack all who approach, and pierce with their sting, as with a sword, those who draw near their hive, and repel them even to death. 20 But sympathy with her children didn't turn away the mother of the young men, who had a spirit kindred with that of Avraham.

15:1 Oh reasoning of the sons, lord over the emotions, and religion more desirable to a mother than children! 2 The mother, when two things were set before her, religion and the safety of her seven sons for a time, on the conditional promise of a tyrant, 3 rather elected the religion which according to God preserves to eternal life. 4 In what way can I describe ethically the affections of parents towards their children, the resemblance of soul and of form impressed into the small type of a child in a wonderful manner, especially through the greater sympathy of mothers with the feelings of those born of them! 5 Because by how much mothers are by nature weak in disposition and prolific in offspring, by so much the fonder they're of children. 6 Of all mothers, the mother of the seven was the fondest of children, who in seven childbirths had deeply engendered love towards them. 7 Through her many pains undergone in connection with each one, she was compelled to feel sympathy with them; 8 yet, through fear of God, she neglected the temporary salvation of her children. 9 Not only so, but on account of the excellent disposition to the law, her maternal affection towards them was increased. 10 Because they were both just and temperate, and courageous, high-minded, fond of their kindred, and so fond of their mother that even to death they obeyed her by observing the law.

11 Yet, though there were so many circumstances connected with love of children to draw on a mother to sympathy, in the case of none of them were the various tortures able to pervert her principle. 12 But she inclined each one separately and all together to death for religion. 13 Oh holy nature and parental feeling, and reward of bringing up children, and unconquerable maternal affection! 14 At the racking and roasting of each one of them, the observant mother was prevented by religion from changing. 15 She saw her children's flesh dissolving around the fire, and their extremities quivering on the ground, and the flesh of their heads dropped forward down to their beards, like masks.

16 Oh you mother, who was tried at this time with bitterer pangs than those at birth! 17 Oh you only woman who've produced perfect holiness! 18 Your firstborn, expiring, didn't turn you, nor the second, looking miserable in his torments, nor the third, breathing out his soul. 19 You didn't weep when you saw each of their eyes looking sternly at their tortures, and their nostrils foreboding death! 20 When you saw children's flesh heaped on children's flesh that'd been torn off, heads decapitated on heads, dead falling on the dead, and a choir of children turned through torture into a burying ground, you didn't lament. 21 Not so do siren melodies or songs of swans attract the hearers to listening, Oh voices of children calling on your mother in the middle of torments! 22 With what and what manner of torments was the mother herself tortured, as her sons were undergoing the wheel and the fires! 23 But religious reasoning, having strengthened her courage in the middle of sufferings, enabled her to forego, for the time, parental love.

24 Although seeing the destruction of seven children, the noble mother, after one embrace, stripped off her feelings through faith in God. 25 Because just as in a council room, seeing in her own soul vehement counsellors, nature and parentage and love of her children, and the racking of her children, 26 she holding two votes, one for the death, the other for the preservation of her children, 27 didn't lean to that which would have saved her children for the safety of a brief space. 28 But this daughter of Avraham remembered his holy fortitude.

29 Oh holy mother of a nation, avenger of the law, defender of religion, and prime bearer in the battle of the affections! 30 Oh you nobler in endurance than males, and more courageous than men in perseverance! 31 Because

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like Noah's ship, bearing the world in the world-filling flood, bore up against the waves, 32 so you, the guardian of the law, when surrounded on every side by the flood of emotions, and assaulted by violent storms which were the torments of your children, bore up nobly against the storms against religion.

The mother encourages her sons to remain faithful

16:1 If, then, even a woman, and that an aged one, and the mother of seven children, endured to see her children's torments even to death, it must be admitted that religious reasoning is master even of the emotions. 2 I've proved, then, that not only men have obtained the mastery of their emotions, but also that a woman despised the greatest torments. 3 The lions around Daniyel weren't so fierce, nor the furnace of Mishael burning with most vehement fires as that natural love of children burnt within her, when she saw her seven sons tortured. 4 But with the reasoning of religion the mother quenched emotions so great and powerful. 5 Because we must consider also this: that, had the woman been faint hearted, as being their mother, she'd have lamented over them, and perhaps might have spoken thus: 6 "Ah! I'm wretched and many times miserable, who having born seven sons, have become the mother of none. 7 Oh seven useless childbirths, and seven profitless periods of labour, and fruitless givings of suck, and miserable nursings at the breast. 8 Vainly, for your sakes, Oh sons, have I endured many pangs, and the more difficult anxieties of rearing. 9 Alas, of my children, some of you unmarried, and some who've married to no profit, I won't see your children, nor have the joy of being a grandmother. 10 Ah, that I who had many and fair children, should be a lone widow full of sorrows! 11 Nor, should I die, will I have a son to bury me." But with such a lament as this, the holy and God-fearing mother wept for none of them. 12 Nor did she divert any of them from death, nor grieve for them as for the dead. 13 But as one possessed with an adamant mind, and as one bringing forth again her full number of sons to immortality, she rather urged them to death on behalf of religion. 14 Oh woman, soldier of God for religion, you, aged and a female, have conquered through endurance even a tyrant; and even though weak, have been found more powerful in actions and words. 15 Because when you were seized along with your children, you stood looking at Eleazar in torture, and said to your sons in the Hebrew tongue, 16 "O sons, the contest is noble, to which you being called as a witness for the nation, strive zealously for the laws of your country. 17 Because it'd be disgraceful if this old man endured pains for the sake of righteousness, and that you who are younger would be afraid of the tortures. 18 Remember that through God, you obtained existence and have enjoyed it. 19 Therefore, you ought to bear every affliction because of God. 20 Because him also our father Avraham was zealous to sacrifice Yitshak (Isaac) our progenitor, and didn't shudder at the sight of his own paternal hand descending down with the sword on him. 21 The righteous Daniyel was thrown to the lions; and Hananyah, Azaryah, and Mishael were hurled into a fiery furnace, yet they endured through God. 22 You, then, having the same faith towards God, don't be troubled. 23 Because it's unreasonable that they who know religion wouldn't stand up against troubles. 24 With these arguments, the mother of seven, exhorting each of her sons, encouraged and persuaded them not to transgress God's commandment. 25 They saw this, too, that those who die for God, live to God, like Avraham, Yitshak, Ya'akov (Jacob), and all the patriarchs.

The mother's death and the martyrs' reward

17:1 Some of the spearbearers said that when she herself was about to be seized for the purpose of being put to death, she threw herself on the pile, rather than let them touch her body. 2 Oh you mother, who together with seven children destroyed the violence of the tyrant, and rendered void his wicked intentions, and exhibited the nobleness of faith! 3 Because you, like a house bravely built on the pillar of your children, bore the shock of tortures without swaying. 4 Cheer up, therefore, Oh holy-minded mother! Hold the firm hope of your steadfastness with God. 5 Not so gracious does the moon appear with the stars in heaven, as you're established as honourable before God, and fixed in the sky with your sons whom you illuminated with religion to the stars. 6 Because your bearing of children was after the manner of a child of Avraham.

7 If it were lawful for us to paint as on a tablet the religion of your story, the spectators wouldn't shudder at seeing the mother of seven children enduring for the sake of religion various tortures even to death. 8 It'd have been a worthwhile thing to have inscribed on the tomb itself these words as a memorial to those of the nation, 9 "Here an aged priest, and an aged woman, and seven sons, are buried through the violence of a tyrant, who wished to destroy the society of the Ivrim (Hebrews). 10 These also avenged their nation, looking to God, and enduring torments to death." 11 Because it was truly a divine contest which was carried through by them. 12 Because at that time virtue presided over the contest, approving the victory through endurance, namely, immortality, eternal life. 13 Eleazar was the first to contend. The mother of the seven children entered the contest, and the kindred contended. 14 The tyrant was the antagonist; and the world and living men were the spectators. 15 Reverence for God conquered, and crowned her own athletes. 16 Who didn't admire those champions of true legislation? Who weren't amazed? 17 The tyrant himself, and all their council, admired their endurance, 18 through which, they also now stand beside the divine throne and live a blessed life. 19 Because Mosheh (Moses) says, "All the saints are under your hands." 20 These, therefore, having been sanctified through God, have been honoured not only with this honour, but that also by the fact that because of them, the enemy didn't overcome our nation. 21 That tyrant was punished and their country purified. 22 Because they became the ransom to the sin of the nation. The Divine Providence saved Yisrael (Israel), which was afflicted before, by the blood of those pious ones and the death that appeased

anger. 23 Because the tyrant Antiokos (Antiochus), looking to their courageous virtue and to their endurance in torture, proclaimed that endurance as an example to his soldiers. 24 They proved to be to him noble and brave for land battles and for sieges; and he conquered and stormed the towns of all his enemies.

A call to follow their example

18:1 Oh Israeli children, descendants of the seed of Avraham, obey this law and in every way be religious, 2 knowing that religious reasoning is lord of the emotions, and those not only inward but outward.

3 Therefore those people who gave up their bodies to pains for the sake of religion weren't only admired by men, but were deemed worthy of a divine portion. 4 The nation through them obtained peace, and having renewed the observance of the law in their country, drove the enemy out of the land. 5 The tyrant Antiokos was both punished on earth, and is punished now that he's dead; for when he was quite unable to compel the Israelis to adopt foreign customs, and to desert the manner of life of their fathers, 6 then, departing from Yerushalem (Jerusalem), he made war against the Persians. 7 The righteous mother of the seven children spoke also as follows to her offspring: "I was a pure virgin, and didn't go beyond my father's house, but I took care of the rib from which woman was made. 8 No destroyer of the desert or ravisher of the plain injured me, nor did the destructive, deceitful snake make plunder of my chaste virginity. I remained with my husband during the time of my maturity. 9 When these, my children, arrived at maturity, their father died. He was blessed! Because having strived for a life of fertility in children, he wasn't grieved with a period of loss of children. 10 He used to teach you, when yet with you, the law and the prophets. 11 He used to read to you about the slaying of Hevel (Abel) by Kayin (Cain), the offering up of Yitshak (Isaac), and the imprisonment of Yosef (Joseph). 12 He used to tell you of the zealous Pinhas, and informed you of Hananyah, Azaryah, and Mishael in the fire. 13 He used to glorify Daniyel, who was in the den of lions, and pronounce him blessed. 14 He used to remind you of the scripture of Yeshayah (Isaiah), which says, "Even if you pass through the fire, it won't burn you." 15 He chanted to you David, the hymn writer, who says, "Many are the afflictions of the just." 16 He declared the proverbs of Shelomoh (Solomon), who says, "He's a tree of life to all those who do His will." 17 He used to confirm what Yehezkel (Ezekiel) said: "Will these dry bones live?" 18 Because he didn't forget the song which Mosheh (Moses) taught, proclaiming, "I'll kill, and I'll make alive." 19 This is our life and the length of our days.

20 Oh that bitter, and yet not bitter, day when the bitter tyrant of the Hellains (Greeks), quenching fire with fire in his cruel cauldrons, brought with boiling rage the seven sons of the daughter of Avraham to the rack, and to all his torments! 21 He pierced the balls of their eyes, and cut out their tongues, and put them to death with varied tortures. 22 Therefore divine retribution pursued and will pursue the pestilent wretch. 23 But the children of Avraham, with their victorious mother, are assembled together to the choir of their father, having received pure and immortal souls from God. 24 To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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