

To Alan

Lin Yang

I would like to thank you here for each effort you made for me, each piece of advise you provided to you and each chance you gave me.

You are a crucial reason to encourage me to come to Edinburgh and I do learn a lot from you. You showed me not only what a scholarly scholar should be, but also what a gracious person should be. I am always impressed by your enrichment on logic background, surprised by your aspiration and energy to learning new knowledge and techniques and touched by your warm-hearted behaviours and helps to others.

I am not good at express myself. I just hope to present my admiration and appreciation to you with my poor expression. To reduce such kind of suffering which may be caused by reading my clumsy words ☺, I will finish it with an old joke. I hope you will like it and also wish your life be full of smiles and laughter everyday.

A joke about logic

A young man knocks on the door of the renowned scholar, Rabbi Shwartz. "My name is Sean Goldstein and I wish to study the Talmud."

"Do you know Aramaic?"

"No."

"Hebrew?"

"No."

"Have you read the Talmud?"

"No, Rabbi. But don't worry. I've an honours degree in philosophy and have just finished a doctorate at Harvard in Socratic Logic."

"I seriously doubt," replies the Rabbi, "that you are yet ready to study the Talmud. But if you wish I will test your logic and if you pass I will teach you the Talmud." The young man agrees.

Rabbi Shwartz holds up two fingers. "Two men come down a chimney. One with a dirty face and the other with a clean face. Which one washes his face.?"

"The one with the dirty face," he answers wearily.

"Wrong. The one with the clean face washes his face. Simple logic. The one with the dirty face looks at the one with the clean face and thinks his face is clean. The one with the clean face looks at the one with the clean face sees his friend's face is dirty so presumes his must be dirty too. So the one with the clean face washes."

"Very clever. Give me another test."

"The Rabbi again holds up two fingers. Two men come down a chimney. One with a clean face and

one with a dirty face. Which one washes his face?"

"We've already established that. It is the one with the clean face."

"Wrong. Each one washes his face. Examine the logic. The one with the clean face washes his face because he sees his friend's face is dirty. Then the one with the dirty face also washes his face because he sees even the clean faced man needs to wash his face."

"I never thought of that, please test me again."

So the Rabbi once more holds up two fingers. "Two men come down a chimney. One with a clean face and one with a dirty face. Which one washes his face."

"Both."

"Wrong. The man with the dirty face looks at the man with the clean face and thinks his face is clean so he doesn't wash. When the man with the clean face sees that the man with the dirty face doesn't wash, he doesn't wash either."

The young man is now desperate. "Give me one more try," he pleads.

"No, not yet." said the Rabbi. "Perhaps you now see why logic and philosophy are an insufficient basis for studying the Talmud. Tell me how can two men come down the same chimney and one to have a dirty face and the other to have a clean face. The whole question is foolish. If you spend your life trying to answer foolish questions, all your answers will be foolish too."