

# **Baḥyā Ben Joseph Ibn Paqūda [addendum] Encyclopedia Article**

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# Baḥyā Ben Joseph Ibn Paqūda [addendum]

Although Baḥyā ben Joseph ibn Paqūda follows the major categories of Sufism in his exploration of human motivation, he also manages to find a social justification for many aspects of Judaism. For example, one of the virtues he discusses is restraint or abstemiousness, the need to resist our desires. He argues that we can pursue this socially by our attitude to others by acquiring a cheerful and calm attitude toward others. A means of being disposed to act thus is the Torah and its laws, for these have the effect of training ourselves to restrain our desires and bring them under the rule of law. For Baḥyā the very private and personal moral rules that we adopt to bring us closer to God have a significant public element. The highest virtue is love of God, and to acquire this we need to practice personal asceticism, together with justice, good manners, and justice. Although the aim of his book on the duties of the heart is to show that Judaism is not only about external actions but has an inner spiritual dimension as well, he does not go to the extreme of denying the significance of law and prayer. On the contrary, he argues that the private and the public aspects of religion complement each other. His book also provides a detailed account of how that works in the case of Judaism.

## See Also

Asceticism; Jewish Philosophy; Justice; Moral Rules and Principles; Sufism.

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## Works by Baḥyā

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