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THE GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

BY

MOSES MAIMONIDES

TRANSLATED FROM

THE ORIGINAL ARABIC TEXT

BY

M. FRIEDLÄNDER, PHD

SECOND EDITION

REVISED THROUGHOUT

London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

[1904]

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PREFACE

The first Edition of the English Translation of Maimonides *Dalalāt al-Ḥairin* being exhausted without having fully supplied the demand, I prepared a second, revised edition of the Translation. In the new edition the three volumes of the first edition have been reduced to one volume by the elimination of the notes; besides Hebrew words and phrases have been eliminated or transliterated. By these changes the translator sought to produce a cheap edition in order to bring the work of Maimonides within the reach of all students of Theology and Jewish Literature.

M. FRIEDLÄNDER.

Jews' College, *July* 1904.

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PREFACE TO VOLUME ONE OF THE FIRST EDITION

IN compliance with a desire repeatedly expressed by the Committee of the Hebrew Literature Society, I have undertaken to translate Maimonides *Dalalāt al-Ḥairin*, better known by the Hebrew title *Moreh Nebuchim*, and I offer the first instalment of my labours in the present volume. This contains--(1) A short Life of Maimonides, in which special attention is given to his alleged apostasy. (2) An analysis of the whole of the *Moreh Nebuchim*. (3) A translation of the First Part of this work from the Arabic, with explanatory and critical notes.

Parts of the Translation have been contributed by Mr. Joseph Abrahams, B.A., Ph.D., and Rev. H. Gollancz--the Introduction by the former, and the first twenty-five chapters by the latter.

In conclusion I beg to tender my thanks to Rev. A. Loewy, Editor of the Publications of the Hebrew Literature Society, for his careful revision of my manuscript and proofs, and to Mr. A. Neubauer, M.A., for his kindness in supplying me with such information as I required.

M. FRIEDLÄNDER.

Jews' College, *June* 1881.

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THE LIFE OF MOSES MAIMONIDES

"BEFORE the sun of Eli had set the son of Samuel had risen." Before the voice of the prophets had ceased to guide the people, the Interpreters of the Law, the Doctors of the Talmud, had commenced their labours, and before the Academies of Sura and of Pumbedita were closed, centres of Jewish thought and learning were already flourishing in the far West. The circumstances which led to the transference of the head-quarters of Jewish learning from the East to the West in the tenth century are thus narrated in the *Sefer ha-kabbalah* of Rabbi Abraham ben David:

"After the death of Hezekiah, the head of the Academy and Prince of the Exile, the academies were closed and no new Geonim were appointed. But long before that time Heaven had willed that there should be a discontinuance of the pecuniary gifts which used to be sent from Palestine, North Africa and Europe. Heaven had also decreed that a ship sailing from Bari should be captured by Ibn Romahis, commander of the naval forces of Abd-er-rahman al-nasr. Four distinguished Rabbis were thus made prisoners--Rabbi Hushiel, father of Rabbi Hananel, Rabbi Moses, father of Rabbi Hanok, Rabbi Shemarjahu, son of Rabbi Elhanan, and a fourth whose name has not been recorded. They were engaged in a mission to collect subsidies in aid of the Academy in Sura. The captor sold them as slaves; Rabbi Hushiel was carried to Kairuan, R. Shemarjahu was left in Alexandria, and R. Moses was brought to Cordova. These slaves were ransomed by their brethren and were soon placed in important positions. When Rabbi Moses was brought to Cordova, it was supposed that he was uneducated. In that city there was a synagogue known at that time by the name of *Keneset ha-midrash*, and Rabbi Nathan, renowned for his great piety, was the head of the congregation. The members of the community used to hold meetings at which the Talmud was read and discussed. One day when Rabbi Nathan was expounding the Talmud and was unable to give a satisfactory explanation of the passage under discussion, Rabbi Moses promptly removed the difficulty and at the same time answered several questions which were submitted to him. Thereupon R. Nathan thus addressed the assembly:--'I am no longer your leader; that stranger in sackcloth shall henceforth be my teacher, and you shall appoint him to be your chief.' The admiral, on hearing of the high attainments of his prisoner, desired to revoke the sale, but the king would not permit this retraction, being pleased to learn that his Jewish subjects were no longer dependent for their religious instruction on the schools in the East.

Henceforth the schools in the West asserted their independence, and even surpassed the parent institutions. The Caliphs, mostly opulent, gave every encouragement to philosophy and poetry; and, being generally liberal in sentiment, they entertained kindly feelings towards their Jewish subjects.

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[paragraph continues] These were allowed to compete for the acquisition of wealth and honour on equal terms with their Mohammedan fellow-citizens. Philosophy and poetry were consequently cultivated by the Jews with the same zest as by the Arabs. Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Hasdai, Judah ha-levi, Hananel, Alfasi, the Ibn Ezras, and others who flourished in that period were the ornament of their age, and the pride of the Jews at all times. The same favourable condition was maintained during the reign of the Omeiyades; but when the Moravides and the Almohades came into power, the horizon darkened once more, and misfortunes threatened to destroy the fruit of several centuries. Amidst this gloom there appeared a brilliant luminary which sent forth rays of light and comfort: this was Moses Maimonides.

Moses, the son of Maimon, was born at Cordova, on the 14th of Nisan, 4895 (March 30, 1135). Although the date of his birth has been recorded with the utmost accuracy, no trustworthy notice has been preserved concerning the early period of his life. But his entire career is a proof that he did not pass his youth in idleness; his education must have been in harmony with the hope of his parents, that one day he would, like his father and forefathers, hold the honourable office of *Dayyan* or *Rabbi*, and distinguish himself in theological learning. It is probable that the Bible and the Talmud formed the chief subjects of his study; but he unquestionably made the best use of the opportunities which Mohammedan Spain, and especially Cordova, afforded him for the acquisition of general knowledge. It is not mentioned in any of his writings who were his teachers; his father, as it seems, was his principal guide and instructor in many branches of knowledge. David Conforte, in his historical work, *Ḳore ha-dorot*, states that Maimonides was the pupil of two eminent men, namely, Rabbi Joseph Ibn Migash and Ibn Roshd (Averroes); that by the former he was instructed in the Talmud, and by the latter in philosophy. This statement seems to be erroneous, as Maimonides was only a child at the time when Rabbi Joseph died, and already far advanced in years when he became acquainted with the writings of Ibn Roshd. The origin of this mistake, as regards Rabbi Joseph, can easily be traced. Maimonides in his *Mishneh Tora*, employs, in reference to R. Isaac Alfasi and R. Joseph, the expression "my teachers" (*rabbotai*), and this expression, by which he merely describes his indebtedness to their writings, has been taken in its literal meaning.

Whoever his teachers may have been, it is evident that he was well prepared by them for his future mission. At the age of twenty-three he entered upon his literary career with a treatise on the Jewish Calendar. It is unknown where this work was composed, whether in Spain or in Africa. The author merely states that he wrote it at the request of a friend, whom he, however, leaves unnamed. The subject was generally considered to be very abstruse, and to involve a thorough knowledge of mathematics. Maimonides must, therefore, even at this early period, have been regarded as a profound scholar by those who knew him. The treatise is of an elementary character.--It was probably about the same time that he wrote, in Arabic, an explanation of Logical terms, *Millot higgayon*, which Moses Ibn Tibbon translated into Hebrew.

The earlier period of his life does not seem to have been marked by any incident worth noticing. It may, however, be easily conceived that the later

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period of his life, which was replete with interesting incidents, engaged the exclusive attention of his biographers. So much is certain, that his youth was beset with trouble and anxiety; the peaceful development of science and philosophy was disturbed by wars raging between Mohammedans and Christians, and also between the several Mohammedan sects. The Moravides, who had succeeded the Omeiyades, were opposed to liberality and toleration; but they were surpassed in cruelty and fanaticism by their successors. Cordova was taken by the Almohades in the year 1148, when Maimonides was about thirteen years old. The victories of the

Almohades, first under the leadership of the Mahadi Ibn Tamurt, and then under Abd-al-mumen, were, according to all testimonies, attended by acts of excessive intolerance. Abd-al-mumen would not suffer in his dominions any other faith but the one which he himself confessed. Jews and Christians had the choice between Islam and emigration or a martyr's death. The *Sefer ha-ḳabbalah* contains the following description of one of the persecutions which then occurred:

"After the death of R. Joseph ha-levi the study of the Torah was interrupted, although he left a son and a nephew, both of whom had under his tuition become profound scholars. 'The righteous man (R. Joseph) was taken away on account of the approaching evils. After the death of R. Joseph there came for the Jews a time of oppression and distress. They quitted their homes, 'Such as were for death, to death, and such as were for the sword, to the sword; and such as were for the famine, to the famine, and such as were for the captivity, to the captivity'; and--it might be added to the words of Jeremiah (xv. 2)--'such as were for apostasy, to apostasy.' All this happened through the sword of Ibn Tamurt, who, in 4902 (1142), determined to blot out the name of Israel, and actually left no trace of the Jews in any part of his empire."

Ibn Verga in his work on Jewish martyrdom, in *Shebet Jehudah*, gives the following account of events then happening:--"In the year 4902 the armies of Ibn Tamurt made their appearance. A proclamation was issued that any one who refused to adopt Islam would be put to death, and his property would be confiscated. Thereupon the Jews assembled at the gate of the royal palace and implored the king for mercy. He answered--'It is because I have compassion on you, that I command you to become Muslemim; for I desire to save you from eternal punishment.' The Jews replied--'Our salvation depends on our observance of the Divine Law; you are the master of our bodies and of our property, but our souls will be judged by the King who gave them to us, and to whom they will return; whatever be our future fate, you, O king, will not be held responsible for it.' 'I do not desire to argue with you,' said the king; 'for I know you will argue according to your own religion. It is my absolute will that you either adopt my religion or be put to death. The Jews then proposed to emigrate, but the king would not allow his subjects to serve another king. In vain did the Jews implore the nobles to intercede in their behalf; the king remained inexorable. Thus many congregations forsook their religion; but within a month the king came to a sudden death; the son, believing that his father had met with an untimely end as a punishment for his cruelty to the Jews, assured the involuntary converts that it would be indifferent to him what

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religion they professed. Hence many Jews returned at once to the religion of their fathers, while others hesitated for some time, from fear that the king meant to entrap the apparent converts." From such records it appears that during these calamities some of the Jews fled to foreign countries, some died as martyrs, and many others submitted for a time to outward conversion. Which course was followed by the family of Maimon? Did they sacrifice personal comfort and safety to their religious conviction, or did they, on the contrary, for the sake of mere worldly considerations dissemble their faith and pretend that they completely submitted to the dictates of

the tyrant? An answer to this question presents itself in the following note which Maimonides has appended to his commentary on the Mishnah: "I have now finished this work in accordance with my promise, and I fervently beseech the Almighty to save us from error. If there be one who shall discover an inaccuracy in this Commentary or shall have a better explanation to offer, let my attention be directed unto it; and let me be exonerated by the fact that I have worked with far greater application than any one who writes for the sake of pay and profit, and that I have worked under the most trying circumstances. For Heaven had ordained that we be exiled, and we were therefore driven about from place to place; I was thus compelled to work at the Commentary while travelling by land, or crossing the sea. It might have sufficed to mention that during that time I, in addition, was engaged in other studies, but I preferred to give the above explanation in order to encourage those who wish to criticise or annotate the Commentary, and at the same time to account for the slow progress of this work. I, Moses, the son of Maimon, commenced it when I was twenty-three years old, and finished it in Egypt, at the age of thirty[-three] years, in the year 1479 Sel.(1168)."

The *Sefer Haredim* of R. Eleazar Askari of Safed contains the following statement of Maimonides:--"On Sabbath evening, the 4th of Iyyar, 4925 (1165), I went on board; on the following Sabbath the waves threatened to destroy our lives. . . . On the 3rd of Sivan, I arrived safely at Acco, *and was thus rescued from apostasy*. . . . On Tuesday, the 4th of Marḥeshvan, 4926, I left Acco, arrived at Jerusalem after a journey beset with difficulties and with dangers, and prayed on the spot of the great and holy house on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of Marḥeshvan. On Sunday, the 9th of that month, I left Jerusalem and visited the cave of Machpelah, in Hebron."

From these two statements it may be inferred that in times of persecution Maimonides and his family did not seek to protect their lives and property by dissimulation. They submitted to the troubles of exile in order that they might remain faithful to their religion. Carmoly, Geiger, Munk, and others are of opinion that the treatise of Maimonides on involuntary apostasy, as well as the accounts of some Mohammedan authors, contain strong evidence to show that there was a time when the family of Maimon publicly professed their belief in Mohammed. A critical examination of these documents compels us to reject their evidence as inadmissible.--After a long period of trouble and anxiety, the family of Maimon arrived at Fostat, in Egypt, and settled there. David, the brother of Moses Maimonides, carried on a trade in precious stones, while Moses occupied himself with his studies and interested himself in the communal affairs of the Jews.

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It appears that for some time Moses was supported by his brother, and when this brother died, he earned a living by practising as a physician; but he never sought or derived any benefit from his services to his community, or from his correspondence or from the works he wrote for the instruction of his brethren; the satisfaction of being of service to his fellow-creatures was for him a sufficient reward.

The first public act in which Maimonides appears to have taken a leading part was a decree promulgated by the Rabbinical authorities in Cairo in the year 1167. The decree begins as follows--"In times gone by, when storms and tempests threatened us, we used to wander about from place to place but by the mercy of the Almighty we have now been enabled to find here a resting-place. On our arrival, we noticed to our great dismay that the learned were disunited; that none of them turned his attention to the needs of the congregation. We therefore felt it our duty to undertake the task of guiding the holy flock, of inquiring into the condition of the community, of "reconciling the hearts of the fathers to their children," and of correcting their corrupt ways. The injuries are great, but we may succeed in effecting a cure, and--in accordance with the words of the prophet--'I will seek the lost one, and that which has been cast out I will bring back, and the broken one I will cure' (Micah iv. 6). When we therefore resolved to take the management of the communal affairs into our hands, we discovered the existence of a serious evil in the midst of the community," etc.

It was probably about that time that Maimon died. Letters of condolence were sent to his son Moses from all sides, both from Mohammedan and from Christian countries; in some instances the letters were several months on their way before they reached their destination.

The interest which Maimonides now took in communal affairs did not prevent him from completing the great and arduous work, the Commentary on the Mishnah, which he had begun in Spain and continued during his wanderings in Africa. In this Commentary he proposed to give the quintessence of the Gemara, to expound the meaning of each dictum in the Mishnah, and to state which of the several opinions had received the sanction of the Talmudical authorities. His object in writing this work was to enable those who are not disposed to study the Gemara, to understand the Mishnah, and to facilitate the study of the Gemara for those who are willing to engage in it. The commentator generally adheres to the explanations given in the Gemara, and it is only in cases where the *halakah*, or practical law, is not affected, that he ventures to dissent. He acknowledges the benefit he derived from such works of his predecessors as the Halakot of Alfasi, and the writings of the Geonim, but afterwards he asserted that errors which were discovered in his works arose from his implicit reliance on those authorities. His originality is conspicuous in the Introduction and in the treatment of general principles, which in some instances precedes the exposition of an entire section or chapter, in others that of a single rule. The commentator is generally concise, except when occasion is afforded to treat of ethical and theological principles, or of a scientific subject, such as weights and measures, or mathematical and astronomical problems. Although exhortations to virtue and warnings against vice are found in all parts of his work, they are especially abundant in the Commentary on *Abot*, which is prefaced by a

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separate psychological treatise, called *The Eight Chapters*. The dictum "He who speaketh much commits a sin," elicited a lesson on the economy of speech; the explanation of *'olam ha-ba* in the

treatise Sanhedrin (xi. 1) led him to discuss the principles of faith, and to lay down the thirteen articles of the Jewish creed. The Commentary was written in Arabic, and was subsequently translated into Hebrew and into other languages. The estimation in which the Commentary was held may be inferred from the following fact: When the Jews in Italy became acquainted with its method and spirit, through a Hebrew translation of one of its parts, they sent to Spain in search of a complete Hebrew version of the Commentary. R. Simḥah, who had been entrusted with the mission, found no copy extant, but he succeeded, through the influence of Rabbi Shelomoh ben Aderet, in causing a Hebrew translation of this important work to be prepared.--In the Introduction, the author states that he has written a Commentary on the Babylonian Talmud treatise Ḥullin and on nearly three entire sections, viz., *Mo'ed*, *Nashim*, and *Nezikin*. Of all these Commentaries only the one on *Rosh ha-shanah* is known.

In the year 1572 Maimonides wrote the *Iggeret Teman*, or *Petaḥ-tiḳvah* ("Letter to the Jews in Yemen," or "Opening of hope") in response to a letter addressed to him by Rabbi Jacob al-Fayumi on the critical condition of the Jews in Yemen. Some of these Jews had been forced into apostasy others were made to believe that certain passages in the Bible alluded to the mission of Mohammed; others again had been misled by an impostor who pretended to be the Messiah. The character and style of Maimonides reply appear to have been adapted to the intellectual condition of the Jews in Yemen, for whom it was written. These probably read the Bible with Midrashic commentaries, and preferred the easy and attractive *Agadah* to the more earnest study of the *Halakah*. It is therefore not surprising that the letter contains remarks and interpretations which cannot be reconciled with the philosophical and logical method by which all the other works of Maimonides are distinguished. After a few complimentary words, in which the author modestly disputes the justice of the praises lavished upon him, he attempts to prove that the present sufferings of the Jews, together with the numerous instances of apostasy, were foretold by the prophets, especially by Daniel, and must not perplex the faithful. It must be borne in mind, he continues, that the attempts made in past times to do away with the Jewish religion, had invariably failed; the same would be the fate of the present attempts; for "religious persecutions are of but short duration." The arguments which profess to demonstrate that in certain Biblical passages allusion is made to Mohammed, are based on interpretations which are totally opposed to common sense. He urges that the Jews, faithfully adhering to their religion, should impress their children with the greatness of the Revelation on Mount Sinai, and of the miracles wrought through Moses; they also should remain firm in the belief that God will send the Messiah to deliver their nation, but they must abandon futile calculations of the Messianic period, and beware of impostors. Although there be signs which indicate the approach of the promised deliverance, and the times seem to be the period of the last and most cruel persecution mentioned in the visions of Daniel (xi. and xii.), the person in Yemen who pretends to be the Messiah

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is an impostor, and if care be not taken, he is sure to do mischief. Similar impostors in Cordova, France, and Africa, have deceived the multitude and brought great troubles upon the Jews.--Yet,

inconsistently with this sound advice the author gives a positive date of the Messianic time, on the basis of an old tradition; the inconsistency is so obvious that it is impossible to attribute this passage to Maimonides himself. It is probably spurious, and has, perhaps, been added by the translator. With the exception of the rhymed introduction, the letter was written in Arabic, "in order that all should be able to read and understand it"; for that purpose the author desires that copies should be made of it, and circulated among the Jews. Rabbi Naḥum, of the Maghreb, translated the letter into Hebrew.

The success in the first great undertaking of explaining the Mishnah encouraged Maimonides to propose to himself another task of a still more ambitious character. In the Commentary on the Mishnah, it was his object that those who were unable to read the Gemara should be made acquainted with the results obtained by the Amoraim in the course of their discussions on the Mishnah. But the Mishnah, with the Commentary, was not such a code of laws as might easily be consulted in cases of emergency; only the initiated would be able to find the section, the chapter, and the paragraph in which the desired information could be found. The *halakah* had, besides, been further developed since the time when the Talmud was compiled. The changed state of things had suggested new questions; these were discussed and settled by the Geonim, whose decisions, being contained in special letters or treatises, were not generally accessible. Maimonides therefore undertook to compile a complete code, which would contain, in the language and style of the Mishnah, and without discussion, the whole of the Written and the Oral Law, all the precepts recorded in the Talmud, Sifra, Sifre and Tosefta, and the decisions of the Geonim. According to the plan of the author, this work was to present a solution of every question touching the religious, moral, or social duties of the Jews. It was not in any way his object to discourage the study of the Talmud and the Midrash; he only sought to diffuse a knowledge of the Law amongst those who, through incapacity or other circumstances, were precluded from that study. In order to ensure the completeness of the code, the author drew up a list of the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Pentateuch, divided them into fourteen groups, these again he subdivided, and thus showed how many positive and negative precepts were contained in each section of the Mishneh torah. The principles by which he was guided in this arrangement were laid down in a separate treatise, called *Sefer ha-mizvot*. Works of a similar kind, written by his predecessors, as the *Halakot gedolot* of R. Shimon Kahira, and the several *Azharot* were, according to Maimonides, full of errors, because their authors had not adopted any proper method. But an examination of the rules laid down by Maimonides and of their application leads to the conclusion that his results were not less arbitrary; as has, in fact, been shown by the criticisms of Naḥmanides. The *Sefer ha-mizvot* was written in Arabic, and thrice translated into Hebrew, namely, by Rabbi Abraham ben Ḥisdai, Rabbi Shelomoh ben Joseph ben Job, and Rabbi Moses Ibn Tibbon. Maimonides himself desired to translate the book into Hebrew, but to his disappointment he found no time.

This *Sefer ha-mizvot* was executed as a preparation for his principal work, the *Mishneh Torah*, or *Yad ha-ḥazakah*, which consists of an Introduction and fourteen Books. In the Introduction the author first describes the chain of tradition from Moses to the close of the Talmud, and then he explains his method in compiling the work. He distinguishes between the dicta found in the Talmud, Sifre, Sifra, or Tosefta, on the one hand, and the dicta of the Geonim on the other; the former were binding on all Jews, the latter only as far as their necessity and their utility or the authority of their propounders was recognized. Having once for all stated the sources from which he compiled his work, he did not deem it necessary to name in each case the authority for his opinion or the particular passage from which he derived his dictum. Any addition of references to each paragraph he probably considered useless to the uninformed and superfluous to the learned. At a later time he discovered his error, he being himself unable to find again the sources of some of his decisions. Rabbi Joseph Caro, in his commentary on the *Mishneh Torah*, termed *Keseph Mishneh*, remedied this deficiency. The Introduction is followed by the enumeration of the six hundred and thirteen precepts and a description of the plan of the work, its division into fourteen books, and the division of the latter into sections, chapters, and paragraphs.

According to the author, the *Mishneh Torah* is a mere compendium of the Talmud; but he found sufficient opportunities to display his real genius, his philosophical mind, and his ethical doctrines. For in stating what the traditional Law enjoined he had to exercise his own judgment, and to decide whether a certain dictum was meant to be taken literally or figuratively whether it was the final decision of a majority or the rejected opinion of a minority; whether it was part of the Oral Law or a precept founded on the scientific views of a particular author; and whether it was of universal application or was only intended for a special period or a special locality. The first Book, *Sefer ha-madda*, is the embodiment of his own ethical and theological theories, although he frequently refers to the Sayings of our Sages, and employs the phraseology of the Talmud. Similarly, the section on the Jewish Calendar, *Hilkot ha-'ibur*, may be considered as his original work. In each group of the *halakot*, its source, a certain passage of the Pentateuch, is first quoted, with its traditional interpretation, and then the detailed rules follow in systematic order. The *Mishneh Torah* was written by the author in pure Hebrew; when subsequently a friend asked him to translate it into Arabic, he said he would prefer to have his Arabic writings translated into Hebrew instead of the reverse. The style is an imitation of the Mishnah he did not choose, the author says, the philosophical style, because that would be unintelligible to the common reader; nor did he select the prophetic style, because that would not harmonize with the subject.

Ten years of hard work by day and by night were spent in the compilation of this code, which had originally been undertaken for "his own benefit, to save him in his advanced age the trouble and the necessity of consulting the Talmud on every occasion." Maimonides knew very well that his work would meet with the opposition of those whose ignorance it would expose, also of those who were incapable of comprehending it, and of those who were inclined to condemn every deviation from their own preconceived notions.

[paragraph continues] But he had the satisfaction to learn that it was well received in most of the congregations of Israel, and that there was a general desire to possess and study it. This success confirmed him in his hope that at a later time, when all cause for jealousy would have disappeared, the *Mishneh Torah* would be received by all Jews as an authoritative code. This hope has not been realized. The genius, earnestness, and zeal of Maimonides are generally recognized; but there is no absolute acceptance of his dicta. The more he insisted on his infallibility, the more did the Rabbinical authorities examine his words and point out errors wherever they believed that they could discover any. It was not always from base motives, as contended by Maimonides and his followers, that his opinions were criticised and rejected. The language used by Rabbi Abraham ben David in his notes (*hasagot*) on the *Mishneh Torah* appears harsh and disrespectful, if read together with the text of the criticised passage, but it seems tame and mild if compared with expressions used now and then by Maimonides about men who happened to hold opinions differing from his own.

Maimonides received many complimentary letters, congratulating him upon his success; but likewise letters with criticisms and questions respecting individual *halakot*. In most cases he had no difficulty in defending his position. From the replies it must, however, be inferred that Maimonides made some corrections and additions, which were subsequently embodied in his work. The letters addressed to him on the *Mishneh Torah* and on other subjects were so numerous that he frequently complained of the time he had to spend in their perusal, and of the annoyance they caused him; but "he bore all this patiently, as he had learned in his youth to bear the yoke." He was not surprised that many misunderstood his words, for even the simple words of the Pentateuch, "the Lord is one," had met with the same fate. Some inferred from the fact that he treated fully of *'Olam ha-ba*, "the future state of the soul," and neglected to expatiate on the resurrection of the dead, that he altogether rejected that principle of faith. They therefore asked Rabbi Samuel ha-levi of Bagdad to state his opinion; the Rabbi accordingly discussed the subject; but, according to Maimonides, he attempted to solve the problem in a very unsatisfactory manner. The latter thereupon likewise wrote a treatise "On the Resurrection of the Dead," in which he protested his adherence to this article of faith. He repeated the opinion he had stated in the Commentary on the Mishnah and in the *Mishneh Torah*, but "in more words; the same idea being reiterated in various forms, as the treatise was only intended for women and for the common multitude."

These theological studies engrossed his attention to a great extent, but it did not occupy him exclusively. In a letter addressed to R. Jonathan, of Lunel, he says: "Although from my birth the Torah was betrothed to me, and continues to be loved by me as the wife of my youth, in whose love I find a constant delight, strange women whom I at first took into my house as her handmaids have become her rivals and absorb a portion of my time." He devoted himself especially to the study of medicine, in which he distinguished himself to such a degree, according to Alkifti, that "the King of the Franks in Ascalon wanted to appoint him as his

physician." Maimonides declined the honour. Alfadhel, the Vizier of Saladin king of Egypt, admired the genius of Maimonides, and bestowed upon him many distinctions. The

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name of Maimonides was entered on the roll of physicians, he received a pension, and was introduced to the court of Saladin. The method adopted in his professional practice he describes in a letter to his pupil, Ibn Akin, as follows: "You know how difficult this profession is for a conscientious and exact person who only states what he can support by argument or authority." This method is more fully described in a treatise on hygiene, composed for Alfadhel, son of Saladin, who was suffering from a severe illness and had applied to Maimonides for advice. In a letter to Rabbi Samuel Ibn Tibbon he alludes to the amount of time spent in his medical practice, and says I reside in Egypt (or Fostat); the king resides in Cairo, which lies about two Sabbath-day journeys from the first-named place. My duties to the king are very heavy. I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning; and when he or any of his children or the inmates of his harem are indisposed, I dare not quit Cairo, but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two of the royal officers fall sick, and then I have to attend them. As a rule, I go to Cairo very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens I do not return before the afternoon, when I am almost dying with hunger; but I find the antechambers filled with Jews and Gentiles, with nobles and common people, awaiting my return," etc.

Notwithstanding these heavy professional duties of court physician, Maimonides continued his theological studies. After having compiled a religious guide--*Mishneh Torah*--based on Revelation and Tradition, he found it necessary to prove that the principles there set forth were confirmed by philosophy. This task he accomplished in his *Dalalāt al-hairin*, "The Guide for the Perplexed," of which an analysis will be given below. It was composed in Arabic, and written in Hebrew characters. Subsequently it was translated into Hebrew by Rabbi Samuel Ibn Tibbon, in the lifetime of Maimonides, who was consulted by the translator on all difficult passages. The congregation in Lunel, ignorant of Ibn Tibbon's undertaking, or desirous to possess the most correct translation of the Guide, addressed a very flattering letter to Maimonides, requesting him to translate the work into Hebrew. Maimonides replied that he could not do so, as he had not sufficient leisure for even more pressing work, and that a translation was being prepared by the ablest and fittest man, Rabbi Samuel Ibn Tibbon. A second translation was made later on by Jehudah Alharizi. The Guide delighted many, but it also met with much adverse criticism on account of the peculiar views held by Maimonides concerning angels, prophecy, and miracles, especially on account of his assertion that if the Aristotelian proof for the Eternity of the Universe had satisfied him, he would have found no difficulty in reconciling the Biblical account of the Creation with that doctrine. The controversy on the Guide continued long after the death of Maimonides to divide the community, and it is difficult to say how far the author's hope to effect a reconciliation between reason and revelation was realized. His disciple, Joseph Ibn Akin, to whom the work was dedicated, and who was expected to derive from it the greatest

benefit, appears to have been disappointed. His inability to reconcile the two antagonistic elements of faith and science, he describes allegorically in the form of a letter addressed to Maimonides, in which the following passage occurs: "Speak, for I desire that you be justified;

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if you can, answer me. Some time ago your beloved daughter, the beautiful and charming Kimah, obtained grace and favour in my sight, and I betrothed her unto me in faithfulness, and married her in accordance with the Law, in the presence of two trustworthy witnesses, viz., our master, Abd-allah and Ibn Roshd. But she soon became faithless to me; she could not have found fault with me, yet she left me and departed from my tent. She does no longer let me behold her pleasant countenance or hear her melodious voice. You have not rebuked or punished her, and perhaps you are the cause of this misconduct. Now, 'send the wife back to the man, for he is'--or might become--'a prophet; he will pray for you that you may live, and also for her that she may be firm and steadfast. If, however, you do not send her back, the Lord will punish you. Therefore seek peace and pursue it; listen to what our Sages said: 'Blessed be he who restores to the owner his lost property'; for this blessing applies in a higher degree to him who restores to a man his virtuous wife, the crown of her husband." Maimonides replied in the same strain, and reproached his "son-in-law" that he falsely accused his wife of faithlessness after he had neglected her; but he restored him his wife with the advice to be more cautious in future. In another letter Maimonides exhorts Ibn Akin to study his works, adding, "apply yourself to the study of the Law of Moses; do not neglect it, but, on the contrary, devote to it the best and the most of your time, and if you tell me that you do so, I am satisfied that you are on the right way to eternal bliss."

Of the letters written after the completion of the "Guide," the one addressed to the wise men of Marseilles (1194) is especially noteworthy. Maimonides was asked to give his opinion on astrology. He regretted in his reply that they were not yet in the possession of his *Mishneh Torah*; they would have found in it the answer to their question. According to his opinion, man should only believe what he can grasp with his intellectual faculties, or perceive by his senses, or what he can accept on trustworthy authority. Beyond this nothing should be believed. Astrological statements, not being founded on any of these three sources of knowledge, must be rejected. He had himself studied astrology, and was convinced that it was no science at all. If some dicta be found in the Talmud which appear to represent astrology as a true source of knowledge, these may either be referred to the rejected opinion of a small minority, or may have an allegorical meaning, but they are by no means forcible enough to set aside principles based on logical proof.

The debility of which Maimonides so frequently complained in his correspondence, gradually increased, and he died, in his seventieth year, on the 20th Tebeth, 4965 (1204). His death was the cause of great mourning to all Jews. In Fostat a mourning of three days was kept; in Jerusalem a fast was appointed; a portion of the *tochaḥah* (Lev. xxvi. or Deut. xxix.) was read, and also the

history of the capture of the Ark by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv.). His remains were brought to Tiberias. The general regard in which Maimonides was held, both by his contemporaries and by succeeding generations, has been expressed in the popular saying: "From Moses to Moses there was none like Moses."

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THE MOREH NEBUCHIM LITERATURE

I. *The Arabic Text.*--The *editio princeps*, the only edition of the original text of the Guide (in Arabic, *Dēlil*, or *Dalalat al-h.āirīn*), was undertaken and executed by the late S. Munk. Its title is: *Le Guide des Égarés, traité de Théologie et de Philosophie par Moïse ben Maimon, publié pour la première fois dans l'original Arabe, et accompagné d'une traduction Française et de notes critiques, littéraires et explicatives, par S. Munk* (Paris, 1850-1866). The plan was published, 1833, in *Reflexions sur le culte des anciens Hébreux* (La Bible, par S. Cahen, vol. iv.), with a specimen of two chapters of the Third Part. The text adopted has been selected from the several MSS. at his disposal with great care and judgment. Two Leyden MSS. (cod. 18 and 221), various MSS. of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* (No. 760, very old; 761 and 758, written by R. Saadia Ibn Danan), and some MSS. of the Bodleian Library were consulted. In the notes which accompany the French translation, the various readings of the different MSS. are fully discussed. At the end of the third volume a list is added of "Variantes des Manuscrits Arabes et des deux Versions Hébraïques."

The library of the British Museum possesses two copies of the Arabic text; the one Or. 5423 is complete, beautifully written, with explanatory notes in the margin and between the lines. The name of the copyist is not mentioned, nor the date when it has been written. The volume has in the beginning an incomplete index to the Scriptural passages referred to in the *Guide*, and at the end fragments of Psalm cxli. in Arabic and of astronomical tables.

The second copy of the *Dalalat al-ḥāirīn* is contained in the MS. Or. 2423, written in large Yemen Rabbinic characters. It is very fragmentary. The first fragment begins with the last paragraph of the introduction; there are a few marginal notes in Hebrew.

In the Bodleian Library there are the following copies of the *Dalalat al-ḥāirīn* according to the Catal, of Hebr. MSS. by Dr. A. Neubauer:--

No. 1236. The text is preceded by Jehudah al-Charizi's index of the contents of the chapters, and by an index of Biblical quotations. In the margin there are notes, containing omissions, by different hands, two in Arabic characters. The volume was written 1473.

No. 1237. The Arabic text, with a few marginal notes containing various readings the text is preceded by three Hebrew poems, beginning, *De'i holek*, *Bi-sedeh tebunot*; and *Binu be-dat Mosheh*. Fol. 212 contains a fragment of the book (III., xxix.).

No. 1238. Text with a few marginal notes.

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No. 1239. The end of the work is wanting in this copy. The second part has forty-nine chapters, as the introduction to Part II. is counted as chapter i.; Part III. has fifty-six chapters, the introduction being counted as chapter i., and chapter xxiv. being divided into two chapters. The index of passages from the Pentateuch follows the ordinary mode of counting the chapters of the *Guide*.

No. 1240. Arabic text transcribed in Arabic characters by Saadiah b. Levi Azankoṭ for Prof. Golius in 1645.

No. 1245. First part of the *Dalalat al-ḥāirin*, written by Saadiah b. Mordecai b. Mosheh in the year 1431.

No. 1242 contains the same Part, but incomplete. Nos. 1243, 1244, 1245, and 1246 contain Part II. of the Arabic text, incomplete in No. 1245 and 1246.

Nos. 1247, 1248, and 1249 have Part III.; it is incomplete in Nos. 1248 and 1249. No. 1249 was written 1291, and begins with III, viii. A fragment of the Arabic text, the end of Part III., is contained in No. 407, 2.

No. 2508 includes a fragment of the original (I. ii.-xxxii.), with a Hebrew interlineary translation of some words and a few marginal notes. It is written in Yemen square characters, and is marked as "holy property of the Synagogue of Alsiani."

A fragment (I. i.) of a different recension from the printed is contained in 2422, 16. On the margin the Commentaries of Shem-ṭob and Ephodi are added in Arabic.

A copy of the *Dalalat* is also contained in the Berlin Royal Library MS. Or. Qu., 579 (so; Cat. Steinschneider); it is defective in the beginning and at the end.

The Cairo Genizah at Cambridge contains two fragments (*a*) I. lxiv. and beginning of lxv; (*b*) II. end of xxxii. and xxxiii. According to Dr. H. Hirschfeld, *Jewish Quarterly Review* (vol. xv. p. 677), they are in the handwriting of Maimonides.

The valuable collection of MSS. in the possession of Dr. M. Gaster includes a fragment of the *Dalalat al-ḥāirin* (Codex 605). II. xiii-xv., beginning and end defective.

II. *Translations, a. Hebrew.*--As soon as European Jews heard of the existence of this work, they procured its translation into Hebrew. Two scholars, independently of each other, undertook the task: Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Jehudah al-Ḥarizi. There is, besides, in the *Moreh ha-moreh* of Shemṭob Palquera an original translation of some portions of the *Moreh*. In the *Sifte yeshenim* (No. 112) a rhymed translation of the *Dalalat* by Rabbi Mattityahu Kartin is mentioned. Ibn

Tibbon's version is very accurate; he sacrificed elegance of style to the desire of conscientiously reproducing the author's work, and did not even neglect a particle, however unimportant it may appear. Ibn Tibbon went in his anxiety to retain peculiarities of the original so far as to imitate its ambiguities, e.g., *meziut* (I. lviii.) is treated as a masculine noun, only in order to leave it doubtful whether a pronoun which follows agrees with *meziut*, "existence," or with *nimza*, "existing being," both occurring in the same sentence (Br. Mus. MS. Harl. 7586, marg. note by Ibn Tibbon). When he met with passages that offered any difficulty he consulted Maimonides. Ḥarizi, on the other hand, was less conscientious about words and particles, but wrote in a superior style. *Vox populi*, however, decided in favour of the version of Ibn Tibbon, the rival of which became almost forgotten. Also Abraham, the son of Moses Maimonides, in *Milḥamoth ha-shem*, describes Ḥarizi's version as being inaccurate. Most of the modern translations were made from Ibn Tibbon's version. There are, therefore, MSS. of this version almost in every library containing collections of Hebrew books and MSS. It has the title *Moreh-nehuchim*. The British Museum has the following eight copies of Ibn Tibbon's version:--

Harl. 7586 A. This codex was written in the year 1284, for Rabbi Shabbatai ben Rabbi Mattityahu. In the year 1340 it came into the possession of Jacob b. Shelomoh; his son Menaḥem sold it in the year 1378 to R. Mattityahu, son of R. Shabbatai, for

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fifty gold florins. It was again sold in the year 1461 by Yehiel ben Joab. There is, this peculiarity in the writing, that long words at the end of a line are divided, and written half on the one line, half on the next; in words which are vocalized, *pataḥ* is frequently found for *ḳamez*. There are numerous various readings in the margin. The text is preceded by a poem, written by Joseph Ibn Aknin, pupil of Maimonides, in praise of his master, and beginning *Adon yizro*. This poem is attributed to R. Yehudah ha-Levi (Luzzatto, in his *Divan*, *Betulat-bat-Yehudah*, p. 104). At the end the copyist adds an epigram, the translation of which is as follows:--

"The Moreh is finished--Praise to Him who formed and created everything--written for the instruction and benefit of the few whom the Lord calleth. Those who oppose the Moreh ought to be put to death; but those who study and understand it deserve that Divine Glory rest upon them, and inspire them with a spirit from above."

Harl. 7586 B. This codex, much damaged in the beginning and at the end, contains the version of Ibn Tibbon, with marginal notes, consisting of words omitted in the text, and other corrections. The version is followed by the poems *Ḳarob meod*, etc., and *De'i bolek*, etc.

Harl. 5507 contains the Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon, with the translator's preface and marginal notes, consisting of various readings and omissions from the text. The work of Maimonides is followed by Ibn Tibbon's Vocabulary (*millot-zarot*), *Mesharet-mosheh*, *'Arugot ba-mezimmah*, *Millot higgayon*, *Ruah-ḥen*, Alfarabi's *Hathalot*, a Hebrew-Italian vocabulary of logical terms,

and an explanation of *koteb*. The passage in Part I., chap. lxxi., which refers to Christianity, has been erased.

Harl. 5525 was the property of Shimshon Kohen Modon. The MS. begins with Ḥarizi's *Kavvanat ha-peraḳim*; then follows the text, with a few marginal notes of a later hand, mostly adverse criticisms and references to 'Arama's *Aḳedah* and the Biblical commentaries of Abarbanel. There is also a note in Latin. The text is followed by Ibn Tibbon's Vocabulary (*Millot-zarot*) and *Masoret ba-pesukim* (Index to the Biblical quotations in the *Moreh*). In a poem, beginning *Moreh asher mennu derakav gabehu*, the *Moreh* is compared to a musical instrument, which delights when played by one that understands music, but is spoiled when touched by an ignorant person.

Add. 27068 (Almanzi coll.). At the end the following remark is added: I, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, finished the translation of this work in the month of Tebet 4965 (1205). The text is preceded by the well-known epigrams, *De'ī holek* and *Moreh-nebuchim sa shelomi*; the last page contains the epigram *Ḳarob meod*. There are some notes in the margin, mostly referring to various readings.

Add. 14763. This codex, written 1273 at Viterbo, contains the preface of Ḥarizi to his translation of the *Moreh* and his index of contents, Ibn Tibbon's version with a few marginal notes of different hands, including some remarks of the translator, and the contents of the chapters. The codex contains besides the following treatises: Commentary of Maimonides on Abot; Comm. of Maim. on Mishnah Sanhedrin x. i; Letter of Maimonides on the Resurrection of the Dead; Vocabulary of difficult words by Samuel Ibn Tibbon; Maimonides' Letter to the wise men of Marseilles; his Letter to Rabbi Jonathan; *Keter-malkut*, *Mesharet-mosheh*, *Ruah-ḥen*, *Otot ha-shamayim*, translated from the Arabic by Samuel Ibn Tibbon; *Hathalot ha-nimṣaot*, of Alfarabi; *Sefer ha-ḥappuah*, *Mishle ḥamishim ha-talmidim*; on the seven zones of the earth; a fragment of a chronicle from the exile of Babylon down to the fourth year of the Emperor Nicepheros of Constantinople, and a poem, which begins *asher yishal*, and has the following sense:--"If one asks the old and experienced for advice, you may expect his success in all he undertakes but if one consults the young, remember the fate of Rehoboam, son of Solomon."

Add. 4764. In addition to the Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon (from end of I. xxvii.) with a few marginal notes and index, the codex contains at the end of Part I. an Index of references made by the author to explanations given in preceding or succeeding chapters. At the end of the text the statement is added, that the translation was finished in the month of Tebet 968 (1208). The *Moreh* is followed by *Ruah-ḥen*, and Ibn Tibbon's Vocabulary of *millot-zarot* (incomplete), and is preceded by four poems in praise of the *Moreh*, beginning *Shim'u nebone leb*, *Moreh nebuchim sa shelomi*, *De'ī holek* and *Nofet maḥkim*.

Bibl. Reg. 16 A, xi. This codex, written in Prov. curs, characters in the year 308, has in front a fragment of iii. i., then follows the poem of Meshullam, beginning *Yehgu mezimmotai* (Grätz *Leket-shoshanim*, p. 1511), and other poems.

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The following MS. copies of Ibn Tibbon's version are included in the Oxford Bodleian Library; the numbers refer to Dr. Neubauer's catalogue of the MSS.:--

1250. An index of the passages from the Bible referred to in the work, and an index of the contents precede the version. The marginal note, contain chiefly omissions.

1251. This codex was written in 1675. The marginal notes contain omissions and explanations.

1252. The marginal notes contain the translator's remarks on I. lxxiv. 4, and III. xlvii. The version is followed by Ibn Tibbon a vocabulary, and his additional remarks on the reasons for the commandments. The MS. was bought by Samuel ben Moses from a Christian after the pillage of Padua, where it had belonged to a Synagogue of foreigners (*lo' azim*); he gave it to a Synagogue of the same character at Mantua.

1253. The marginal notes include that of the translator on III. xlvii.

1254, I. Text with marginal note, containing omissions.

1255. The marginal notes include those of the translator on I. xlv. and lxxiv. 5.

1256. The marginal notes contain various reading, notes relating to Ḥarizi's, translation and the Arabic text; on fol. 80 there is a note in Latin. There are in this codex six epigrams concerning the Moreh.

1257. Text incomplete; with marginal notes.

Fragments of the Version are contained in the following codices: 2047,3, p.65; 2283, 8; 2309, 2, and 2336.

Among the MS. copies of the Moreh in the Bibl. Nat. in Paris, there is one that has been the property of R. Eliah Mizraḥi, and another that had been in the hands of Azariah de Rossi (No. 685 and No. 69!); the Günzburg Library (Paris) possesses a copy (No. 775), that was written 1452 by Samuel son of Isaac for Rabbi Moses de Leon, and Eliah del Medigo's copy of the Moreh is in the possession of Dr. Ginsburg (London); it contains six poems, beginning *Moreh nebuchim sa; Emet moreh emet; Bi-leshon esh; Mah-ba'aru; Kamu more shav.*

The editio princeps of this version has no statement as to where and when it was printed, and is without pagination. According to Fürst (Bibliogr.) it is printed before 1480. The copy in the British Museum has some MS. notes. Subsequent editions contain besides the Hebrew text the Commentaries of Shem-ṭob and Efodi, and the index of contents by Ḥarizi (Venice, 1551, fol.); also the Comm. of Crescas and Vocabulary of Ibn Tibbon (Sabionetta, 1553, fol.; Jessnitz, 1742, fol. etc.); the Commentaries of Narboni and S. Maimon (Berlin, 1791); the commentaries of Efodi, Shem-tob, Crescas and Abarbanel (Warsaw, 1872, 4to); German translation and Hebrew

Commentary (*Biur*) Part I. (Krotoschin, 1839, 8vo); German translation and notes, Part II. (Wien. 1864), Part III. (Frankfort-a-M., 1838).

The Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon (Part I. to ch. lxxii.) has been translated into Mishnaic Hebrew by M. Levin (Zolkiew, 1829, 4to).

There is only one MS. known of Ḥarizi's version, viz., No. 682 of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. It has been edited by L. Schlosberg, with notes. London, 1851 (Part I.), 1876 (II.), and 1879 (III.). The notes on Part I. were supplied by S. Scheyer.

The first Latin translation of the *Moreh* has been discovered by Dr. J. Perles among the Latin MSS. of the Munic Library, Catal. Cod. latinorum bibl. regiae Monacensis, tom. i, pars iii. pag. 208 (Kaish. 36 b), 1700 (7936 b). This version is almost identical with that edited by Augustinus Justinianus,

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[paragraph continues] Paris, 1520, and is based on Ḥarizi's Hebrew version of the *Moreh*. The name of the translator is not mentioned. In the Commentary of Moses, son of Solomon, of Salerno, on the *Moreh*, a Latin translation is quoted, and the quotations agree with this version. It is called by this commentator *ha 'ataḳat ha-noḳrit* ("the Christian translation"), and its author, *ha-ma 'atik ha-noḳer* (lit. "the Christian translator"). Dr. Perles is, however, of opinion that these terms do not necessarily imply that a Christian has made this translation, as the word *noḳer* may have been used here for "Latin." He thinks that it is the result of the combined efforts of Jewish and Christian scholars connected with the court of the German Emperor Frederic II., especially as in the thirteenth century several Jewish scholars distinguished themselves by translating Oriental works into Latin. See Grätz Monatschrift, 1875, Jan.-June, "Die in einer Münchener Handschrift aufgefundenene erste lateinische Uebersetzung," etc., von Dr. J. Perles. The title has been variously rendered into Latin: Director neutrorum, directorium dubitantium, director neutrorum, nutantium or dubitantium; doctor perplexorum.

Gedaliah ibn Yahyah, in *Shalsholet ha-ḳabbalah*, mentions a Latin translation of the *Moreh* by Jacob Monteno: but nothing is known of it, unless it be the anonymous translation of the Munich MS., mentioned above. Augustinus Justinianus edited this version (Paris, 1520), with slight alterations and a great number of mistakes. Joseph Scaliger's opinion of this version is expressed in a letter to Casaubonus, as follows: Qui latine vertit, Hebraica, non Arabica, convertit, et quidem sæpe hallucinatur, neque mentem Authoris assequitur. Magna seges mendorum est in Latino. Præter illa quæ ab inertia Interpretis peccata sunt accessit et inertia Librariorum aut Typographorum, e.g., prophetiæ pro philosophiæ; altitudo pro aptitudo; bonitatem pro brevitatem. (Buxtorf, Doctor Perplexorum, Præf.)

Johannes Buxtorfius, Fil., translated the Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon into Latin (Basileæ, 1629, 4to). In the Præfatio ad Lectorem, the translator discusses the life and the works of Maimonides,

and dwells especially on the merits and the fate of the *Moreh-nebuchim*. The preface is followed by a Hebrew poem of Rabbi Raphael Joseph of Treves, in praise of an edition of the Moreh containing the Commentaries of Efodi, Shem-tob, and Crescas.

Italian was the first living language into which the Moreh has been translated. This translation was made by Yedidyah ben Moses (Amadeo de Moïse di Recanati), and dedicated by him to "divotissimo e divinissimo Signor mio il Signor Immanuel da Fano" (i.e., the Kabbalist Menahem Azariah). The translator dictated it to his brother Eliah, who wrote it in Hebrew characters; it was finished the 8th of February, 1583. The MS. copy is contained in the Royal Library at Berlin, MS. Or. Qu. 487 (M. Steinschneider Catal., etc.)--The Moreh has been translated into Italian a second time, and annotated by D. J. Maroni: Guida degli Smarriti, Firenze, 1870, fol.

The Moreh has been translated into German by R. Fürstenthal (Part I., Krotoschin, 1839), M. Stern (Part II., Wien, 1864), and S. Scheyer (Part III., Frankfort-a.-M., 1838). The translation is based on Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew version. The chapters on the Divine Attributes have been translated into

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[paragraph continues] German, and fully discussed, by Dr. Kaufmann in his *Geschichte der Attributenlehre* (Gotha, 1877). An excellent French translation, based on the Arabic original, has been supplied by the regenerator of the *Guide*, S. Munk. It was published together with the Arabic text (Paris, 1850-1866).

The Moreh has also been translated into the Hungarian language by Dr. Klein. The translation is accompanied by notes (Budapest, 1878-80).

The portion containing the reasons of the Commandments (Part III. ch. xxvi.-xlix.) has been translated into English by James Townley (London, 1827). The translation is preceded by an account on the life and works of Maimonides, and dissertations on various subjects; among others, Talmudical and Rabbinical writings, the Originality of the Institutions of Moses, and Judicial astrology.

III. *Commentaries*.--It is but natural that in a philosophical work like the Moreh, the reader will meet with passages that at first thought seem unintelligible, and require further explanation, and this want has been supplied by the numerous commentators that devoted their attention to the study of the Moreh. Joseph Solomon del Medigo (1597) saw eighteen Commentaries. The four principal ones he characterizes thus (in imitation of the Hagadah for Passover): Moses Narboni is *rasha* ' , has no piety, and reveals all the secrets of the Moreh. Shem-ṭob is *hakam*, "wise," expounds and criticises; Crescas is *tam*, "simple," explains the book in the style of the Rabbis; Epodi is *she-eno yode 'a lishol*, "does not understand to ask," he simply explains in short notes without criticism (*Miktab-aḥuz*; ed. A. Geiger, Berlin, 1840, p. i8). The earliest annotations were

made by the author himself on those passages, which the first translator of the Moreh was unable to comprehend. They are contained in a letter addressed to Samuel Ibn Tibbon, beginning, *lefi siklo yehullal ish* (Bodl Library, No. 2218, s.; comp. *The Guide*, etc., I. 21, 343; II. 8, 99). Ibn Tibbon, the translator, likewise added a few notes, which are found in the margin of MSS. of the Hebrew version of the Moreh (on I. xlv. lxxiv.; II. xxiv.; and III. xlvii.--MSS. Bodl. 1252, 1; 1253, 1255, 1257; Brit. Mus. Add. 14,763 and 27,068).

Both translators wrote explanations of the philosophical terms employed in the versions. Ḥarizi wrote his vocabulary first, and Ibn Tibbon, in the introductory remarks, to *Perush millot zarot* ("Explanation of difficult words"), describes his rival's vocabulary as full of blunders. Ibn Tibbon's *Perush* is found almost in every copy of his version, both MS. and print; so also Ḥarizi's index of the contents of the chapters of the Moreh (*Kavvanat ha-peraḳim*).

The following is an alphabetical list of Commentaries on the Moreh:--

Abarbanel (Don Isaak) wrote a Commentary on I. i.-lv.; II. xxxi.-xlv., and a separate book *Shamayim-ḥadashim*, "New Heavens," on II. xix., in which he fully discusses the question concerning *Creatio ex nihilo*. The opinion of Maimonides is not always accepted. Thus twenty-seven objections are raised against his interpretation of the first chapter of Ezekiel. These objections he wrote at Molin, in the house of R. Abraham Treves Zarfati. The Commentary is followed by a short essay (*maamar*) on the plan of the Moreh. The method adopted by Abarbanel in all his Commentaries, is also employed in this essay. A series of questions is put forth on the subject, and then the author sets about to answer them. M. J. Landau edited the Commentary without text, with a Preface, and with explanatory notes, called *Moreh li-zeddakah* (Prag. 1831; MS. Bodl. 2385). In addition to

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these the same author wrote *Teshubot* "Answers" to several questions asked by Rabbi Shaul ha-Cohen on topics discussed in the Moreh (Venice, 1754).

Abraham Abulafia wrote "Sodot ha-moreh," or *Sitre-torah*, a kabbalistic Commentary on the Moreh. He gives the expression, עֵרֶן גֵּן (Paradise), for the number (177) of the chapters of the Moreh. MS. Nat. Bibl. 226, 3. Leipsic Libr. 232,4. MS. Bodl. 2360, contains a portion of Part III.

Buchner A. *Ha-moreh li-zedakah* (Warsaw, 1838). Commentary on "The Reasons of the Laws," Moreh III. xxix.-xlix. The Commentary is preceded by an account of the life of Maimonides.

Comtino, Mordecai b. Eliezer, wrote a short commentary on the Moreh (Dr. Ginsburg's collection of MSS. No. 10). Narboni, who "spread light on dark passages in the Guide," is frequently quoted. Reference is also made to his own commentary on Ibn Ezra's *Yesod-mora*.

Crescas (Asher b. Abraham), expresses in the Preface to his Commentary the conviction that he could not always comprehend the right sense of the words of Maimonides, for "there is no

searching to his understanding." He nevertheless thinks that his explanations will help "the young" to study the Moreh with profit. A long poem in praise of Maimonides and his work precedes the Preface. His notes are short and clear, and in spite of his great respect of Maimonides, he now and then criticises and corrects him.

David Yahya is named by Joseph Del Medigo (*Miktab-aḥuz* ed. A. Geiger, Berlin, 1840; p. 18, and note 76), as having written a Commentary on the Moreh.

David ben Yehudah Leon Rabbino wrote *‘En ha-ḳore*, MS. Bodl. 1263. He quotes in his Commentary among others *‘Arama's ‘Akedat yizḥak*. The Preface is written by Immanuel ben Raphael Ibn Meir, after the death of the author.

Efodi is the name of the Commentary written by Isaac ben Moses, who during the persecution of 1391 had passed as Christian under the name of Profiat Duran. He returned to Judaism, and wrote against Christianity the famous satire "*Al tehee ka-aboteka*" ("Be not like your Fathers"), which misled Christians to cite it as written in favour of Christianity. It is addressed to the apostate En Bonet Bon Giorno. The same author also wrote a grammatical work, *Ma‘aseh-efod*. The name *Efod* (עֶפֶד), is explained as composed of the initials *Amar Profiat Duran*. His Commentary consists of short notes, explanatory of the text. The beginning of this Commentary is contained in an Arabic translation in MS. Bodl. 2422, 16.

Ephraim Al-Naqavah in *Sha‘ar Kebod ha-shem* (MS. Bodl. 939, 2 and 1258, 2), answers some questions addressed to him concerning the Moreh. He quotes Ḥiṣdai's *Or adonai*.

Fürstenthal, R., translator and commentator of the Maḥzor, added a Biur, short explanatory notes, to his German translation of Part I. of the Moreh (Krotoschin, 1839).

Gershon, Moreh-derek, Commentary on Part I. of the Moreh (MS. Bodl. 1265).

Hillel b. Samuel b. Elazar of Verona explained the Introduction to Part II, (the 25 Propos.). S. H. Halberstam edited this Commentary together with *Tagmule ha-nefesh* of the same author, for the Society *Mekize-nirdamim* (Lyck, 1874).

Joseph ben Aba-mari b. Joseph, of Caspi (Argentièrre), wrote three Commentaries on the Moreh. The first is contained in a Munich MS. (No. 263); and seems to have been recast by the author, and divided into two separate Commentaries: *‘Ammude Kesef*, and *Maskiyot Kesef*. The former was to contain plain and ordinary explanation, whilst profound and mysterious matter was reserved for the second (Steinschn. Cat.). In II., chap. xlviii., Caspi finds fault with Maimonides that he does not place the book of Job among the highest class of inspired writings, "its author being undoubtedly Moses." These Commentaries have been edited by T. Werblumer (Frankfort-a.-M., 1848). R. Kirchheim added a Hebrew introduction discussing the character of these commentaries, and describing the manuscripts from which these were copied; a Biography of the author is added in German.

Joseph Gikatilia wrote notes on the *Moreh*, printed with "Questions of Shaul ha-kohen" (Venice, 1574. MS. Bodl.. 1911, 3).

Joseph b. Isaac ha-Levi's Gib'at ha-Moreh is a short Commentary on portions of the *Moreh*, with notes by R. Yom-tub Heller, the author of *Tosafot Yam-tob* (Prag., 1612).

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Isaac Satanov wrote a commentary on Parts II. and III. of the *Moreh* (see Maimon Solomon p. xxi.).

Isaac ben Shem-ṭob ibn Shem-ṭob wrote a lengthy Commentary on the *Moreh*, Part I. (MS. Brit. Mus, Or. 1358). The object of the Commentary is to show that there is no contradiction between Maimonides and the Divine Law. He praises Maimonides as a true believer in *Creatio ex nihilo*, whilst Ibn Ezra and Gersonides assumed a *prima materia*, (*Yozer, ḳadosh*). Nachmanides is called *ha-ḥasid ha-gadol*, but is nevertheless blamed, together with Narboni and Zerahyah ha-Levi, for criticising Maimonides, instead of trying to explain startling utterances even in "a forced way" (*bederek raḥok*) and Narboni, "in spite of his wisdom, frequently misunderstood the *Moreh*." At the end of each chapter a résumé, (*derush*) of the contents of the chapter is given, and the lesson to be derived from it. The MS. is incomplete, chaps. xlvi.-xlviii. are missing.

Kauffmann, D., in his *Geschichte der Atributenlehre*, translated Part I. chap. l.-lxiii. into German, and added critical and explanatory notes.

Kalonymos wrote a kind of introduction to the *Moreh* (*Mesharet Mosheh*), in which he especially discusses the theory of Maimonides on Providence.

Leibnitz made extracts from Buxtorf's. Latin version of the *Moreh*, and added his own remarks, *Observationes ad R. Mosen Maimoniden* (Foucher de Careil, C.A., *La Philosophie Juive*, 1861).

Levin, M., wrote *Allon-moreh* as a kind of introduction to his retranslation of Tibbon's Hebrew version into the language of the Mishnah.

Maimon, Solomon, is the author of *Gib'at ha-moreh*, a lengthy commentary on Book I. (Berlin, 1791). The author is fond of expatiating on topics of modern philosophy, to the introduction he gives a short history of philosophy. The commentary on Books II. and III. was written by Isaac Satanov.

Meir ben Jonah ha-mekunneh Ben-shneor wrote a commentary on the *Moreh* in Fez 1560 (MS. Bodl. 1262).

Menaḥem Kara expounded the twenty-five propositions enumerated in the Introduction to Part II. of the *Moreh* (MS. Bodl. 1649, 13).

Mordecai Yaffe, in his *Or Yeḳarot* or *Pinnat Yikrat*, one of his ten *Lebushim*, comments upon the theories contained in the *Moreh*.

Moses, son of Abraham Provençal, explains the passage in Part I. chap. lxxiii. Prop. 3, in which Maimonides refers to the difference between commensurable and incommensurable lines (MS. Bodl.. 2033, 8).

Moses, son of Jehudah Nagari, made an index of the subjects treated in the *Moreh*, indicating in each case the chapters in which allusion is made to the subject. He did so, "in obedience to the advice of Maimonides, to consider the chapters in connected order" (Part I. p. 20). It has been printed together with the questions of Shaul ha-kohen (Venice, 1574).

Moses son of Solomon of Salerno, is one of the earliest expounders of the *Moreh*. He wrote his commentary on Parts I. and II., perhaps together with a Christian scholar. He quotes the opinion of "the Christian scholar with whom he worked together." Thus he names Petrus de Bernia and Nicolo di Giovenazzo. R. Jacob Anatoli, author of the *Malmed ha-talmidim*, is quoted as offering an explanation for the passage from *Pirḳe di-rabbi Eliezer*, which Maimonides (II. chap. xxvi.) considers as strange and inexplicable (Part I., written 1439; MS. of *Bet ha-midrash*, London; Parts I.- II., MS. Bodl, 1261, written, 1547; MS. Petersburg, No. 82; Munich MS. 60 and 370).

Moses ha-ḳatan, son of Jehudah, son of Moses, wrote *To 'aliyot pirḳe ha-maamar* ("Lessons taught in the chapters of this work"). It is an index to the *Moreh* (MS. Bodl. 1267).

Moses Leiden explained the 25 Prop. of the Introduction to Part II. (MS. Günzburg, Paris).

Moses Narboni wrote a short commentary at Soria 1362. He freely criticizes Maimonides, and uses expressions like the following:--"He went too far, may God pardon him" (II. viii.). Is. Euchel ed. Part I. (Berlin, 1791); J. Goldenthal, I. to III. (Wien, 1852). The Bodl. Libr. possesses several MS. copies of this commentary (Nos. 1260, 1264, 2, and 1266).

Munk, S., added to his French translation of the *Moreh* numerous critical and explanatory notes.

S. Sachs (Ha-teḥiyah, Berlin, 1850, p. 5) explains various passages of the *Moreh*, with

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a view of discovering the names of those who are attacked by Maimonides without being named.

Scheyer, S., added critical and explanatory notes to his German translation of the *Moreh*, Part 3, and to the Hebrew version of Ḥarizi, Part I. He also wrote *Das Psychologische System des Maimonides*, an Introduction to the *Moreh* (Frankf.-a-M., 1845).

Shem ṭob Ibn Palquera's Moreh ha-moreh consists of 3 parts:(1) a philosophical explanation of the *Moreh*, (2) a description of the contents of the chapters of the *Moreh*, Part I, i.-lvii. (Presburg, 1827); (3) Corrections of Ibn Tibbon's version. He wrote the book for himself, that in old age he

might have a means of refreshing his memory. The study of science and philosophy is to be recommended, but only to those who have had a good training in "the fear of sin." Ibn Roshd (Averroes) is frequently quoted, and referred to as *he-ḥakam ha-nizkar* (the philosopher mentioned above).

Shem-ṭob ben Joseph ben Shem-ṭob had the commentary of Efodi before him, which he seems to have quoted frequently *verbatim* without naming him. In the preface he dwells on the merits of the Moreh as the just mediator between religion and philosophy. The commentary of Shem-tobh is profuse, and includes almost a paraphrase of the text. He apologises in conclusion for having written many superfluous notes and added explanation where no explanation was required; his excuse is that he did not only intend to write a commentary (*biur*) but also a work complete in itself (*hibbur*). He often calls the reader's attention to things which are plain and clear.

Shem-ṭob Ibn Shem-ṭob, in *Sefer ha-emunot* (Ferrara, 1556), criticises some of the various theories discussed in the Moreh, and rejects them as heretic. His objections were examined by Moses Al-ashkar, and answered in *Hasagot 'al mah she-katab Rabbi Shem-ṭob neged ha-Rambam* (Ferrara, 1556).

Salomon b. Jehudah ha-nasi wrote in Germany *Sitre-torah*, a kabbalistic commentary on the Moreh, and dedicated it to his pupil Jacob b. Samuel (MS. Bet-ha-midrash, London).

Tabrizi. The twenty-five Propositions forming the introduction to Part 2, have been fully explained by Mohammed Abu-becr ben Mohammed al-tabrizi. His Arabic explanations have been translated by Isaac b. Nathan of Majorca into Hebrew (Ferraro, 1556). At the end the following eulogy is added:--The author of these Propositions is the chief whose sceptre is "wisdom" and whose throne is "understanding," the Israelite prince, that has benefited his nation and all those who love God, etc. Moses b. Maimon b. Ebed-elohim, the Israelite. . . . May God lead us to the truth. Amen!

Tishbi. In MS. Bodl. 2279, 1, there are some marginal notes on Part III. which are signed Tishbi (Neub. Cat.).

Yaḥya Ibn Suleiman wrote in Arabic a Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*. A fragment is contained in the Berlin MS. Or. Qu., 554, 2 (Steinschneider, Cat. No. 92).

Zerahyah b. Isaac ha-Levi. Commentary on the Moreh, I., i.-lxxi., and some other portions of the work. (See Maskir, 1861, p. 125).

MS. Bodl. 2360, 8, contains a letter of Jehudah b. Shelomoh on some passages of the Moreh, and Zerahyah's reply.

Anonymous Commentaries.--The MS. Brit. Mus. 1423 contains marginal and interlineary notes in Arabic. No author or date is given, nor is any other commentary referred to in the notes. The explanations given are mostly preceded by a question, and introduced by the phrase, "the answer

is," in the same style as is employed in the Hebrew-Arabic Midrash, MS. Brit. Mus. Or. 2213. The Midrashic character is prominent in the notes. Thus the verse "Open, ye gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in," is explained as meaning: Open, ye gates of wisdom, that human understanding that perceiveth truth may enter. The notes are numerous, especially in the first part, explaining almost every word; e.g., on "Rabbi": Why does Maimonides employ this title before the name of his pupil? The answer is: either the word is not to be taken literally ("master"), but as a mere compliment, or it has been added by later copyists. Of a similar style seem to be the Arabic notes in the Berlin MS. Or. Oct. 258, 2, 8, so. (Cat. Steinschneider, No. 108.)--Anonymous marginal

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notes are met with almost in every MS. of the *Moreh*; e.g., Brit. Mos. Harl. 5525; Add. 14,763, 14,764; Bodl. 1264, I; 2282, 10; 2423, 3; Munich MS., 239, 6.

The explanation of passages from the Pentateuch contained in the *Moreh* have been collected by D. Ottensosser, and given as an appendix (*Moreh-derek*) to *Derek-selulah* (Pent. with Comm. etc., Furth, 1824).

IV. *Controversies*.--The seemingly new ideas put forth by Maimonides in the *Moreh* and in the first section of his *Mishneh-torah* (*Sefer ha-madda*) soon produced a lively controversy as regards the merits of Maimonides theories. It was most perplexing to pious Talmudists to learn how Maimonides explained the anthropomorphisms employed in the Bible, the Midrashim and the Talmud, what he thought about the future state of our soul, and that he considered the study of philosophy as the highest degree of Divine worship, surpassing even the study of the Law and the practice of its precepts. The objections and attacks of Daniel of Damascus were easily silenced by a *herem* (excommunication) pronounced against him by the *Rosh ha-golah* Rabbi David. Stronger was the opposition that had its centre in Montpellier. Rabbi Solomon ben Abraham noticed with regret in his own community the fruit of the theories of Maimonides in the neglect of the study of the Law and of the practice of the Divine precepts. It happened to Moses Maimonides what in modern times happened to Moses Mendelssohn. Many so-called disciples and followers of the great master misunderstood or misinterpreted his teaching in support of their dereliction of Jewish law and Jewish practice, and thus brought disrepute on him in the eyes of their opponents. Thus it came that Rabbi Solomon and his disciples turned their wrath against the writings of Maimonides instead of combating the arguments of the pseudo-Maimonists. The latter even accused Solomon of having denounced the *Moreh* and the *Sefer ha-madda* 'to the Dominicans, who condemned these writings to the flames; when subsequently copies of the Talmud were burnt, and some of the followers of the Rabbi of Montpellier were subjected to cruel tortures, the Maimonists saw in this event a just punishment for offending Maimonides. (Letters of Hillel of Verona, *Hemdah Genuzah*, ed. H. Edelmann, p. 58 sqq.).

Meir b. Todros ha-levi Abulafia wrote already during the lifetime of Maimonides to the wise men in Lunel about the heretic doctrines he discovered in the works of Maimonides. Ahron b. Meshullam and Shesheth Benvenisti defended Maimonides. About 1232 a correspondence opened between the Maimonists and the Anti-maimonists (Grätz, *Gesch. d. J.* vii. note I). The Grammarian David Kimḥi wrote in defence of Maimonides three letters to Jehudah Alfachar, who answered each of them in the sense of Rabbi Solomon of Montpellier. Abraham b. Ḥisdai and Samuel b. Abraham Saportas on the side of the Maimonists, took part in the controversy. Meshullam b. Kalonymos b. Todros of Narbonne begged Alfachar to treat Kimḥi with more consideration, whereupon Alfachar resolved to withdraw from the controversy. Naḥmanides, though more on the side of Rabbi Solomon, wrote two letters of a conciliatory character, advising moderation on both sides. Representatives of the congregations of Saragossa, Huesca, Monzon, Kalatajud, and Lerida signed declarations against R. Solomon. A herem was proclaimed from Lunel and Narbonne against

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the Anti-Maimonists. The son of Maimonides, Abraham, wrote a pamphlet *Milḥamot adonai*, in defence of the writings of his father. The controversy raised about fifty years later by Abba Man Don Astruc and R. Solomon ben-Aderet of Barcelona, concerned the Moreh less directly. The question was of a more general character: Is the study of philosophy dangerous to the religious belief of young students? The letters written in this controversy are contained in *Minḥat-kenaot* by Abba Mari Don Astruc (Presburg, 1838), and *Kitab alrasail* of Meir Abulafia ed. J. Brill (Paris, 1871). Yedaya Bedrasi took part in this controversy, and wrote *Ketab hitnazlut* in defence of the study of philosophy (Teshubot Rashba, Hanau, 1610, p. iii b.). The whole controversy ended in the victory of the Moreh and the other writings of Maimonides. Stray remarks are found in various works, some in praise and some in condemnation of Maimonides. A few instances may suffice. Rabbi Jacob Emden in his *Mitpaḥat-sefarim* (Lemberg, 1870, p. 56) believes that parts of the Moreh are spurious; he even doubts whether any portion of it is the work of "Maimonides, the author of the Mishneh-torah, who was not capable of writing such heretic doctrines," S. D. Luzzato regards Maimonides with great reverence, but this does not prevent him from severely criticising his philosophical theories (Letters to S. Rappoport, No. 79, 83, 266, *Iggeroth Shedal* ed. E. Graber, Premys'1, 1882), and from expressing his conviction that the saying "From Moses to Moses none rose like Moses," was as untrue as that suggested by Rappoport, "From Abraham to Abraham (Ibn-Ezra) none rose like Abraham." Rabbi Hirsch Chayyuth in *Darke-Mosheh* (Zolkiew, 5840) examines the attacks made upon the writings of Maimonides, and tries to refute them, and to show that they can be reconciled with the teaching of the Talmud.

The Bodl. MS. 2240, 3a, contains a document signed by Josselman and other Rabbis, declaring that they accept the teaching of Maimonides as correct, with the exception of his theory about angels and sacrifices.

Numerous poems were written, both in admiration and in condemnation of the Moreh. Most of them precede or follow the Moreh in the printed editions and in the various MS. copies of the work. A few have been edited in *Dibre-ḥakamim*, pp. 75 and 86; in the *Literaturblatt d. Or.* I. 379, II. 26-27, IV. 748, and *Leket-shoshannim* by Dr. Grätz. In the *Sammelband* of the Mekize Nirdamim (1885) a collection of 69 of these poems is contained, edited and explained by Prof. Dr. A. Berliner. In imitation of the Moreh and with a view of displacing Maimonides work, the Karaite Ahron II. b. Eliah wrote a philosophical treatise, *Ez-ḥayyim* (Ed. F. Delitzsch. Leipzig, 1841).

Of the works that discuss the whole or part of the philosophical system of the Moreh the following are noteworthy:--

Bacher, W. Die Bibilexegese Moses Maimûni's, in the Jahresbericht der Landes Rabbinerschule zu Buda-Pest. 1896.

Eisler, M. Vorlesungen über die jüdischen Philosophen des Mittelalters. Abtheil. II., Moses Maimonides (Wien, 1870).

Geiger, A. Das Judenthum u. seine Geschichte (Breslau, 1865), Zehnte Vorlesung: Aben Ezra u. Maimonides.

Grätz, H. Geschichte d. Juden, VI. p. 363 *sqq.*

Joel, M. Religionsphilosophie des Moses b. Maimon (Breslau, 1859).

Joel, M. Albertus Magnus u. sein Verhältniss zu Maimonides (Breslau, 1863).

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Kaufmann, D. Geschichte der Attributenlehre, VII. Gotha, 1874.

Philippsohn, L. Die Philosophie des Maimonides. Predigt und Schul-Magazin, I. xviii. (Magdeburg, 1834.)

Rosin, D. Die Ethik d. Maimonides (Breslau, 1876).

Rubin, S. Spinoza u. Maimonides, ein Psychologisch-Philosophisches Antitheton (Wien, 1868).

Scheyer, S. Das psychologische System des Maimonides. Frankfurt-a.-M., 1845.

Weiss, T. H. *Beth-Talmud*, I. x. p. 289.

David Yellin and Israel Abrahams, Maimonides.

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ANALYSIS OF THE GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

IT is the object of this work "to afford a guide for the perplexed," i.e. "to thinkers whose studies have brought them into collision with religion" (p. 9), "who have studied philosophy and have acquired sound knowledge, and who, while firm in religious matters, are perplexed and bewildered on account of the ambiguous and figurative expressions employed in the holy writings (p. 5). Joseph, the son of Jehudah Ibn Akin, a disciple of Maimonides, is addressed by his teacher as an example of this kind of students. It was "for him and for those like him" that the treatise was composed, and to him this work is inscribed in the dedicatory letter with which the Introduction begins. Maimonides, having discovered that his disciple was sufficiently advanced for an exposition of the esoteric ideas in the books of the Prophets, commenced to give him such expositions "by way of hints." His disciple then begged him to give him further explanations, to treat of metaphysical themes, and to expound the system and the method of the Kalām, or Mohammedan Theology. 1 In compliance with this request, Maimonides composed the Guide of the Perplexed. The reader has, therefore, to expect that the subjects mentioned in the disciple's request indicate the design and arrangement of the present work, and that the Guide consists of the following parts:--1. An exposition of the esoteric ideas (*sodot*) in the books of the Prophets. 2. A treatment of certain metaphysical problems. 3. An examination of the system and method of the Kalām. This, in fact, is a correct account of the contents of the book; but in the second part of the Introduction, in which the theme of this work is defined, the author mentions only the first-named subject. He observes "My primary object is to explain certain terms occurring in the prophetic book. Of these some are homonymous, some figurative, and some hybrid terms." "This work has also a second object. It is designed to explain certain obscure figures which occur in the Prophets, and are not distinctly characterised as being figures" (p. 2). Yet from this observation it must not be inferred that Maimonides abandoned his original purpose; for he examines the Kalām in the last chapters of the First Part (ch. lxx.-lxxvi.), and treats of certain metaphysical themes in the beginning of the Second Part (Introd. and ch. i.-xxv.). But in the passage quoted above he confines himself to a delineation of the *main* object of this treatise, and advisedly leaves unmentioned the other two subjects, which, however important they may be, are here of subordinate interest. Nor did he consider it necessary to expatiate on these subjects; he only wrote for the student, for whom a mere reference to works on philosophy and science was sufficient. We therefore meet now and then with such phrases as the following "This is folly discussed in works on metaphysics." By references of this kind the author may have intended so create a taste for the study of philosophical works. But our observation only holds good with regard to the Aristotelian philosophy.

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[paragraph continues] The writings of the Mutakallemim are never commended by him; he states their opinions, and tells his disciple that he would not find any additional argument, even if he were to read all their voluminous works (p. 133). Maimonides was a zealous disciple of Aristotle, although the theory of the Kalām might seem to have been more congenial to Jewish thought and belief. The Kalām upheld the theory of God's Existence, Incorporeality, and Unity,

together with the *creatio ex nihilo*. Maimonides nevertheless opposed the Kalām, and, anticipating the question, why preference should be given to the system of Aristotle, which included the theory of the Eternity of the Universe, a theory contrary to the fundamental teaching of the Scriptures, he exposed the weakness of the Kalām and its fallacies.

The exposition of Scriptural texts is divided by the author into two parts the first part treats of homonymous, figurative, and hybrid terms, 1 employed in reference to God; the second part relates to Biblical figures and allegories. These two parts do not closely follow each other; they are separated by the examination of the Kalām, and the discussion of metaphysical problems. It seems that the author adopted this arrangement for the following reason first of all, he intended to establish the fact that the Biblical anthropomorphisms do not imply corporeality, and that the Divine Being of whom the Bible speaks could therefore be regarded as identical with the Primal Cause of the philosophers. Having established this principle, he discusses from a purely metaphysical point of view the properties of the Primal Cause and its relation to the universe. A solid foundation is thus established for the esoteric exposition of Scriptural passages. Before discussing metaphysical problems, which he treats in accordance with Aristotelian philosophy, he disposes of the Kalām, and demonstrates that its arguments are illogical and illusory.

The "Guide for the Perplexed" contains, therefore, an Introduction and the following four parts:--
1. On homonymous, figurative, and hybrid terms, 2. On the Supreme Being and His relation to the universe, according to the Kalām. 3. On the Primal Cause and its relation to the universe, according to the philosophers. 4. Esoteric exposition of some portions of the Bible (*sodot*) *a. Maaseh bereshith*, or the history of the Creation (Genesis, ch. i-iv.); *b. on Prophecy*; *c. Maaseh mercabhah*, or the description of the divine chariot (Ezekiel, ch. i.).

According to this plan, the work ends with the seventh chapter of the Third Part. The chapters which follow may be considered as an appendix; they treat of the following theological themes the Existence of Evil, Omniscience and Providence, Temptations, Design in Nature, in the Law, and in the Biblical Narratives, and finally the true Worship of God.

In the Introduction to the "Guide," Maimonides (1) describes the object of the work and the method he has followed; (2) treats of similes; (3) gives "directions for the study of the work"; and (4) discusses the usual causes of inconsistencies in authors.

1 (pp. 2-3). Inquiring into the root of the evil which the Guide was intended to remove, viz., the conflict between science and religion, the author perceived that in most cases it originated in a misinterpretation of the anthropomorphisms in Holy Writ. The main difficulty is found in the ambiguity of the words employed by the prophets when speaking of the Divine Being; the question arises whether they are applied to the Deity and to other things in one and the same sense or equivocally; in the latter case the author distinguishes between homonyms pure and simple, figures, and hybrid terms. In order to show that the Biblical anthropomorphisms do not

imply the corporeality of the Deity, he seeks in each instance to demonstrate that the expression under examination

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is a perfect homonym denoting things which are totally distinct from each other, and whenever such a demonstration is impossible, he assumes that the expression is a hybrid term, that is, being employed in one instance figuratively and in another homonymously. His explanation of "form" (*zelem*) may serve as an illustration. According to his opinion, it invariably denotes "form" in the philosophical acceptance of the term, viz., the complex of the essential properties of a thing. But to obviate objections he proposes an alternative view, to take *zelem* as a hybrid term that may be explained as a class noun denoting only things of the same class, or as a homonym employed for totally different things, viz., "form" in the philosophical sense, and "form" in the ordinary meaning of the word. Maimonides seems to have refrained from explaining anthropomorphisms as figurative expressions, lest by such interpretation he might implicitly admit the existence of a certain relation and comparison between the Creator and His creatures.

Jewish philosophers before Maimonides enunciated and demonstrated the Unity and the Incorporeality of the Divine Being, and interpreted Scriptural metaphors on the principle that "the Law speaks in the language of man" but our author adopted a new and altogether original method. The Commentators, when treating of anthropomorphisms, generally contented themselves with the statement that the term under consideration must not be taken in its literal sense, or they paraphrased the passage in expressions which implied a lesser degree of corporeality. The Talmud, the Midrashim, and the Targumim abound in paraphrases of this kind. Saadiah in "*Emunot ve-de'ot*," Bahya in his "*Hobot ha-lebabot*," and Jehudah ha-levi in the "*Cusari*," insist on the necessity and the appropriateness of such interpretations. Saadiah enumerates ten terms which primarily denote organs of the human body, and are figuratively applied to God. To establish this point of view he cites numerous instances in which the terms in question are used in a figurative sense without being applied to God. Saadiah further shows that the Divine attributes are either qualifications of such of God's actions as are perceived by man, or they imply a negation. The correctness of this method was held to be so obvious that some authors found it necessary to apologize to the reader for introducing such well-known topics. From R. Abraham ben David's strictures on the *Yad haḥazakah* it is, however, evident that in the days of Maimonides persons were not wanting who defended the literal interpretation of certain anthropomorphisms. Maimonides, therefore, did not content himself with the vague and general rule, "The Law speaks in the language of man," but sought carefully to define the meaning of each term when applied to God, and to identify it with some transcendental and metaphysical term. In pursuing this course he is sometimes forced to venture upon an interpretation which is much too far-fetched to commend itself even to the supposed philosophical reader. In such instances he generally adds a simple and plain explanation, and leaves it to the option of the reader to choose the one which appears to him preferable. The enumeration of the different meanings of a word is often, from a philological point of view, incomplete; he introduces only

such significations as serve his object. When treating of an imperfect homonym, the several significations of which are derived from one primary signification, he apparently follows a certain system which he does not employ in the interpretation of perfect homonyms. The homonymity of the term is not proved; the author confines himself to the remark, "It is employed homonymously," even when the various meanings of a word might easily be traced to a common source.

2 (pag. 4-8). In addition to the explanation of homonyms Maimonides undertakes to interpret similes and allegories. At first it had been his intention to write two distinct works--*Sefer ha-nebuaah*, "A Book on Prophecy," and *Sefer ha-shevaah*, "A Book of Reconciliation." In the former work he had intended

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to explain difficult passages of the Bible, and in the latter to expound such passages in the Midrash and the Talmud as seemed to be in conflict with common sense. With respect to the "Book of Reconciliation," he abandoned his plan, because he apprehended that neither the learned nor the unlearned would profit by it the one would find it superfluous, the other tedious. The subject of the "Book on Prophecy" is treated in the present work, and also strange passages that occasionally occur in the Talmud and the Midrash are explained.

The treatment of the simile must vary according as the simile is compound or simple. In the first case, each part represents a separate idea and demands a separate interpretation; in the other case, only one idea is represented, and it is not necessary to assign to each part a separate metaphorical meaning. This division the author illustrates by citing the dream of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12 *sqq.*), and the description of the adulteress (Prov. vii. 6 *sqq.*). He gives no rule by which it might be ascertained to which of the two categories a simile belongs, and, like other Commentators, he seems to treat as essential those details of a simile for which he can offer an adequate interpretation. As a general principle, he warns against the confusion and the errors which arise when an attempt is made to expound every single detail of a simile. His own explanations are not intended to be exhaustive; on the contrary, they are to consist of brief allusions to the idea represented by the simile, of mere suggestions, which the reader is expected to develop and to complete. The author thus aspires to follow in the wake of the Creator, whose works can only be understood after a long and persevering study. Yet it is possible that he derived his preference for a reserved and mysterious style from the example of ancient philosophers, who discussed metaphysical problems in figurative and enigmatic language. Like Ibn Ezra, who frequently concludes his exposition of a Biblical passage with the phrase, "Here a profound idea (*sod*) is hidden," Maimonides somewhat mysteriously remarks at the end of different chapters, "Note this," "Consider it well." In such phrases some Commentators fancied that they found references to metaphysical theories which the author was not willing fully to discuss. Whether this was the case or not, in having recourse to that method he was not, as some have suggested, actuated by fear of being charged with heresy. He expresses his opinion on the principal theological

questions without reserve, and does not dread the searching inquiries of opponents; for he boldly announces that their displeasure would not deter him from teaching the truth and guiding those who are able and willing to follow him, however few these might be. When, however, we examine the work itself, we are at a loss to discover to which parts the professed enigmatic method was applied. His theories concerning the Deity, the Divine attributes, angels, *creatio ex nihilo*, prophecy, and other subjects, are treated as fully as might be expected. It is true that a cloud of mysterious phrases enshrouds the interpretation of *Ma'aseh bereshit* (Gen. i-iii.) and *Ma'aseh mercabah* (Ez. i.). But the significant words occurring in these portions are explained in the First Part of this work, and a full exposition is found in the Second and Third Parts. Nevertheless the statement that the exposition was never intended to be explicit occurs over and over again. The treatment of the first three chapters of Genesis concludes thus: "These remarks, together with what we have already observed on the subject, and what we may have to add, must suffice both for the object and for the reader we have in view" (II. xxx.).

In like manner, he declares, after the explanation of the first chapter of Ezekiel "I have given you here as many suggestions as maybe of service to you, if you will give them a further development. . . . Do not expect to hear from me anything more on this subject, for I have, though with some hesitation, gone as far in my explanation as I possibly could go" (III. vii.).

3 (pag. 8-9), In the next paragraph, headed, "Directions for the Study of

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this Work," he implores the reader not to be hasty with his Criticism, and to bear in mind that every sentence, indeed every word, had been fully considered before it was written down. Yet it might easily happen that the reader could not reconcile his own view with that of the author, and in such a case he is asked to ignore the disapproved chapter or section altogether. Such disapproval Maimonides attributes to a mere misconception on the part of the reader, a fate which awaits every work composed in a mystical style. In adopting this peculiar style, he intended to reduce to a minimum the violation of the rule laid down in the Mishnah (*Hagigah* ii. i), that metaphysics should not be taught publicly. The violation of this rule he justifies by citing the following two Mishnaic maxims: "It is time to do something in honour of the Lord" (*Berakot* ix. 5), and "Let all thy acts be guided by pure intentions" (*Abot* ii. i 7). Maimonides increased the mysteriousness of the treatise, by expressing his wish that the reader should abstain from expounding the work, lest he might spread in the name of the author opinions which the latter never held. But it does not occur to him that the views he enunciates might in themselves be erroneous. He is positive that his own theory is unexceptionally correct, that his esoteric interpretations of Scriptural texts are sound, and that those who differed from him--viz., the Mutakallemim on the one hand, and the unphilosophical Rabbis on the other--are indefensibly wrong. In this respect other Jewish philosophers--e.g. Saadiah and Bahya--were far less positive; they were conscious of their own fallibility, and invited the reader to make such corrections as

might appear needful. Owing to this strong self-reliance of Maimonides, it is not to be expected that opponents would receive a fair and impartial judgment at his hands.

4 (pag. 9-11). The same self-reliance is noticeable in the next and concluding paragraph of the Introduction. Here he treats of the contradictions which are to be found in literary works, and he divides them with regard to their origin into seven classes. The first four classes comprise the apparent contradictions, which can be traced back to the employment of elliptical speech the other three classes comprise the real contradictions, and are due to carelessness and oversight, or they are intended to serve some special purpose. The Scriptures, the Talmud, and the Midrash abound in instances of apparent contradictions; later works contain real contradictions, which escaped the notice of the writers. In the present treatise, however, there occur only such contradictions as are the result of intention and design.

PART I.

The homonymous expressions which are discussed in the First Part include--(1) nouns and verbs used in reference to God, ch. i. to ch. xlix.; (2) attributes of the Deity, ch. 1. to lx.; (3) expressions commonly regarded as names of God, ch. lxi. to lxx. In the first section the following groups can be distinguished--(a) expressions which denote form and figure, cii. i. to ch. vi.; (b) space or relations of space, ch. viii. to ch. xxv.; (c) parts of the animal body and their functions, ch. xxviii. to ch. xlix. Each of these groups includes chapters not connected with the main subject, but which serve as a help for the better understanding of previous or succeeding interpretations. Every word selected for discussion bears upon some Scriptural text which, according to the opinion of the author, has been misinterpreted. But such phrases as "the mouth of the Lord," and "the hand of the Lord," are not introduced, because their figurative meaning is too obvious to be misunderstood.

The lengthy digressions which are here and there interposed appear like outbursts of feeling and passion which the author could not repress. Yet they are "words fitly spoken in the right place", for they gradually unfold the author's

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theory, and acquaint the reader with those general principles on which he founds the interpretations in the succeeding chapters. Moral reflections are of frequent occurrence, and demonstrate the intimate connexion between a virtuous life and the attainment of higher knowledge, in accordance with the maxim current long before Maimonides, and expressed in the Biblical words, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cxl. 10). No opportunity is lost to inculcate this lesson, be it in a passing remark or in an elaborate essay.

The discussion of the term "*zelem*" (cii. i.) afforded the first occasion for reflections of this kind. Man, "the image of God," is defined as a living and rational being, as though the moral faculties of man were not an essential element of his existence, and his power to discern between good

and evil were the result of the first sin. According to Maimonides, the moral faculty would, in fact, not have been required, if man had remained a purely rational being. It is only through the senses that "the knowledge of good and evil" has become indispensable. The narrative of Adam's fall is, according to Maimonides, an allegory representing the relation which exists between sensation, moral faculty, and intellect. In this early part (ch. ii.), however, the author does not yet mention this theory; on the contrary, every allusion to it is for the present studiously avoided, its full exposition being reserved for the Second Part.

The treatment of *hazah* "he beheld" (ch. vi), is followed by the advice that the student should not approach metaphysics otherwise than after a sound and thorough preparation, because a rash attempt to solve abstruse problems brings nothing but injury upon the inexperienced investigator. The author points to the "nobles of the children of Israel" (Exod. xxiv. s i), who, according to his interpretation, fell into this error, and received their deserved punishment. He gives additional force to these exhortations by citing a dictum of Aristotle to the same effect. In a like way he refers to the allegorical use of certain terms by Plato (ch. xvii.) in support of his interpretation of "*zur*" (lit., "rock") as denoting "Primal Cause."

The theory that nothing but a sound moral and intellectual training would entitle a student to engage in metaphysical speculations is again discussed in the digression which precedes the third group of homonyms (xxxi.-xxxvi.). Man's intellectual faculties, he argues, have this in common with his physical forces, that their sphere of action is limited, and they become inefficient whenever they are overstrained. This happens when a student approaches metaphysics without due preparation. Maimonides goes on to argue that the non-success of metaphysical studies is attributable to the following causes: the transcendental character of this discipline, the imperfect state of the student's knowledge, the persistent efforts which have to be made even in the preliminary studies, and finally the waste of energy and time owing to the physical demands of man. For these reasons the majority of persons are debarred from pursuing the study of metaphysics. Nevertheless, there are certain metaphysical truths which have to be communicated to all men, e.g., that God is One, and that He is incorporeal; for to assume that God is corporeal, or that He has any properties, or to ascribe to Him any attributes, is a sin bordering on idolatry.

Another digression occurs as an appendix to the second group of homonyms (ch. xxvi.-xxvii.). Maimonides found that only a limited number of terms are applied to God in a figurative sense; and again, that in the "Targum" of Onkelos some of the figures are paraphrased, while other figures received a literal rendering. He therefore seeks to discover the principle which was applied both in the Sacred Text and in the translation, and he found it in the Talmudical dictum, "The Law speaketh the language of man." For this reason all figures are eschewed which, in their literal sense, would appear to the multitude as implying debasement or a blemish. Onkelos, who rigorously guards himself

against using any term that might suggest corporification, gives a literal rendering of figurative terms when there is no cause for entertaining such an apprehension. Maimonides illustrates this rule by the mode in which Onkelos renders "*yarad*" ("he went down,"), when used in reference to God. It is generally paraphrased, but in one exceptional instance, occurring in Jacob's "visions of the night" (Gen. xlv. i), it is translated literally; in this instance the literal rendering does not lead to corporification; because visions and dreams were generally regarded as mental operations, devoid of objective reality. Simple and clear as this explanation may be, we do not consider that it really explains the method of Onkelos. On the contrary, the translator paraphrased anthropomorphic terms, even when he found them in passages relating to dreams or visions; and indeed it is doubtful whether Maimonides could produce a single instance, in favour of his view. He was equally unsuccessful in his explanation of "*hazah*" "he saw" (ch. xlviii.). He says that when the object of the vision was derogatory, it was not brought into direct relation with the Deity; in such instances the verb is paraphrased, while in other instances the rendering is literal. Although Maimonides grants that the force of this observation is weakened by three exceptions, he does not doubt its correctness.

The next Section (ch. l. to ch. lix.) "On the Divine Attributes" begins with the explanation that "faith" consists in thought, not in mere utterance; in conviction, not in mere profession. This explanation forms the basis for the subsequent discussion. The several arguments advanced by Maimonides against the employment of attributes are intended to show that those who assume the real existence of Divine attributes may possibly utter with their lips the creed of the Unity and the Incorporeality of God, but they cannot truly believe it. A demonstration of this fact would be needless, if the Attributists had not put forth their false theses and defended them with the utmost tenacity, though with the most absurd arguments.

After this explanation the author proceeds to discuss the impropriety of assigning attributes to God. The Attributists admit that God is the Primal Cause, One, incorporeal, free from emotion and privation, and that He is not comparable to any of His creatures, Maimonides therefore contends that any attributes which, either directly or indirectly, are in contradiction to this creed, should not be applied to God. By this rule he rejects four classes of attributes viz., those which include a definition, a partial definition, a quality, or a relation. The definition of a thing includes its efficient Cause; and since God is the Primal Cause, He cannot be defined, or described by a partial definition. A quality, whether psychical, physical, emotional, or quantitative, is always regarded as something distinct from its substratum; a thing which possesses any quality, consists, therefore, of that quality and a substratum, and should not be called one. All relations of time and space imply corporeality; all relations between two objects are, to a certain degree, a comparison between these two objects. To employ any of these attributes in reference to God would be as much as to declare that God is not the Primal Cause, that He is not One, that He is corporeal, or that He is comparable to His creatures.

There is only one class of attributes to which Maimonides makes no objection, viz, such as describe actions, and to this class belong all the Divine attributes which occur in the Scriptures.

The "Thirteen Attributes" (*shelosh esreh middot*, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7) serve as an illustration. They were communicated to Moses when he, as the chief of the Israelites, wished to know the way in which God governs the universe, in order that he himself in ruling the nation might follow it, and thereby promote their real well-being.

On the whole, the opponents of Maimonides admit the correctness of this theory. Only a small number of attributes are the subject of dispute. The

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[paragraph continues] Scriptures unquestionably ascribe to God Existence, Life, Power, Wisdom, Unity, Eternity, and Will. The Attributists regard these as properties distinct from, but co-existing with, the Essence of God. With great acumen, and with equally great acerbity, Maimonides shows that their theory is irreconcilable with their belief in the Unity and the Incorporeality of God. He points out three different ways of interpreting these attributes:--1. They may be regarded as descriptive of the works of God, and as declaring that these possess such properties as, in works of man, would appear to be the result of the will, the power, and the wisdom of a living being. 2. The term "existing," "one," "wise," etc., are applied to God and to His creatures homonymously; as attributes of God they coincide with His Essence; as attributes of anything beside God they are distinct from the essence of the thing. 3. These terms do not describe a positive quality, but express a negation of its opposite. This third interpretation appears to have been preferred by the author; he discusses it more fully than the two others. He observes that the knowledge of the incomprehensible Being is solely of a negative character, and he shows by simple and appropriate examples that an approximate knowledge of a thing can be attained by mere negations, that such knowledge increases with the number of these negations, and that an error in positive assertions is more injurious than an error in negative assertions. In describing the evils which arise from the application of positive attributes to God, he unsparingly censures the hymnologists, because he found them profuse in attributing positive epithets to the Deity. On the basis of his own theory he could easily have interpreted these epithets in the same way as he explains the Scriptural attributes of God. His severity may, however, be accounted for by the fact that the frequent recurrence of positive attributes in the literary composition of the Jews was the cause that the Mohammedans charged the Jews with entertaining false notions of the Deity.

The inquiry into the attributes is followed by a treatment of the names of God. It seems to have been beyond the design of the author to elucidate the etymology of each name, or to establish methodically its signification; for he does not support his explanations by any proof. His sole aim is to show that the Scriptural names of God in their true meaning strictly harmonize with the philosophical conception of the Primal Cause. There are two things which have so be distinguished in the treatment of the Primal Cause the Primal Cause *per se*, and its relation to the Universe. The first is expressed by the tetragrammaton and its cognates, the second by the several attributes, especially by *rokeb ba'arabot*, "He who rideth on the 'arabot" (Ps. lxxviii. 4)

The tetragrammaton exclusively expresses the essence of God, and therefore it is employed as a *nomen proprium*. In the mystery of this name, and others mentioned in the Talmud, as consisting of twelve and of forty-two letters, Maimonides finds no other secret than the solution of some metaphysical problems. The subject of these problems is not actually known, but the author supposes that it referred to the "absolute existence of the Deity." He discovers the same idea in *ehyeh* (Exod. iii. 14), in accordance with the explanation added in the Sacred Text: *asher ehyeh*, "that is, I am." In the course of this discussion he exposes the folly or sinfulness of those who pretend to work miracles by the aid of these and similar names.

With a view of preparing the way for his peculiar interpretation of *rokeb ba'arabot*, he explains a variety of Scriptural passages, and treats of several philosophical terms relative to the Supreme Being. Such expressions as "the word of God," "the work of God," "the work of His fingers," "He made," "He spake," must be taken in a figurative sense; they merely represent God as the cause that some work has been produced, and that some person has acquired

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a certain knowledge. The passage, "And He rested on the seventh day" (Exod. xx. ii) is interpreted as follows: On the seventh Day the forces and laws were complete, which during the previous six days were in the state of being established for the preservation of the Universe. They were not to be increased or modified.

It seems that Maimonides introduced this figurative explanation with a view of showing that the Scriptural "God" does not differ from the "Primal Cause" or "Ever-active Intellect" of the philosophers. On the other hand, the latter do not reject the Unity of God, although they assume that the Primal Cause comprises the *causa efficiens*, the *agens*, and the *causa finalis* (or, the cause, the means, and the end); and that the Ever-active Intellect comprises the *intelligens*, the *intellectus*, and the *intellectum* (or, the thinking subject, the act or thought, and the object thought of); because in this case these apparently different elements are, in fact, identical. The Biblical term corresponding to "Primal Cause" is *rokeb ba'arabot*, "riding on 'arabot." Maimonides is at pains to prove that *'arabot* denotes "the highest sphere," which causes the motion of all other spheres, and which thus brings about the natural course of production and destruction. By "the highest sphere" he does not understand a material sphere, but the immaterial world of intelligences and angels, "the seat of justice and judgment, stores of life, peace, and blessings, the seat of the souls of the righteous," etc. *Rokeb ba'arabot*, therefore, means He presides over the immaterial beings, He is the source of their powers, by which they move the spheres and regulate the course of nature. This theory is more fully developed in the Second Part.

The next section (chap. lxxi.-lxxvi.) treats of the Kalām. According to the author, the method of the Kalām is copied from the Christian Fathers, who applied it in the defence of their religious doctrines. The latter examined in their writings the views of the philosophers, ostensibly in search of truth, in reality, however, with the object of supporting their own dogmas.

Subsequently Mohammedan theologians found in these works arguments which seemed to confirm the truth of their own religion; they blindly adopted these arguments, and made no inquiry whence these had been derived. Maimonides rejects *à priori* the theories of the Mutakallemim, because they explain the phenomena in the universe in conformity with preconceived notions, instead of following the scientific method of the philosophers. Among the Jews, especially in the East and in Africa, there were also some who adopted the method of the Kalām; in doing so they followed the Mu'tazilah (dissenting Mohammedans), not because they found it more correct than the Kalām of the Ashariyah (orthodox Mohammedans), but because at the time when the Jews became acquainted with the Kalām it was only cultivated by the Mu'tazilah. The Jews in Spain, however, remained faithful to the Aristotelian philosophy.

The four principal dogmas upheld by the dominant religions were the *creatio ex nihilo*, the Existence of God, His Incorporeality, and His Unity. By the philosophers the *creatio ex nihilo* was rejected, but the Mutakallemim defended it, and founded upon it their proofs for the other three dogmas. Maimonides adopts the philosophical proofs for the Existence, Incorporeality, and Unity of God, because they must be admitted even by those who deny the *creatio ex nihilo*, the proofs being independent of this dogma. In order to show that the Mutakallemim are mistaken in ignoring the organization of the existing order of things, the author gives a minute description of the analogy between the Universe, or Kosmos, and man, the mikrokosmos (ch. lxxii.). This analogy is merely asserted, and the reader is advised either to find the proof by his own studies, or to accept the fact on the authority of the learned. The Kalām does not admit the existence of law, organization, and unity in the universe. Its

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adherents have, accordingly, no trustworthy criterion to determine whether a thing is possible or impossible. Everything that is conceivable by imagination is by them held as possible. The several parts of the universe are in no relation to each other; they all consist of equal elements; they are not composed of substance and properties, but of atoms and accidents the law of causality is ignored; man's actions are not the result of will and design, but are mere accidents. Maimonides in enumerating and discussing the twelve fundamental propositions of the Kalām (ch. lxiii.), which embody these theories, had apparently no intention to give a complete and impartial account of the Kalām; he solely aimed at exposing the weakness of a system which he regarded as founded not on a sound basis of positive facts, but on mere fiction; not on the evidences of the senses and of reason, but on the illusions of imagination.

After having shown that the twelve fundamental propositions of the Kalām are utterly untenable, Maimonides finds no difficulty in demonstrating the insufficiency of the proofs advanced by the Mutakallemim in support of the above-named dogmas. Seven arguments are cited which the Mutakallemim employ in support of the *creatio ex nihilo*. 1 The first argument is based on the atomic theory, viz., that the universe consists of equal atoms without inherent properties all variety and change observed in nature must therefore be attributed to an external force. Three

arguments are supplied by the proposition that finite things of an infinite number cannot exist (Propos. xi.). Three other arguments derive their support from the following proposition (x.) Everything that can be imagined can have an actual existence. The present order of things is only one out of the many forms which are possible, and exist through the fiat of a determining power.

The Unity of God is demonstrated by the Mutakallemim as follows: Two Gods would have been unable to produce the world; one would have impeded the work of the other. Maimonides points out that this might have been avoided by a suitable division of labour. Another argument is as follows The two Beings would have one element in common, and would differ in another each would thus Consist of two elements, and would not be God. Maimonides might have suggested that the argument moves in a circle, the unity of God being proved by assuming His unity. The following argument is altogether unintelligible: Both Gods are moved to action by will; the will, being without a substratum, could not act simultaneously in two separate beings. The fallacy of the following argument is clear: The existence of one God is proved; the existence of a second God is not proved, it would be possible; and as possibility is inapplicable to God, there does not exist a second God. The possibility of ascertaining the existence of God is here confounded with potentiality of existence. Again, if one God suffices, the second God is superfluous; if one God is not sufficient, he is not perfect, and cannot be a deity. Maimonides objects that it would not be an imperfection in either deity to act exclusively within their respective provinces. As in the criticism of the first argument, Maimonides

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seems here to forget that the existence of separate provinces would require a superior determining Power, and the two Beings would not properly be called Gods. The weakest of all arguments are, according to Maimonides, those by which the Mutakallemim sought to support the doctrine of God's Incorporeality. If God were corporeal, He would consist of atoms, and would not be one; or He would be comparable to other beings but a comparison implies the existence of similar and of dissimilar elements, and God would thus not be one. A corporeal God would be finite, and an external power would be required to define those limits.

PART II.

The Second Part includes the following sections:--1. Introduction; 2. Philosophical Proof of the Existence of One Incorporeal Primal Cause (ch. i.); 3. On the Spheres and the Intelligences (ii.-xii.); 4. On the theory of the Eternity of the Universe (xiii.-xxix.); 5. Exposition of Gen. i.-iv. (xxx., xxxi.); 6. On Prophecy (xxxii.-xlvi.).

The enumeration of twenty-six propositions, by the aid of which the philosophers prove the Existence, the Unity, and the Incorporeality of the Primal Cause, forms the introduction to the Second Part of this work. The propositions treat of the properties of the finite and the infinite (i.-iii., x.-xii., xvi.), of change and motion (iv.-ix., xiii.-xviii.), and of the possible and the absolute or necessary (xx.-xxv.); they are simply enumerated, but are not demonstrated. Whatever the

value of these Propositions may be, they were inadequate for their purpose, and the author is compelled to introduce auxiliary propositions to prove the existence of an infinite, incorporeal, and uncompounded Primal Cause. (Arguments I. and III.)

The first and the fourth arguments may be termed cosmological proofs. They are based on the hypothesis that the series of causes for every change is finite, and terminates in the Primal Cause. There is no essential difference in the two arguments in the first are discussed the causes of the motion of a moving object; the fourth treats of the causes which bring about the transition of a thing from potentiality to reality. To prove that neither the spheres nor a force residing in them constitute the Primal Cause, the philosophers employed two propositions, of which the one asserts that the revolutions of the spheres are infinite, and the other denies the possibility that an infinite force should reside in a finite object. The distinction between the finite in space and the finite in time appears to have been ignored; for it is not shown why a force infinite in time could not reside in a body finite in space. Moreover, those who, like Maimonides, reject the eternity of the universe, necessarily reject this proof, while those who hold that the universe is eternal do not admit that the spheres have ever been only potential, and passed from potentiality to actuality. The second argument is supported by the following supplementary proposition If two elements coexist in a state of combination, and one of these elements is to be found at the same time separate, in a free state, it is certain that the second element is likewise to be found by itself. Now, since things exist which combine in themselves motive power and mass moved by that power, and since mass is found by itself, motive power must also be found by itself independent of mass.

The third argument has a logical character: The universe is either eternal or temporal, or partly eternal and partly temporal. It cannot be eternal in all its parts, as many parts undergo destruction; it is not altogether temporal, because, if so, the universe could not be reproduced after being destroyed. The continued

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existence of the universe leads, therefore, to the conclusion that there is an immortal force, the Primal Cause, besides the transient world.

These arguments have this in common, that while proving the existence of a Primal Cause, they at the same time demonstrate the Unity, the Incorporeality, and the Eternity of that Cause. Special proofs are nevertheless superadded for each of these postulates, and on the whole they differ very little from those advanced by the Mohammedan Theologians.

This philosophical theory of the Primal Cause was adapted by Jewish scholars to the Biblical theory of the Creator. The universe is a living, organized being, of which the earth is the centre. Any changes on this earth are due to the revolutions of the spheres; the lowest or innermost sphere, viz., the one nearest to the centre, is the sphere of the moon; the outermost or uppermost is "the all-encompassing sphere." Numerous spheres are interposed but Maimonides divides all

the spheres into four groups, corresponding to the moon, the sun, the planets, and the fixed stars. This division is claimed by the author as his own discovery; he believes that it stands in relation to the four causes of their motions, the four elements of the sublunary world, and the four classes of beings, viz., the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the rational. The spheres have souls, and are endowed with intellect; their souls enable them to move freely, and the impulse to the motion is given by the intellect in conceiving the idea of the Absolute Intellect. Each sphere has an intellect peculiar to itself; the intellect attached to the sphere of the moon is called "the active intellect" (*Sekel ha-po 'ēl*). In support of this theory numerous passages are cited both from Holy Writ and from post-Biblical Jewish literature. The angels (*elohim, malakim*) mentioned in the Bible are assumed to be identical with the intellects of the spheres; they are free agents, and their volition invariably tends to that which is good and noble they emanate from the Primal Cause, and form a descending series of beings, ending with the active intellect. The transmission of power from one element to the other is called "emanation" (*shefa*). This transmission is performed without the utterance of a sound; if any voice is supposed to be heard, it is only an illusion, originating in the human imagination, which is the source of all evils (ch. xii.).

In accordance with this doctrine, Maimonides explains that the three men who appeared to Abraham, the angels whom Jacob saw ascend and descend the ladder, and all other angels seen by man, are nothing but the intellects of the spheres, four in number, which emanate from the Primal Cause (ch. x). In his description of the spheres he, as usual, follows Aristotle. The spheres do not contain any of the four elements of the sublunary world, but consist of a quintessence, an entirely different element. Whilst things on this earth are transient, the beings which inhabit the spheres above are eternal. According to Aristotle, these spheres, as well as their intellects, coexist with the Primal Cause. Maimonides, faithful to the teaching of the Scriptures, here departs from his master, and holds that the spheres and the intellects had a beginning, and were brought into existence by the will of the Creator. He does not attempt to give a positive proof of his doctrine all he contends is that the theory of the *creatio ex nihilo* is, from a philosophical point of view, not inferior to the doctrine which asserts the eternity of the universe, and that he can refute all objections advanced against his theory (ch. xiii.-xxviii.).

He next enumerates and criticises the various theories respecting the origin of the Universe, viz.: A. God created the Universe out of nothing. B. God formed the Universe from an eternal substance. C. The Universe originating in the eternal Primal Cause is co-eternal.--It is not held necessary by the author to discuss the view of those who do not assume a Primal Cause, since the existence of such a cause has already been proved (ch. xiii.).

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The objections raised to a *creatio ex nihilo* by its opponents are founded partly on the properties of Nature, and partly on those of the Primal Cause, They infer from the properties of Nature the following arguments: (1) The first moving force is eternal; for if it had a beginning, another motion must have produced it, and then it would not be the First moving force. (2) If the *formless*

matter be not eternal, it must have been produced out of another substance; it would then have a certain form by which it might be distinguished from the primary substance, and then it would not *formless*. (3) The circular motion of the spheres does not involve the necessity of termination; and anything that is without an end, must be without a beginning. (4) Anything brought to existence existed previously *in potentia*; something must therefore have pre-existed of which potential existence could be predicated. Some support for the theory of the eternity of the heavens has been derived from the general belief in the eternity of the heavens.--The properties of the Primal Cause furnished the following arguments:--If it were assumed that the Universe was created from nothing, it would imply that the First Cause had changed from the condition of a potential Creator to that of an actual Creator, or that His will had undergone a change, or that He must be imperfect, because He produced a perishable work, or that He had been inactive during a certain period. All these contingencies would be contrary so a true conception of the First Cause (ch. xiv.).

Maimonides is of opinion that the arguments based on the properties of things in Nature are inadmissible, because the laws by which the Universe is regulated need not have been in force before the Universe was in existence. This refutation is styled by our author "a strong wall built round the Law, able to resist all attacks" (ch. xvii.). In a similar manner the author proceeds against the objections founded on the properties of the First Cause. Purely intellectual beings, he says, are not subject to the same laws as material bodies; that which necessitates a change in the latter or in the will of man need not produce a change in immaterial beings. As so the belief that the heavens are inhabited by angels and deities, it has not its origin in the real existence of these supernatural beings; it was suggested to man by meditation on the apparent grandeur of heavenly phenomena (ch. xviii.).

Maimonides next proceeds to explain how, independently of the authority or Scripture, he has been led to adopt the belief in the *creatio ex nihilo*. Admitting that the great variety of the things in the sublunary world can be traced to those immutable laws which regulate the influence of the spheres on the beings below--the variety in the spheres can only be explained as the result of God's free will. According to Aristotle--the principal authority for the eternity of the Universe--it is impossible that a simple being should, according to the laws of nature, be the cause of various and compound beings. Another reason for the rejection of the Eternity of the Universe may be found in the fact that the astronomer Ptolemy has proved the incorrectness of the view which Aristotle had of celestial spheres, although the system of that astronomer is likewise far from being perfect and final (ch. xxiv.). It is impossible to obtain a correct notion of the properties of the heavenly spheres; "the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth hath He given to the children of man" (Ps. cxv. 16). The author, observing that the arguments against the *creatio ex nihilo* are untenable, adheres to his theory, which was taught by such prophets as Abraham and Moses. Although each Scriptural quotation could, by a figurative interpretation, be made to agree with the opposite theory, Maimonides declines to ignore the literal sense of a term, unless it be in opposition so well-established truths, as is the case with anthropomorphic

expressions; for the latter, if taken literally, would be contrary to the demonstrated truth of God's incorporeality (ch. xxv.). He is therefore surprised that the author of Pirke-di Rabbi Eliezer ventured to assume the eternity of

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matter, and he thinks it possible that Rabbi Eliezer carried the license of figurative speech too far. (Ch. xxvi.).

The theory of the *creatio ex nihilo* does not involve the belief that the Universe will at a future time be destroyed; the Bible distinctly teaches the creation, but not the destruction of the world except in passages which are undoubtedly conceived in a metaphorical sense. On the contrary, respecting certain parts of the Universe it is clearly stated "He established them for ever." (Ps. cxlviii. 5.) The destruction of the Universe would be, as the creation has been, a direct act of the Divine will, and not the result of those immutable laws which govern the Universe. The Divine will would in that case set aside those laws, both in the initial and the final stages of the Universe. Within this interval, however, the laws remain undisturbed (ch. xxvii.). Apparent exceptions, the miracles, originate in these laws, although man is unable to perceive the causal relation. The Biblical account of the creation concludes with the statement that God rested on the seventh day, that is to say, He declared that the work was complete; no new act of creation was to take place, and no new law was to be introduced. It is true that the second and the third chapters of Genesis appear to describe a new creation, that of Eve, and a new law, viz., that of man's mortality, but these chapters are explained as containing an allegorical representation of man's psychical and intellectual faculties, or a supplemental detail of the Contents of the first chapter. Maimonides seems to prefer the allegorical explanation which, as it seems, he had in view without expressly stating it, in his treatment of Adams sin and punishment. (Part I. ch. ii.) It is certainly inconsistent on the one hand to admit that at the pleasure of the Almighty the laws of nature may become inoperative, and that the whole Universe may become annihilated, and on the other hand to deny, that during the existence of the Universe, any of the natural laws ever have been or ever will be suspended. It seems that Maimonides could not conceive the idea that the work of the All-wise should be, as the Mutakallemim taught--without plan and system, or that the laws Once laid down should not be sufficient for all emergencies.

The account of the Creation given in the book of Genesis is explained by the author according to the following two rules: First its language is allegorical; and, Secondly, the terms employed are homonyms. The words *erez*, *mayim*, *ruah*, and *hoshek* in the second verse (ch. i.), are homonyms and denote the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire; in other instances *erez* is the terrestrial globe, *mayim* is water or vapour, *ruah* denotes wind, and *hoshek* darkness: According to Maimonides, a summary of the first chapter may be given thus; God created the Universe by producing first the *reshit* the "beginning" (Gen. i. 1), or *hathalah*, i.e., the intellects which give to the spheres both existence and motion, and thus become the source of the existence of the entire Universe. At first this Universe consisted of a chaos of elements, but its form was successively

developed by the influence of the spheres, and more directly by the action of light and darkness, the properties of which were fixed on the first day of the Creation. In the subsequent five days minerals, plants, animals, and the intellectual beings came into existence. The seventh day, on which the Universe was for the first time ruled by the same natural laws which still continue in operation, was distinguished as a day blessed and sanctified by the Creator, who designed it to proclaim the *creatio ex nihilo* (Exod. xx. xi). The Israelites were moreover commanded to keep this Sabbath in commemoration of their departure from Egypt (Deut. v. ii), because during the period of the Egyptian bondage, they had not been permitted to rest on that day. In the history of the first sin of man, Adam, Eve, and the serpent represent the intellect, the body, and the imagination. In order to complete the imagery, *Samael* or *Satan*, mentioned in the Midrash in connexion with this account,

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is added as representing man's appetitive faculties. Imagination, the source of error, is directly aided by the appetitive faculty, and the two are intimately connected with the body, so which man generally gives paramount attention, and for the sake of which he indulges in sins; in the end, however, they subdue the intellect and weaken its power. Instead of obtaining pure and real knowledge, man forms false conceptions; in consequence, the body is subject to suffering, whilst the imagination, instead of being guided by the intellect and attaining a higher development becomes debased and depraved. In the three sons of Adam, Kain, Abel, and Seth, Maimonides finds an allusion to the three elements in man: the vegetable, the animal, and the intellectual. First, the animal element (Abel) becomes extinct; then the vegetable elements (Kain) are dissolved; only the third element, the intellect (Seth), survives, and forms the basis of mankind (ch. xxx., xxxi.).

Maimonides having so far stated his opinion in explicit terms, it is difficult to understand what he had in view by the avowal that he could not disclose everything. It is unquestionably no easy matter to adapt each verse in the first chapters of Genesis to the foregoing allegory; but such an adaptation is, according to the author's own view (Part I., Introd., p. 19), not only unnecessary, but actually objectionable.

In the next section (xxxii.-xlvi.) Maimonides treats of Prophecy. He mentions the following three opinions:--1. Any person, irrespective of his physical or moral qualifications, may be summoned by the Almighty to the mission of a prophet. 2. Prophecy is the highest degree of mental development, and can only be attained by training and study. 3. The gift of prophecy depends on physical, moral, and mental training, combined with inspiration. The author adopts the last-mentioned opinion. He defines prophecy as an emanation (*shefa*), which through the will of the Almighty descends from the Active Intellect to the intellect and the imagination of thoroughly qualified persons. The prophet is thus distinguished both from wise men whose intellect alone received the necessary impulse from the Active Intellect, and from diviners or dreamers, whose imagination alone has been influenced by the Active Intellect. Although it is

assumed that the attainment of this prophetic faculty depends on God's will, this dependence is nothing else but the relation which all things bear to the Primal Cause; for the Active Intellect acts in conformity with the laws established by the will of God; it gives an impulse to the intellect of man, and, bringing to light those mental powers which lay dormant, it merely turns potential faculty into real action. These faculties can be perfected to such a degree as to enable man to apprehend the highest truths intuitively, without passing through all the stages of research required by ordinary persons. The same fact is noticed with respect to imagination; man sometimes forms faithful images of objects and events which cannot be traced to the ordinary channel of information, viz., impressions made on the senses. Since prophecy is the result of a natural process, it may appear surprising that, of the numerous men excelling in wisdom, so few became prophets. Maimonides accounts for this fact by assuming that the moral faculties of such men had not been duly trained. None of them had, in the author's opinion, gone through the moral discipline indispensable for the vocation of a prophet. Besides this, everything which obstructs mental improvement, misdirects the imagination or impairs the physical strength, and precludes man from attaining to the rank of prophet. Hence no prophecy was vouchsafed to Jacob during the period of his anxieties on account of his separation from Joseph. Nor did Moses receive a Divine message during the years which the Israelites, under Divine punishment, spent in the desert. On the other hand, music and song awakened the prophetic power (comp. 2 Kings iii. 15), and

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[paragraph continues] "The spirit of prophecy alights only on him who is wise, strong, and rich" (Babyl. Talm. Shabbat, 922). Although the preparation for a prophetic mission, the pursuit of earnest and persevering study, as also the execution of the Divine dictates, required physical strength, yet in the moment when the prophecy was received the functions of the bodily organs were suspended. The intellect then acquired true knowledge, which presented itself to the prophet's imagination in forms peculiar to that faculty. Pure ideals are almost incomprehensible; man must translate them into language which he is accustomed to use, and he must adapt them to his own mode of thinking. In receiving prophecies and communicating them to others the exercise of the prophet's imagination was therefore as essential as that of his intellect, and Maimonides seems to apply to this imagination the term "angel," which is so frequently mentioned in the Bible as the medium of communication between the Supreme Being and the prophet.

Only Moses held his bodily functions under such control that even without their temporary suspension he was able to receive prophetic inspiration the interposition of the imagination was in his case not needed "God spoke to him mouth to mouth" (Num. xii. 1). Moses differed so completely from other prophets that the term "prophet" could only have been applied to him and other men by way of homonymy.

The impulses descending from the Active intellect to man's intellect and to his imagination produce various effects, according to his physical, moral, and intellectual condition. Some men are thus endowed with extraordinary courage and with an ambition to perform great deeds, or they feel themselves impelled to appeal mightily to their fellowmen by means of exalted and pure language. Such men are filled with "the spirit of the Lord," or, "with the spirit of holiness." To this distinguished class belonged Jephthah, Samson, David, Solomon, and the authors of the Hagiographa. Though above the standard of ordinary men, they were not included in the rank of prophets. Maimonides divides the prophets into two groups, viz., those who receive inspiration in a dream and those who receive it in a vision. The first group includes the following five classes:--1. Those who see symbolic figures; 2. Those who hear a voice addressing them without perceiving the speaker; 3. Those who see a man and hear him addressing them; 4. Those who see an angel addressing them; 5. Those who see God and hear His voice. The other group is divided in a similar manner, but contains only the first four classes, for Maimonides considered it impossible that a prophet should see God in a vision. This classification is based on the various expressions employed in the Scriptures to describe the several prophecies.

When the Israelites received the Law at Mount Sinai, they distinctly heard the first two commandments, which include the doctrines of the Existence and the Unity of God; of the other eight commandments, which enunciate moral, not metaphysical truths, they heard the mere "sound of words"; and it was through the mouth of Moses that the Divine instruction was revealed to them. Maimonides defends this opinion by quotations from the Talmud and the Midrashim.

The theory that imagination was an essential element in prophecy is supported by the fact that figurative speech predominates in the prophetic writings, which abound in figures, hyperbolic expressions and allegories. The symbolical acts which are described in connexion with the visions of the prophets, such as the translation of Ezekiel from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ez. viii. 3), Isaiah's walking about naked and barefoot (Isa. xx. 2), Jacob's wrestling with the angel (Gen. xxxii. 17 *sqq.*), and the speaking of Balaam's ass (Num. xxii. 28), had no positive reality. The prophets, employing an elliptical style,

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frequently omitted to state that a Certain event related by them was part of a vision or a dream. In consequence of such elliptical speech events are described in the Bible as coming directly from God, although they simply are the effect of the ordinary laws of nature, and as such depend on the will of God. Such passages cannot be misunderstood when it is borne in mind that every event and every natural phenomenon can for its origin be traced to the Primal Cause. In this sense the prophets employ such phrases as the following "And I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it" (Isa. v. 6); "I have also called my mighty men" (*ibid.* xi. 3).

PART III.

This part contains the following six sections:--1. Exposition of the *ma'aseh mercabah* (Ez. i.), ch. i. vii.; 2. On the nature and the origin of evil, ch. viii. xii. 3. On the object of the creation, ch. xiii.-xv.; 4. On Providence and Omniscience, ch. xvi.-xxv.; 5. On the object of the Divine precepts (*ta'ame ha-mizvot*) and the historical portions of the Bible, ch. xxv.-xl.; 6. A guide to the proper worship of God.

With great caution Maimonides approaches the explanation of the *ma'aseh mercabah*, the chariot which Ezekiel beheld in a vision (Ez. i.). The mysteries included in the description of the Divine chariot had been orally transmitted from generation to generation, but in consequence of the dispersion of the Jews the chain of tradition was broken, and the knowledge of these mysteries had vanished. Whatever he knew of those mysteries he owed exclusively to his own intellectual faculties; he therefore could not reconcile himself to the idea that his knowledge should die with him. He committed his exposition of the *ma'aseh mercabah* and the *ma'aseh bereshit* to writing, but did not divest it of its original mysterious character; so that the explanation was fully intelligible to the initiated--that is to say, to the philosopher--but to the ordinary reader it was a mere paraphrase of the Biblical text.--(Introduction.)

The first seven chapters are devoted to the exposition of the Divine chariot. According to Maimonides three distinct parts are to be noticed, each of which begins with the phrase, "And I saw." These parts correspond to the three parts of the Universe, the sublunary world, the spheres and the intelligences. First of all the prophet is made to behold the material world which consists of the earth and the spheres, and of these the spheres, as the more important, are noticed first. In the Second Part, in which the nature of the spheres is discussed, the author dwells with pride on his discovery that they can be divided into four groups. This discovery he now employs to show that the four "*hayyot*" (animals) represent the four divisions of the spheres. He points out that the terms which the prophet uses in the description of the *hayyot* are identical with terms applied to the properties of the spheres. For the four *hayyot* or "angels," or *cherubim*, (1) have human form; (2) have human faces; (3) possess characteristics of other animals; (4) have human hands; (5) their feet are straight and round (cylindrical); (6) their bodies are closely joined so each other; (7) only their faces and their wings are separate; (8) their substance is transparent and refulgent; (9) they move uniformly; (10) each moves in its own direction; (11) they run; (12) swift as lightning they return towards their starting point; and (13) they move in consequence of an extraneous impulse (*ruah*). In a similar manner the spheres are described:--(1) they possess the characteristics of man, viz., life and intellect; (2) they consist like man of body and soul; (3) they are strong, mighty and swift, like the ox, the lion, and the eagle, (4) they perform all manner of work as though they had

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hands; (5) they are round, and are not divided into parts; (6) no vacuum intervenes between one sphere and the other; (7) they may be considered as one being, but in respect to the intellects, which are the causes of their existence and motion, they appear as four different beings; (8) they

are transparent and refulgent; (9) each sphere moves uniformly, (10) and according to its special laws; (11) they revolve with great velocity; (12) each point returns again to its previous position; (13) they are self-moving, yet the impulse emanates from an external power.

In the second part of the vision the prophet saw the *ofannim*. These represent the four elements of the sublunary world. For the *ofannim* (1) are connected with the *hayyot* and with the earth; (2) they have four faces, and are four separate beings, but interpenetrate each other "as though it were a wheel in the midst of a wheel" (Ez. i. 16); (3) they are covered with eyes; (4) they are not self-moving; (5) they are set in motion by the *hayyot*; (6) their motion is not circular but rectilinear. The same may almost be said of the four elements (1) they are in close contact with the spheres, being encompassed by the sphere of the moon; earth occupies the centre, water surrounds earth, air has its position between water and fire; (2) this order is not invariably maintained; the respective portions change and they become intermixed and combined with each other (3) though they are only four elements they form an infinite number of things; (4) not being animated they do not move of their own accord; (5) they are set in motion by the action of the spheres; (6) when a portion is displaced it returns in a straight line to its original position.

In the third vision Ezekiel saw a human form above the *hayyot*. The figure was divided in the middle; in the upper portion the prophet only noticed that it was *hashmal*, (mysterious); from the loins downwards there was "the vision of the likeness of the Divine Glory," and "the likeness of the throne." The world of Intelligences was represented by the figure; these can only be perceived in as far as they influence the spheres, but their relation to the Creator is beyond human comprehension. The Creator himself is not represented in this vision.

The key to the whole vision Maimonides finds in the introductory words, "And the heavens were opened," and in the minute description of the place and the time of the revelation. When pondering on the grandeur of the spheres and their influences, which vary according to time and place, man begins to think of the existence of the Creator. At the conclusion of this exposition Maimonides declares that he will, in the subsequent chapters, refrain from giving further explanation of the *ma'aseh mercabah*. The foregoing summary, however, shows that the opinion of the author on this subject is fully stated, and it is indeed difficult to conceive what additional disclosures he could still have made.

The task which the author has proposed to himself in the Preface he now regarded as accomplished. He has discussed the method of the Kalām, the system of the philosophers, and his own theory concerning the relation between the Primal Cause and the Universe: he has explained the Biblical account of the creation, the nature of prophecy, and the mysteries in Ezekiel's vision. In the remaining portion of the work the author attempts to solve certain theological problems, as though he wished to obviate the following objections, which might be raised to his theory that there is a design throughout the creation, and that the entire Universe is subject to the law of causation:--What is the purpose of the evils which attend human life? For what purpose was the world created? In how far does Providence interfere with the natural

course of events? Does God know and foresee man's actions? To what end was the Divine Law revealed These problems are treated seriatim.

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All evils, Maimonides holds, originate in the material element of man's existence. Those who are able to emancipate themselves from the tyranny of the body, and unconditionally so submit to the dictates of reason, are protected from many evils. Man should disregard the cravings of the body, avoid them as topics of conversation, and keep his thoughts far away from them; convivial and erotic songs debase man's noblest gifts--thought and speech. Matter is the partition separating man from the pure Intellects; it is "the thickness of the cloud" which true knowledge has so traverse before it reaches man. In reality, evil is the mere negative of good "God saw *all* that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen. i. 3). Evil does not exist at all. When evils are mentioned in the Scriptures as the work of God, the Scriptural expressions must not be taken in their literal sense.

There are three kinds of evils:--1. Evils necessitated by those laws of production and destruction by which the species are perpetuated. 2. Evils which men inflict on each other; they are comparatively few, especially among civilized men. 3. Evils which man brings upon himself, and which comprise the majority of existing evils. The consideration of these three classes of evils leads to the conclusion that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. cxlv. 9).

The question, What is the object of the creation? must be left unanswered. The creation is the result of the will of God. Also those who believe that the Universe is eternal must admit that they are unable to discover the purpose of the Universe. It would, however, not be illogical to assume that the spheres have been created for the sake of man, notwithstanding the great dimensions of the former and the smallness of the latter. Still it must be conceded that, even if mankind were the main and central object of creation, there is no absolute interdependence between them; for it is a matter of course that, under altered conditions, man could exist without the spheres. All teleological theories must therefore be confined within the limits of the Universe as it now exists. They are only admissible in the relation in which the several parts of the Universe stand to each other; but the purpose of the Universe as a whole cannot be accounted for. It is simply an emanation from the will of God.

Regarding the belief in Providence, Maimonides enumerates the following five opinions:--1. There is no Providence; *everything* is subject to chance. 2. Only a part of the Universe is governed by Providence, viz., the spheres, the species, and such individual beings as possess the power of perpetuating their existence (e.g., the star); the rest--that is, the sublunary world--is left to mere chance. 3. Everything is predetermined; according to this theory, revealed Law is inconceivable. 4. Providence assigns its blessings to *all* creatures, according to their merits; accordingly, all beings, even the lowest animals, if innocently injured or killed, receive

compensation in a future life. 5. According to the Jewish belief all living beings are endowed with free-will; God is just, and the destiny of man depends on his merits. Maimonides denies the existence of trials inflicted by Divine love, i.e. afflictions which befall man, not as punishments of sin, but as means to procure for him a reward in times to come. Maimonides also rejects the notion that God ordains special temptation. The Biblical account, according to which God tempts men, "to know what is in their hearts," must not be taken in its literal sense; it merely states that God made the virtues of certain people known to their fellowmen in order that their good example should be followed. Of all creatures man alone enjoys the especial care of Providence because the acts of Providence are identical with certain influences (*shefa*) which the Active Intellect brings to bear upon the human intellect; their effect upon man varies according to his physical, moral, and intellectual condition; irrational beings, however, cannot be affected by these

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influences. If we cannot in each individual case see how these principles are applied, it must be borne in mind that God's wisdom is far above that of man. The author seems to have felt that his theory has its weak points, for he introduces it as follows:--"My theory is not established by demonstrative proof; it is based on the authority of the Bible, and it is less subject to refutation than any of the theories previously mentioned."

Providence implies Omniscience, and men who deny this, *eo ipso*, have no belief in Providence. Some are unable to reconcile the fate of man with Divine Justice, and are therefore of opinion that God takes no notice whatever of the events which occur on earth. Others believe that God, being an absolute Unity, cannot possess a knowledge of a multitude of things, or of things that do not yet exist, or the number of which is infinite. These objections, which are based on the nature of man's perception, are illogical, for God's knowledge cannot be compared to that of man; it is identical with His essence. Even the Attributists, who assume that God's knowledge is different from His essence, hold that it is distinguished from man's knowledge in the following five points:--1. It is one, although it embraces a plurality. 2. It includes even such things as do not yet exist. 3. It includes things which are infinite in number. 4. It does not change when new objects of perception present themselves. 5. It does not determine the course of events.--However difficult this theory may appear to human comprehension, it is in accordance with the words of Isaiah (lv. 8) "Your thoughts are not My thoughts, and your ways are not My ways." According to Maimonides, the difficulty is to be explained by the fact that God is the Creator of all things, and His knowledge of the things is not dependent on their existence; while the knowledge of man is solely dependent on the objects which come under his cognition.

According to Maimonides, the book of Job illustrates the several views which have been mentioned above. Satan, that is, the material element in human existence, is described as the cause of Job's sufferings. Job at first believed that man's happiness depends on riches, health, and children; being deprived of these sources of happiness, he conceived the notion that Providence

is indifferent to the fate of mortal beings. After a careful study of natural phenomena, he rejected this opinion. Eliphaz held that all misfortunes of man serve as punishments of past sins. Bildad, the second friend of Job, admitted the existence of those afflictions which Divine love decrees in order that the patient sufferer may be fitted to receive a bountiful reward. Zophar, the third friend of Job, declared that the ways of God are beyond human comprehension; there is but one explanation assignable to all Divine acts, namely: Such is His Will. Elihu gives a fuller development to this idea; he says that such evils as befell Job may be remedied once or twice, but the course of nature is not altogether reversed. It is true that by prophecy a clearer insight into the ways of God can be obtained, but there are only few who arrive at that exalted intellectual degree, whilst the majority of men must content themselves with acquiring a knowledge of God through the study of nature. Such a study leads man to the conviction that his understanding cannot fathom the secrets of nature and the wisdom of Divine Providence.

The concluding section of the Third Part treats of the purpose of the Divine precepts. In the Pentateuch they are described as the means of acquiring wisdom, enduring happiness, and also bodily comfort (ch. xxxi.). Generally a distinction is made between "*ḥukkim*" ("statutes") and *mishpatim* ("judgments"). The object of the latter is, on the whole, known, but the *ḥukkim* are considered as tests of man's obedience; no reason is given why they have been enacted. Maimonides rejects this distinction; he states that all precepts are the result of wisdom and design, that all contribute to the welfare of mankind,

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although with regard to the *ḥukkim* this is less obvious. The author draws another line of distinction between the general principles and the details of rules. For the selection and the introduction of the latter there is but one reason, viz. "Such is the will of God."

The laws are intended to promote man's perfection; they improve both his mental and his physical condition; the former in so far as they lead him to the acquisition of true knowledge, the latter through the training of his moral and social faculties. Each law thus imparts knowledge, improves the moral condition of man, or conduces to the well-being of society. Many revealed laws help to enlighten man, and to correct false opinions. This object is not always clearly announced. God in His wisdom sometimes withheld from the knowledge of man the purpose of commandments and actions. There are other precepts which tend to restrain man's passions and desires. If the same end is occasionally attainable by other means, it must be remembered that the Divine laws are adapted to the ordinary mental and emotional state of man, and not to exceptional circumstances. In this work, as in the *Yad ha-ḥazakah*, Maimonides divides the laws of the Pentateuch into fourteen groups, and in each group he discusses the principal and the special object of the laws included in it.

In addition to the legislative contents, the Bible includes historical information; and Maimonides, in briefly reviewing the Biblical narratives, shows that these are likewise intended to improve

man's physical, moral, and intellectual condition. "It is not a vain thing for you" (Deut. xxxii. 47) and when it proves vain to anyone, it is his own fault.

In the final chapters the author describes the several degrees of human perfection, from the sinners who have turned from the right path to the best of men, who in all their thoughts and acts cling to the Most Perfect Being, who aspire after the greatest possible knowledge of God, and strive to serve their Maker in the practice of "loving-kindness, righteousness, and justice." This degree of human perfection can only be attained by those who never forget the presence of the Almighty, and remain firm in their fear and love of God. These servants of the Most High inherit the choicest of human blessings they are endowed with wisdom they are godlike beings.

Footnotes

xxxix:1 See *infra*, page 4, note 1.

xl:1 See *infra*, page 5, note 4.

xlvi:1 Saadiah proves the existence of the Creator in the following way:--1. The Universe is limited, and therefore cannot possess an unlimited force, 2. All things are compounds the composition must be owing to some external cause, 3. Changes observed in all beings are effected by some external cause, 4. If time were infinite, it would be impossible to conceive the progress of time from the present moment to the future, or from the past to the present moment. (Emunot vede'ot, ch. i.)--Bahya founds his arguments on three propositions:--1. A thing cannot be its own maker, 2. The series of successive causes is finite. 3. Compounds owe their existence to an external force. His arguments are:--1. The Universe, even the elements, are compounds consisting of substance and form. 2. In the Universe plan and unity is discernible. (Hobot ha-lebabot, ch. i.)

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INTRODUCTION

[*Letter of the Author to his Pupil, R. Joseph Ibn Akinin.*]

In the name of GOD, Lord of the Universe.

To R. Joseph (may God protect him!), son of R. Jehudah (may his repose be in Paradise!):--

My dear pupil, ever since you resolved to come to me, from a distant country, and to study under my direction, I thought highly of your thirst for knowledge, and your fondness for speculative pursuits, which found expression in your poems. I refer to the time when I received your writings in prose and verse from Alexandria. I was then not yet able to test your powers of apprehension, and I thought that your desire might possibly exceed your capacity. But when you had gone with

me through a course of astronomy, after having completed the [other] elementary studies which are indispensable for the understanding of that science, I was still more gratified by the acuteness and the quickness of your apprehension. Observing your great fondness for mathematics, I let you study them more deeply, for I felt sure of your ultimate success. Afterwards, when I took you through a course of logic, I found that my great expectations of you were confirmed, and I considered you fit to receive from me an exposition of the esoteric ideas contained in the prophetic books, that you might understand them as they are understood by men of culture. When I commenced by way of hints, I noticed that you desired additional explanation, urging me to expound some metaphysical problems; to teach you the system of the Mutakallemim; to tell you whether their arguments were based on logical proof; and if not, what their method was. I perceived that you had acquired some knowledge in those matters from others, and that you were perplexed and bewildered; yet you sought to find out a solution to your difficulty. I urged you to desist from this pursuit, and enjoined you to continue your studies systematically; for my object was that the truth should present itself in connected order, and that you should not hit upon it by mere chance. Whilst you studied with me I never refused to explain difficult verses in the Bible or passages in rabbinical literature which we happened to meet. When, by the will of God, we parted, and you went your way, our discussions aroused in me a resolution which had long been dormant. Your absence has prompted me to compose this treatise for you and for those who are like you, however few they may be. I have divided it into chapters, each of which shall be sent to you as soon as it is completed. Farewell!"

[Prefatory Remarks.]

"Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." (Psalm cxliii. S.)

"Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." (Prov. viii. 4)

"Bow down thine ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge." (Prov. xxii. 17.)

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My primary object in this work is to explain certain words occurring in the prophetic books. Of these some are homonyms, and of their several meanings the ignorant choose the wrong ones; other terms which are employed in a figurative sense are erroneously taken by such persons in their primary signification. There are also hybrid terms, denoting things which are of the same class from one point of view and of a different class from another. It is not here intended to explain all these expressions to the unlettered or to mere tyros, a previous knowledge of Logic and Natural Philosophy being indispensable, or to those who confine their attention to the study of our holy Law, I mean the study of the canonical law alone; for the true knowledge of the Torah is the special aim of this and similar works.

The object of this treatise is to enlighten a religious man who has been trained to believe in the truth of our holy Law, who conscientiously fulfils his moral and religious duties, and at the same time has been successful in his philosophical studies. Human reason has attracted him to abide within its sphere; and he finds it difficult to accept as correct the teaching based on the literal interpretation of the Law, and especially that which he himself or others derived from those homonymous, metaphorical, or hybrid expressions. Hence he is lost in perplexity and anxiety. If he be guided solely by reason, and renounce his previous views which are based on those expressions, he would consider that he had rejected the fundamental principles of the Law; and even if he retains the opinions which were derived from those expressions, and if, instead of following his reason, he abandon its guidance altogether, it would still appear that his religious convictions had suffered loss and injury. For he would then be left with those errors which give rise to fear and anxiety, constant grief and great perplexity.

This work has also a second object in view. It seeks to explain certain obscure figures which occur in the Prophets, and are not distinctly characterized as being figures. Ignorant and superficial readers take them in a literal, not in a figurative sense. Even well informed persons are bewildered if they understand these passages in their literal signification, but they are entirely relieved of their perplexity when we explain the figure, or merely suggest that the terms are figurative. For this reason I have called this book *Guide for the Perplexed*.

I do not presume to think that this treatise settles every doubt in the minds of those who understand it, but I maintain that it settles the greater part of their difficulties. No intelligent man will require and expect that on introducing any subject I shall completely exhaust it; or that on commencing the exposition of a figure I shall fully explain all its parts. Such a course could not be followed by a teacher in a *viva voce* exposition, much less by an author in writing a book, without becoming a target for every foolish conceited person to discharge the arrows of folly at him. Some general principles bearing upon this point have been fully discussed in our works on the Talmud, and we have there called the attention of the reader to many themes of this kind. We also stated (*Mishneh torah*, I. ii. 12, and iv. 10) that the expression *Ma'ase Bereshit* (Account of the Creation) signified "Natural Science," and *Ma'aseh Mercabah* ("Description of the Chariot") Metaphysics, and we explained the force of the Rabbinical dictum, "The *Ma'aseh Mercabah* must not be fully expounded even in the presence of a

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single student, unless he be wise and able to reason for himself, and even then you should merely acquaint him with the heads of the different sections of the subject. (Babyl. Talm. *Hagigah*, fol. II b). You must, therefore, not expect from me more than such heads. And even these have not been methodically and systematically arranged in this work, but have been, on the contrary, scattered, and are interspersed with other topics which we shall have occasion to explain. My object in adopting this arrangement is that the truths should be at one time apparent, and at another time concealed. Thus we shall not be in opposition to the Divine Will (from which it is

wrong to deviate) which has withheld from the multitude the truths required for the knowledge of God, according to the words, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Ps. xxv. 14).

Know that also in Natural Science there are topics which are not to be fully explained. Our Sages laid down the rule, "The *Ma'aseh Bereshith* must not be expounded in the presence of two." If an author were to explain these principles in writing, it would be equal to expounding them unto thousands of men. For this reason the prophets treat these subjects in figures, and our Sages, imitating the method of Scripture, speak of them in metaphors and allegories; because there is a close affinity between these subjects and metaphysics, and indeed they form part of its mysteries. Do not imagine that these most difficult problems can be thoroughly understood by any one of us. This is not the case. At times the truth shines so brilliantly that we perceive it as clear as day. Our nature and habit then draw a veil over our perception, and we return to a darkness almost as dense as before. We are like those who, though beholding frequent flashes of lightning, still find themselves in the thickest darkness of the night. On some the lightning flashes in rapid succession, and they seem to be in continuous light, and their night is as clear as the day. This was the degree of prophetic excellence attained by (Moses) the greatest of prophets, to whom God said, "But as for thee, stand thou here by Me" (Deut. v. 31), and of whom it is written "the skin of his face shone," etc. (Exod. xxxiv. 29). [Some perceive the prophetic flash at long intervals; this is the degree of most prophets.] By others only once during the whole night is a flash of lightning perceived. This is the case with those of whom we are informed, "They prophesied, and did not prophesy again" (Num. xi. 25). There are some to whom the flashes of lightning appear with varying intervals; others are in the condition of men, whose darkness is illumined not by lightning, but by some kind of crystal or similar stone, or other substances that possess the property of shining during the night; and to them even this small amount of light is not continuous, but now it shines and now it vanishes, as if it were "the flame of the rotating sword."

The degrees in the perfection of men vary according to these distinctions. Concerning those who never beheld the light even for one day, but walk in continual darkness, it is written, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness" (Ps. lxxxii. 5). Truth, in spite of all its powerful manifestations, is completely withheld from them, and the following words of Scripture may be applied to them, "And now men see not the light which is bright in the skies" (Job xxxvii. 21). They are the multitude of ordinary men: there is no need to notice them in this treatise.

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You must know that if a person, who has attained a certain degree of perfection, wishes to impart to others, either orally or in writing, any portion of the knowledge which he has acquired of these subjects, he is utterly unable to be as systematic and explicit as he could be in a science of which the method is well known. The same difficulties which he encountered when investigating the

subject for himself will attend him when endeavouring to instruct others: viz., at one time the explanation will appear lucid, at another time, obscure: this property of the subject appears to remain the same both to the advanced scholar and to the beginner. For this reason, great theological scholars gave instruction in all such matters only by means of metaphors and allegories. They frequently employed them in forms varying more or less essentially. In most cases they placed the lesson to be illustrated at the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of the simile. When they could find no simile which from beginning to end corresponded to the idea which was to be illustrated, they divided the subject of the lesson, although in itself one whole, into different parts, and expressed each by a separate figure. Still more obscure are those instances in which one simile is employed to illustrate many subjects, the beginning of the simile representing one thing, the end another. Sometimes the whole metaphor may refer to two cognate subjects in the same branch of knowledge.

If we were to teach in these disciplines, without the use of parables and figures, we should be compelled to resort to expressions both profound and transcendental, and by no means more intelligible than metaphors and similes: as though the wise and learned were drawn into this course by the Divine Will, in the same way as they are compelled to follow the laws of nature in matters relating to the body. You are no doubt aware that the Almighty, desiring to lead us to perfection and to improve our state of society, has revealed to us laws which are to regulate our actions. These laws, however, presuppose an advanced state of intellectual culture. We must first form a conception of the Existence of the Creator according to our capabilities; that is, we must have a knowledge of Metaphysics. But this discipline can only be approached after the study of Physics: for the science of Physics borders on Metaphysics, and must even precede it in the course of our studies, as is clear to all who are familiar with these questions. Therefore the Almighty commenced Holy Writ with the description of the Creation, that is, with Physical Science; the subject being on the one hand most weighty and important, and on the other hand our means of fully comprehending those great problems being limited. He described those profound truths, which His Divine Wisdom found it necessary to communicate to us, in allegorical, figurative, and metaphorical language. Our Sages have said (Yemen Midrash on Gen. i. 1), "It is impossible to give a full account of the Creation to man. Therefore Scripture simply tells us, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). Thus they have suggested that this subject is a deep mystery, and in the words of Solomon, "Far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out?" (Eccles. vii. 24). It has been treated in metaphors in order that the uneducated may comprehend it according to the measure of their faculties and the feebleness of their apprehension, while educated persons may take it in a different sense. In our commentary on the Mishnah we stated our intention to explain difficult

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problems in the Book on Prophecy and in the Book of Harmony. In the latter we intended to examine all the passages in the Midrash which, if taken literally, appear to be inconsistent with truth and common sense, and must therefore be taken figuratively. Many years have elapsed

since I first commenced those works. I had proceeded but a short way when I became dissatisfied with my original plan. For I observed that by expounding these passages by means of allegorical and mystical terms, we do not explain anything, but merely substitute one thing for another of the same nature, whilst in explaining them fully our efforts would displease most people; and my sole object in planning to write those books was to make the contents of Midrashim and the exoteric lessons of the prophecies intelligible to everybody. We have further noticed that when an ill-informed Theologian reads these Midrashim, he will find no difficulty; for possessing no knowledge of the properties of things, he will not reject statements which involve impossibilities. When, however, a person who is both religious and well educated reads them, he cannot escape the following dilemma: either he takes them literally, and questions the abilities of the author and the soundness of his mind-doing thereby nothing which is opposed to the principles of our faith,-or he will acquiesce in assuming that the passages in question have some secret meaning, and he will continue to hold the author in high estimation whether he understood the allegory or not. As regards prophecy in its various degrees and the different metaphors used in the prophetic books, we shall give in the present work an explanation, according to a different method. Guided by these considerations I have refrained from writing those two books as I had previously intended. In my larger work, the *Mishnah Torah*, I have contented myself with briefly stating the principles of our faith and its fundamental truths, together with such hints as approach a clear exposition. In this work, however, I address those who have studied philosophy and have acquired sound knowledge, and who while firm in religious matters are perplexed and bewildered on account of the ambiguous and figurative expressions employed in the holy writings. Some chapters may be found in this work which contain no reference whatever to homonyms. Such chapters will serve as an introduction to others: they will contain some reference to the signification of a homonym which I do not wish to mention in that place, or explain some figure: point out that a certain expression is a figure: treat of difficult passages generally misunderstood in consequence of the homonymy they include, or because the simile they contain is taken in place of that which it represents, and *vice versâ*.

Having spoken of similes, I proceed to make the following remark:--The key to the understanding and to the full comprehension of all that the Prophets have said is found in the knowledge of the figures, their general ideas, and the meaning of each word they contain. You know the verse:

"I have also spoken in similes by the Prophets" (Hosea xii. 10); and also the verse, "Put forth a riddle and speak a parable" (Ezek. xvii. 2). And because the Prophets continually employ figures, Ezekiel said, "Does He not speak parables?" (xxi. 5). Again, Solomon begins his book of Proverbs with the words, "To understand a proverb and figurative speech, the words of the wise and their dark sayings" (Prov. i. 6); and we read in Midrash, *Shir ha-shirim Rabba*, i. 1); "To what were the words of the Law to be compared

before the time of Solomon? To a well the waters of which are at a great depth, and though cool and fresh, yet no man could drink of them. A clever man joined cord with cord, and rope with rope, and drew up and drank. So Solomon went from figure to figure, and from subject to subject, till he obtained the true sense of the Law." So far go the words of our Sages. I do not believe that any intelligent man thinks that "the words of the Law" mentioned here as requiring the application of figures in order to be understood, can refer to the rules for building tabernacles, for preparing the lulab, or for the four kinds of trustees. What is really meant is the apprehension of profound and difficult subjects, concerning which our Sages said, "If a man loses in his house a sela, or a pearl, he can find it by lighting a taper worth only one issar. Thus the parables in themselves are of no great value, but through them the words of the holy Law are rendered intelligible." These likewise are the words of our Sages; consider well their statement, that the deeper sense of the words of the holy Law are pearls, and the literal acceptance of a figure is of no value in itself. They compare the hidden meaning included in the literal sense of the simile to a pearl lost in a dark room, which is full of furniture. It is certain that the pearl is in the room, but the man can neither see it nor know where it lies. It is just as if the pearl were no longer in his possession, for, as has been stated, it affords him no benefit whatever until he kindles a light. The same is the case with the comprehension of that which the simile represents. The wise king said, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in vessels of silver" (Prov. xxv. 11). Hear the explanation of what he said:--The word *maskiyoth*, the Hebrew equivalent for "vessels," denotes "filigree network"--i.e., things in which there are very small apertures, such as are frequently wrought by silversmiths. They are called in Hebrew *maskiyyoth* (lit. "transpicuous," from the verb *sakah*, "he saw," a root which occurs also in the Targum of Onkelos, Gen. xxvi. 8), because the eye penetrates through them. Thus Solomon meant to say, "just as apples of gold in silver filigree with small apertures, so is a word fitly spoken."

See how beautifully the conditions of a good simile are described in this figure! It shows that in every word which has a double sense, a literal one and a figurative one, the plain meaning must be as valuable as silver, and the hidden meaning still more precious: so that the figurative meaning bears the same relation to the literal one as gold to silver. It is further necessary that the plain sense of the phrase shall give to those who consider it some notion of that which the figure represents. just as a golden apple overlaid with a network of silver, when seen at a distance, or looked at superficially, is mistaken for a silver apple, but when a keen-sighted person looks at the object well, he will find what is within, and see that the apple is gold. The same is the case with the figures employed by prophets. Taken literally, such expressions contain wisdom useful for many purposes, among others, for the amelioration of the condition of society; e.g., the Proverbs (of Solomon), and similar sayings in their literal sense. Their hidden meaning, however, is profound wisdom, conducive to the recognition of real truth.

Know that the figures employed by prophets are of two kinds: first, where every word which occurs in the simile represents a certain idea; and secondly, where the simile, as a whole, represents a general idea, but has a great

many points which have no reference whatever to that idea: they are simply required to give to the simile its proper form and order, or better to conceal the idea: the simile is therefore continued as far as necessary, according to its literal sense. Consider this well.

An example of the first class of prophetic figures is to be found in Genesis:--"And, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. xxviii. 12). The word "ladder" refers to one idea: "set up on the earth" to another: "and the top of it reached to heaven" to a third: "angels of God" to a fourth: "ascending" to a fifth; "descending" to a sixth; "the Lord stood above it" (ver. 13) to a seventh. Every word in this figure introduces a fresh element into the idea represented by the figure.

An example of the second class of prophetic figures is found in Proverbs (vii. 6-26):--"For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones; I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner: and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: and, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: now she is without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait in every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with striped cloths of the yam of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as fetters to the correction of a fool: till a dart strike through his liver: as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Harken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her."

The general principle expounded in all these verses is to abstain from excessive indulgence in bodily pleasures. The author compares the body, which is the source of all sensual pleasures, to a married woman who at the same time is a harlot. And this figure he has taken as the basis of his entire book. We shall hereafter show the wisdom of Solomon in comparing sensual pleasures to an adulterous harlot. We shall explain how aptly he concludes that work with the praises of a faithful wife who devotes herself to the welfare of her husband and of her household. All obstacles which prevent man from attaining his highest aim in life, all the deficiencies in the character of man, all his evil propensities, are to be traced to the body alone. This will be

explained later on. The predominant idea running throughout the figure is, that man shall not be entirely guided by his animal, or material nature; for the material substance of man is identical with that of the brute creation.

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An adequate explanation of the figure having been given, and its meaning having been shown, do not imagine that you will find in its application a corresponding element for each part of the figure; you must not ask what is meant by "I have peace offerings with me" (ver. 14); by "I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry" (ver. 16); or what is added to the force of the figure by the observation "for the goodman is not at home" (ver. 19), and so on to the end of the chapter. For all this is merely to complete the illustration of the metaphor in its literal meaning. The circumstances described here are such as are common to adulterers. Such conversations take place between all adulterous persons. You must well understand what I have said, for it is a principle of the utmost importance with respect to those things which I intend to expound. If you observe in one of the chapters that I explained the meaning of a certain figure, and pointed out to you its general scope, do not trouble yourself further in order to find an interpretation of each separate portion, for that would lead you to one of the two following erroneous courses: either you will miss the sense included in the metaphor, or you will be induced to explain certain things which require no explanation, and which are not introduced for that purpose. Through this unnecessary trouble you may fall into the great error which besets most modern sects in their foolish writings and discussions: they all endeavour to find some hidden meaning in expressions which were never uttered by the author in that sense. Your object should be to discover inmost of the figures the general idea which the author wishes to express. In some instances it will be sufficient if you understand from my remarks that a certain expression contains a figure, although I may offer no further comment. For when you know that it is not to be taken literally, you will understand at once to what subject it refers. My statement that it is a figurative expression will, as it were, remove the screen from between the object and the observer.

Directions for the Study of this Work.

If you desire to grasp all that is contained in this book so that nothing shall escape your notice, consider the chapters in connected order. In studying each chapter, do not content yourself with comprehending its principal subject, but attend to every term mentioned therein, although it may seem to have no connection with the principal subject. For what I have written in this work was not the suggestion of the moment: it is the result of deep study and great application. Care has been taken that nothing that appeared doubtful should be left unexplained. Nothing of what is mentioned is out of place, every remark will be found to illustrate the subject-matter of the respective chapter. Do not read superficially, lest you do me an injury, and derive no benefit for yourself. You must study thoroughly and read continually; for you will then find the solution of those important problems of religion, which are a source of anxiety to all intelligent men. I adjure any reader of my book, in the name of the Most High, not to add any explanation even to

a single word: nor to explain to another any portion of it except such passages as have been fully treated of by previous theological authorities: he must not teach others anything that he has learnt from my work alone, and that has not been hitherto discussed by any of our authorities. The reader must, moreover, beware of raising objections to any of my statements,

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because it is very probable that he may understand my words to mean the exact opposite to what I intended to say. He will injure me, while I endeavoured to benefit him. "He will requite me evil for good." Let the reader make a careful study of this work; and if his doubt be removed on even one point, let him praise his Maker and rest contented with the knowledge he has acquired. But if he derive from it no benefit whatever, he may consider the book as if it had never been written. Should he notice any opinions with which he does not agree, let him endeavour to find a suitable explanation, even if it seem far-fetched, in order that he may judge me charitably. Such a duty we owe to every one. We owe it especially to our scholars and theologians, who endeavour to teach us what is the truth according to the best of their ability. I feel assured that those of my readers who have not studied philosophy, will still derive profit from many a chapter. But the thinker whose studies have brought him into collision with religion, will, as I have already mentioned, derive much benefit from every chapter. How greatly will he rejoice! How agreeably will my words strike his ears! Those, however, whose minds are confused with false notions and perverse methods, who regard their misleading studies as sciences, and imagine themselves philosophers, though they have no knowledge that could truly be termed science, will object to many chapters, and will find in them many insuperable difficulties, because they do not understand their meaning, and because I expose therein the absurdity of their perverse notions, which constitute their riches and peculiar treasure, "stored up for their ruin." God knows that I hesitated very much before writing on the subjects contained in this work, since they are profound mysteries: they are topics which, since the time of our captivity have not been treated by any of our scholars as far as we possess their writings; how then shall I now make a beginning and discuss them? But I rely on two precedents: first, to similar cases our Sages applied the verse, "It is time to do something in honour of the Lord: for they have made void thy law" (Ps. cxix. 126). Secondly, they have said, "Let all thy acts be guided by pure intentions." On these two principles I relied while composing some parts of this work. Lastly, when I have a difficult subject before me--when I find the road narrow, and can see no other way of teaching a well established truth except by pleasing one intelligent man and displeasing ten thousand fools--I prefer to address myself to the one man, and to take no notice whatever of the condemnation of the multitude; I prefer to extricate that intelligent man from his embarrassment and show him the cause of his perplexity, so that he may attain perfection and be at peace.

Introductory Remarks.

[ON METHOD]

THERE are seven causes of inconsistencies and contradictions to be met with in a literary work. The first cause arises from the fact that the author collects the opinions of various men, each differing from the other, but neglects to mention the name of the author of any particular opinion. In such a work contradictions or inconsistencies must occur, since any two statements may belong to two different authors. Second cause: The author holds at first one opinion which he subsequently rejects: in his work., however, both his

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original and altered views are retained. Third cause: The passages in question are not all to be taken literally: some only are to be understood in their literal sense, while in others figurative language is employed, which includes another meaning besides the literal one: or, in the apparently inconsistent passages, figurative language is employed which, if taken literally, would seem to be contradictories or contraries. Fourth cause: The premises are not identical in both statements, but for certain reasons they are not fully stated in these passages: or two propositions with different subjects which are expressed by the same term without having the difference in meaning pointed out, occur in two passages. The contradiction is therefore only apparent, but there is no contradiction in reality. The fifth cause is traceable to the use of a certain method adopted in teaching and expounding profound problems. Namely, a difficult and obscure theorem must sometimes be mentioned and assumed as known, for the illustration of some elementary and intelligible subject which must be taught beforehand the commencement being always made with the easier thing. The teacher must therefore facilitate, in any manner which he can devise, the explanation of those theorems, which have to be assumed as known, and he must content himself with giving a general though somewhat inaccurate notion on the subject. It is, for the present, explained according to the capacity of the students, that they may comprehend it as far as they are required to understand the subject. Later on, the same subject is thoroughly treated and fully developed in its right place. Sixth cause: The contradiction is not apparent, and only becomes evident through a series of premises. The larger the number of premises necessary to prove the contradiction between the two conclusions, the greater is the chance that it will escape detection, and that the author will not perceive his own inconsistency. Only when from each conclusion, by means of suitable premises, an inference is made, and from the enunciation thus inferred, by means of proper arguments, other conclusions are formed, and after that process has been repeated many times, then it becomes clear that the original conclusions are contradictories or contraries. Even able writers are liable to overlook such inconsistencies. If, however, the contradiction between the original statements can at once be discovered, and the author, while writing the second, does not think of the first, he evinces a greater deficiency, and his words deserve no notice whatever. Seventh cause: It is sometimes necessary to introduce such metaphysical matter as may partly be disclosed, but must partly be concealed: while, therefore, on one occasion the object which the author has in view may demand that the metaphysical problem be treated as solved in one way, it may be convenient on another occasion to treat it as

solved in the opposite way. The author must endeavour, by concealing the fact as much as possible, to prevent the uneducated reader from perceiving the contradiction.

Inconsistencies occurring in the Mishnah and Boraitot are traceable to the first cause. You meet frequently in the Gemara with passages like the following:--"Does not the beginning of the passage contradict the end? No: the beginning is the dictum of a certain Rabbi: the end that of another"; or "Rabbi (Jehudah ha-Nasi) approved of the opinion of a certain rabbi in one case and gave it therefore anonymously, and having accepted

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that of another rabbi in the other case he introduced that view without naming the authority"; or "Who is the author of this anonymous dictum? Rabbi A." "Who is the author of that paragraph in the Mishnah? Rabbi B." Instances of this kind are innumerable.

Apparent contradictions or differences occurring in the Gemara may be traced to the first cause and to the second, as e.g., "In this particular case he agrees with this rabbi"; or "He agrees with him in one point, but differs from him in another"; or "These two dicta are the opinions of two Amoraim, who differ as regards the statement made by a certain rabbi." These are examples of contradictions traceable to the first cause. The following are instances which may be traced to the second cause. "Rabba altered his opinion on that point"; it then becomes necessary to consider which of the two opinions came second. Again, "In the first recension of the Talmud by Rabbi Ashi, he made one assertion, and in the second a different one."

The inconsistencies and contradictions met with in some passages of the prophetic books, if taken literally, are all traceable to the third or fourth cause, and it is exclusively in reference to this subject that I wrote the present Introduction. You know that the following expression frequently occurs, "One verse says this, another that," showing the contradiction, and explaining that either some premise is wanting or the subject is altered. Comp. "Solomon, it is not sufficient that thy words contradict thy father: they are themselves inconsistent, etc." Many similar instances occur in the writings of our Sages. The passages in the prophetic books which our Sages have explained, mostly refer to religious or moral precepts. Our desire, however, is to discuss such passages as contain apparent contradictions in regard to the principles of our faith. I shall explain some of them in various chapters of the present work: for this subject also belongs to the secrets of the Torah. Contradictions traceable to the seventh cause occurring in the prophetic works require special investigation: and no one should express his opinion on that matter by reasoning and arguing without weighing the matter well in his mind.

Inconsistencies in the writings of true philosophers are traceable to the fifth cause.

Contradictions occurring in the writings of most authors and commentators, such as are not included in the above-mentioned works, are due to the sixth cause. Many examples of this class of contradictions are found in the Midrash and the Agada: hence the saying, "We must not raise questions concerning the contradictions met with in the Agada." You may also notice in them

contradictions due to the seventh cause. Any inconsistency discovered in the present work will be found to arise in consequence of the fifth cause or the seventh. Notice this, consider its truth, and remember it well, lest you misunderstand some of the chapters in this book.

Having concluded these introductory remarks I proceed to examine those expressions, to the true meaning of which, as apparent from the context, it is necessary to direct your attention. This book will then be a key admitting to places the gates of which would otherwise be closed. When the gates are opened and men enter, their souls will enjoy repose, their eyes will be gratified, and even their bodies, after all toil and labour, will be refreshed.

PART ONE

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"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."--(Isa. xxvi. 2.)

CHAPTER I

Some have been of opinion that by the Hebrew *zelem*, the shape and figure of a thing is to be understood, and this explanation led men to believe in the corporeality [of the Divine Being]: for they thought that the words "Let us make man in our *zelem*" (Gen. i. 26), implied that God had the form of a human being, i.e., that He had figure and shape, and that, consequently, He was corporeal. They adhered faithfully to this view, and thought that if they were to relinquish it they would *eo ipso* reject the truth of the Bible: and further, if they did not conceive God as having a body possessed of face and limbs, similar to their own in appearance, they would have to deny even the existence of God. The sole difference which they admitted, was that He excelled in greatness and splendour, and that His substance was not flesh and blood. Thus far went their conception of the greatness and glory of God. The incorporeality of the Divine Being, and His unity, in the true sense of the word--for there is no real unity without incorporeality--will be fully proved in the course of the present treatise. (Part II., ch. i.) In this chapter it is our sole intention to explain the meaning of the words *zelem* and *demut*. I hold that the Hebrew equivalent of "form" in the ordinary acceptance of the word, viz., the figure and shape of a thing, is *toär*. Thus we find "[And Joseph was] beautiful in *toär* ('form'), and beautiful in appearance" (Gen. xxxix. 6): "What form (*toär*) is he of?" (1 Sam. xxviii. 14): "As the form (*toär*) of the children of a king" (Judges viii. 18). It is also applied to form produced by human labour, as "He marketh its form (*toär*) with a line," "and he marketh its form (*toär*) with the compass" (Isa. xlv. 13). This term is not at all applicable to God. The term *zelem*, on the other hand, signifies the specific form, viz., that which constitutes the essence of a thing, whereby the thing is what it is; the reality of a thing in so far as it is that particular being. In man the "form" is that constituent which gives him human perception: and on account of this intellectual perception the term *zelem* is employed in the sentences "In the *zelem* of God he created him" (Gen. i. 27). It is therefore rightly said, "Thou despisest their *zelem*" (Ps. lxiii. 20); the "contempt" can only concern the

soul--the specific form of man, not the properties and shape of his body. I am also of opinion that the reason why this term is used for "idols" may be found in the circumstance that they are worshipped on account of some idea represented by them, not on account of their figure and shape. For the same reason the term is used in the expression, "the forms (*zalme*) of your

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emerods" (1 Sam. vi. 5), for the chief object was the removal of the injury caused by the emerods, not a change of their shape. As, however, it must be admitted that the term *zelem* is employed in these two cases, viz. "the images of the emerods" and "the idols" on account of the external shape, the term *zelem* is either a homonym or a hybrid term, and would denote both the specific form and the outward shape, and similar properties relating to the dimensions and the shape of material bodies; and in the phrase "Let us make man in our *zelem*" (Gen. i. 26), the term signifies "the specific form" of man, viz., his intellectual perception, and does not refer to his "figure" or "shape." Thus we have shown the difference between *zelem* and *toär*, and explained the meaning of *zelem*.

Demut is derived from the verb *damah*, "he is like." This term likewise denotes agreement with regard to some abstract relation: comp. "I am like a pelican of the wilderness" (Ps. cii. 7); the author does not compare himself to the pelican in point of wings and feathers, but in point of sadness." Nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in beauty" (Ezek. 8); the comparison refers to the idea of beauty. "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent" (Ps. lviii. 5); "He is like unto a lion" (Ps. xvii. 12); the resemblance indicated in these passages does not refer to the figure and shape, but to some abstract idea. In the same manner is used "the likeness of the throne" (Ezek. i. 26); the comparison is made with regard to greatness and glory, not, as many believe, with regard to its square form, its breadth, or the length of its legs: this explanation applies also to the phrase "the likeness of the *hayyot*" ("living creatures," Ezek. i. 13).

As man's distinction consists in a property which no other creature on earth possesses, viz., intellectual perception, in the exercise of which he does not employ his senses, nor move his hand or his foot, this perception has been compared--though only apparently, not in truth--to the Divine perception, which requires no corporeal organ. On this account, i.e., on account of the Divine intellect with which man has been endowed, he is said to have been made in the form and likeness of the Almighty, but far from it be the notion that the Supreme Being is corporeal, having a material form.

CHAPTER II

Some years ago a learned man asked me a question of great importance; the problem and the solution which we gave in our reply deserve the closest attention. Before, however, entering upon this problem and its solution I must premise that every Hebrew knows that the term *Elohim* is a homonym, and denotes God, angels, judges, and the rulers of countries, and that Onkelos the proselyte explained it in the true and correct manner by taking *Elohim* in the sentence, "and ye

shall be like *Elohim*" (Gen. iii. 5) in the last-mentioned meaning, and rendering the sentence "and ye shall be like princes." Having pointed out the homonymity of the term "*Elohim*" we return to the question under consideration. "It would at first sight," said the objector, "appear from Scripture that man was originally intended to be perfectly equal to the rest of the animal creation, which is not endowed with intellect, reason, or power of distinguishing between good and evil: but that Adam's disobedience to the command of God procured him that great perfection

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which is the peculiarity of man, viz., the power of distinguishing between good and evil--the noblest of all the faculties of our nature, the essential characteristic of the human race. It thus appears strange that the punishment for rebelliousness should be the means of elevating man to a pinnacle of perfection to which he had not attained previously. This is equivalent to saying that a certain man was rebellious and extremely wicked, wherefore his nature was changed for the better, and he was made to shine as a star in the heavens." Such was the purport and subject of the question, though not in the exact words of the inquirer. Now mark our reply, which was as follows:--"You appear to have studied the matter superficially, and nevertheless you imagine that you can understand a book which has been the guide of past and present generations, when you for a moment withdraw from your lusts and appetites, and glance over its contents as if you were reading a historical work or some poetical composition. Collect your thoughts and examine the matter carefully, for it is not to be understood as you at first sight think, but as you will find after due deliberation; namely, the intellect which was granted to man as the highest endowment, was bestowed on him before his disobedience. With reference to this gift the Bible states that "man was created in the form and likeness of God." On account of this gift of intellect man was addressed by God, and received His commandments, as it is said: "And the Lord God commanded Adam" (Gen. ii. 16)--for no commandments are given to the brute creation or to those who are devoid of understanding. Through the intellect man distinguishes between the true and the false. This faculty Adam possessed perfectly and completely. The right and the wrong are terms employed in the science of apparent truths (morals), not in that of necessary truths, as, e.g., it is not correct to say, in reference to the proposition "the heavens are spherical," it is "good" or to declare the assertion that "the earth is flat" to be "bad": but we say of the one it is true, of the other it is false. Similarly our language expresses the idea of true and false by the terms *emet* and *sheker*, of the morally right and the morally wrong, by *tob* and *ra'*. Thus it is the function of the intellect to discriminate between the true and the false--a distinction which is applicable to all objects of intellectual perception. When Adam was yet in a state of innocence, and was guided solely by reflection and reason--on account of which it is said: "Thou hast made him (man) little lower than the angels" (Ps. viii. 6)--he was not at all able to follow or to understand the principles of apparent truths; the most manifest impropriety, viz., to appear in a state of nudity, was nothing unbecoming according to his idea: he could not comprehend why it should be so. After man's disobedience, however, when he began to give way to desires which had their source in his imagination and to the gratification of his bodily appetites, as it is said,

"And the wife saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to the eyes" (Gen. iii. 6), he was punished by the loss of part of that intellectual faculty which he had previously possessed. He therefore transgressed a command with which he had been charged on the score of his reason; and having obtained a knowledge of the apparent truths, he was wholly absorbed in the study of what is proper and what improper. Then he fully understood the magnitude of the loss he had sustained, what he had forfeited, and in what situation he was thereby placed. Hence we read, "And ye shall be like

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elohim, knowing good and evil," and not "knowing" or "discerning the true and the false": while in necessary truths we can only apply the words "true and false," not "good and evil." Further observe the passage, "And the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked" (Gen. iii. 7): it is not said, "And the eyes of both were opened, and they *saw*"; for what the man had seen previously and what he saw after this circumstance was precisely the same: there had been no blindness which was now removed, but he received a new faculty whereby he found things wrong which previously he had not regarded as wrong. Besides, you must know that the Hebrew word *pakah* used in this passage is exclusively employed in the figurative sense of receiving new sources of knowledge, not in that of regaining the sense of sight. Comp., "God opened her eyes" (Gen. xxi. 19). "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened" (Isaiah xxxviii. 8). "Open ears, he heareth not" (*ibid.* Xlii. 20), similar in sense to the verse, "Which have eyes to see, and see not" (Ezek. xii. 2). When, however, Scripture says of Adam, "He changed his face (*panav*) and thou sentest him forth" Job xiv. 20), it must be understood in the following way: On account of the change of his original aim he was sent away. For *panim*, the Hebrew equivalent of face, is derived from the verb *panah*, "he turned," and signifies also "aim," because man generally turns his face towards the thing he desires. In accordance with this interpretation, our text suggests that Adam, as he altered his intention and directed his thoughts to the acquisition of what he was forbidden, he was banished from Paradise: this was his punishment; it was measure for measure. At first he had the privilege of tasting pleasure and happiness, and of enjoying repose and security; but as his appetites grew stronger, and he followed his desires and impulses, (as we have already stated above), and partook of the food he was forbidden to taste, he was deprived of everything, was doomed to subsist on the meanest kind of food, such as he never tasted before, and this even only after exertion and labour, as it is said, "Thorns and thistles shall grow up for thee" (Gen. iii. 18), "By the sweat of thy brow," etc., and in explanation of this the text continues, "And the Lord God drove him from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground whence he was taken." He was now with respect to food and many other requirements brought to the level of the lower animals: comp., "Thou shalt eat the grass of the field" (Gen. iii. 18). Reflecting on his condition, the Psalmist says, "Adam unable to dwell in dignity, was brought to the level of the dumb beast" (Ps. xlix. 13)." May the Almighty be praised, whose design and wisdom cannot be fathomed."

CHAPTER III

IT might be thought that the Hebrew words *temunah* and *tabnit* have one and the same meaning, but this is not the case. *Tabnit*, derived from the verb *banah* (he built), signifies the build and construction of a thing--that is to say, its figure, whether square, round, triangular, or of any other shape. Comp. "the pattern (*tabnit*) of the Tabernacle and the pattern (*tabnit*) of all its vessels" (Exod. xxv. 9); "according to the pattern (*tabnit*) which thou wast shown upon the mount" (Exod. xxv. 40); "the form of any bird" (Deut. iv. 17); "the form (*tabnit*) of a hand" (Ezek. viii. 3); "the pattern

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[paragraph continues] (*tabnit*) of the porch" (1 Chron. xxviii. 11). In all these quotations it is the shape which is referred to. Therefore the Hebrew language never employs the word *tabnit* in speaking of the qualities of God Almighty.

The term *temunah*, on the other hand, is used in the Bible in three different senses. It signifies, first, the outlines of things which are perceived by our bodily senses, i.e., their shape and form; as, e.g., "And ye make an image the form (*temunah*) of some likeness" (Deut. iv. 16); "for ye saw no likeness" (*temunah*) (Deut. iv. 15). Secondly, the forms of our imagination, i.e., the impressions retained in imagination when the objects have ceased to affect our senses. In this sense it is used in the passage which begins "In thoughts from the visions of the night" (Job iv. 13), and which concludes "it remained but I could not recognize its sight, only an image--*temunah*--was before my eyes," i.e., an image which presented itself to my sight during sleep. Thirdly, the true form of an object, which is perceived only by the intellect: and it is in this third signification that the term is applied to God. The words "And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii. 8) therefore mean "he shall comprehend the true essence of the Lord."

CHAPTER IV

THE three verbs *raah*, *hibbit*, and *hazah*, which denote "he perceived with the eye," are also used figuratively in the sense of intellectual perception. As regards the first of these verbs this is well known, e.g., "And he looked (*va-yar*) and behold a well in the field" (Gen. xxix. 2) here it signifies ocular perception: "yea, my heart has seen (*raah*) much of wisdom and of knowledge" (Eccles. i. 16); in this passage it refers to the intellectual perception.

In this figurative sense the verb is to be understood, when applied to God e.g., "I saw (*raiti*) the Lord" (1 Kings xxii. 19); "And the Lord appeared (*va-yera*) unto him (Gen. xviii. 1); "And God saw (*va-yar*) that it was good" (Gen. i. 10) "I beseech thee, show me (*hareni*) thy glory" (Exod. xxxiii. 18); "And they saw (*va-yiru*) the God of Israel" (Exod. xxiv. 10). All these instances refer to intellectual perception, and by no means to perception with the eye as in its literal meaning: for, on the one hand, the eye can only perceive a corporeal object, and in connection with it certain accidents, as colour, shape, etc.: and, on the other hand, God does not perceive by means of a corporeal organ, as will be explained.

In the same manner the Hebrew *hibbit* signifies "he viewed with the eye; comp. "Look (*tabbit*) not behind thee" (Gen. xix. 17); "But his wife looked (*va-tabbet*) back from him" (Gen. xix. 26); "And if one look (*ve-nibbat*) unto the land" (Isa. v. 30); and figuratively, "to view and observe" with the intellect, "to contemplate" a thing till it be understood. In this sense the verb is used in passages like the following: "He hath not beheld (*hibbit*) iniquity in Jacob" (Num. xxiii. 21); for "iniquity" cannot be seen with the eye. The words, "And they looked (*ve-hibbitu*) after Moses" (Exod. xxxiii. 8)--in addition to the literal understanding of the phrase--were explained by our Sages in a figurative sense. According to them, these words mean that the Israelites examined and criticised the actions and sayings of Moses. Compare also "Contemplate (*habbet*), I pray thee, the heaven"

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[paragraph continues] (Gen. xv. 5); for this took place in a prophetic vision. This verb, when applied to God, is employed in this figurative sense; e.g., "to look (*me-habbit*) upon God" (Exod. iii. 6) "And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (*yabbit*) (Num. xii. 8); And thou canst not look (*habbet*) on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13).

The same explanation applies to *hazah*. It denotes to view with the eye, as: "And let our eye look (*ve-tahaz*) upon Zion" (Mic. iv. 11); and also figuratively, to perceive mentally: "which he saw (*hazah*) concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. i. 1); "The word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision" (*maḥazeh*) (Gen. xv. 1); in this sense *hazah* is used in the phrase, "Also they saw (*va-yeḥezu*) God" (Exod. xxiv. 11). Note this well.

CHAPTER V

WHEN the chief of philosophers (Aristotle) was about to inquire into some very profound subjects, and to establish his theory by proofs, he commenced his treatise with an apology, and requested the reader to attribute the author's inquiries not to presumption, vanity, egotism, or arrogance, as though he were interfering with things of which he had no knowledge, but rather to his zeal and his desire to discover and establish true doctrines, as far as lay in human power. We take the same position, and think that a man, when he commences to speculate, ought not to embark at once on a subject so vast and important; he should previously adapt himself to the study of the several branches of science and knowledge, should most thoroughly refine his moral character and subdue his passions and desires, the offspring of his imagination; when, in addition, he has obtained a knowledge of the true fundamental propositions, a comprehension of the several methods of inference and proof, and the capacity of guarding against fallacies, then he may approach the investigation of this subject. He must, however, not decide any question by the first idea that suggests itself to his mind, or at once direct his thoughts and force them to obtain a knowledge of the Creator, but he must wait modestly and patiently, and advance step by step.

In this sense we must understand the words "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (Exod. iii. 6), though retaining also the literal meaning of the passage, that Moses was afraid to gaze at the light which appeared to his eye; but it must on no account be assumed that the Being which is exalted far above every imperfection can be perceived by the eye. This act of Moses was highly commended by God, who bestowed on him a well deserved portion of His goodness, as it is said: "And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii. 8). This, say our Sages, was the reward for having previously hidden his face, lest he should gaze at the Eternal. (*Talm. B. Berakot Fa.*)

But "the nobles of the Children of Israel" were impetuous, and allowed their thoughts to go unrestrained: what they perceived was but imperfect. Therefore it is said of them, "And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet," etc. (Exod. xxiv. 10); and not merely, "and they saw the God of Israel"; the purpose of the whole passage is to criticize their act of seeing and not to describe it. They are blamed for the nature of their perception, which was to a certain extent corporeal--a result which necessarily

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followed, from the fact that they ventured too far before being perfectly prepared. They deserved to perish, but at the intercession of Moses this fate was averted by God for the time. They were afterwards burnt at Taberah, except Nadab and Abihu, who were burnt in the Tabernacle of the congregation, according to what is stated by authentic tradition. (*Midr. Rabba ad locum.*)

If such was the case with them, how much more is it incumbent on us who are inferior, and on those who are below us, to persevere in perfecting our knowledge of the elements, and in rightly understanding the preliminaries which purify the mind from the defilement of error: then we may enter the holy and divine camp in order to gaze: as the Bible says, "And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them" (Exod. xix. 22). Solomon, also, has cautioned all who endeavour to attain this high degree of knowledge in the following figurative terms, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God" (Eccles. iv. 17).

I will now return to complete what I commenced to explain. The nobles of the Children of Israel, besides erring in their perception, were, through this cause, also misled in their actions: for in consequence of their confused perception, they gave way to bodily cravings. This is meant by the words, "Also they saw God and did eat and drink" (Exod. xxiv. 11). The principal part of that passage, viz., "And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone" (Exod. xxiv. 10), will be further explained in the course of the present treatise (ch. xxviii.). All we here intend to say is, that wherever in a similar connection any one of the three verbs mentioned above occurs, it has reference to intellectual perception, not to the sensation of sight by the eye: for God is not a being to be perceived by the eye.

It will do no harm, however, if those who are unable to comprehend what we here endeavour to explain should refer all the words in question to sensuous perception, to seeing lights created [for the purpose], angels, or similar beings.

CHAPTER VI

THE two Hebrew nouns *ish* and *ishshah* were originally employed to designate the "male and female" of human beings, but were afterwards applied to the "male and female" of the other species of the animal creation. For instance, we read, "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens," *ish ve-ishto* (Gen. Vii. 2), in the same sense as *ish ve-ishshah*, "male and female." The term *zakar u-nekebah* was afterwards applied to anything designed and prepared for union with another object. Thus we read, "The five curtains shall be coupled together, one (*ishshah*) to the other" (*aḥotah*) (Exod. xxvi. 3).

It will easily be seen that the Hebrew equivalents for "brother and sister" are likewise treated as homonyms, and used, in a figurative sense, like *ish* and *ishshah*.

CHAPTER VII

IT is well known that the verb *yalad* means "to bear," "they have born (*ve-yaledu*) him children" (Deut. xxi. 15). The word was next used in a

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figurative sense with reference to various objects in nature, meaning, "to create," e.g. "before the mountains were created" (*yulladu*) (Ps. xc. 2); also, "to produce," in reference to that which the earth causes to come forth as if by birth, e.g., "He will cause her to bear (*holidah*) and bring forth" (Isa. Iv. 10). The verb further denotes, "to bring forth," said of changes in the process of time, as though they were things which were born, e.g., "for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (*yeled*) (Prov. xxvii. 1). Another figurative use of the word is its application to the formation of thoughts and ideas, or of opinions resulting from them: comp. "and brought forth (*ve-yalad*) falsehood" (Ps. vii. 14); also, "and they please themselves in the children (*yalde*) of strangers" (Isa. ii. 6), i.e., "they delight in the opinions of strangers." Jonathan the son of Uzziel paraphrases this passage, "they walk in the customs of other nations."

A man who has instructed another in any subject, and has improved his knowledge, may in like manner be regarded as the parent of the person taught, because he is the author of that knowledge: and thus the pupils of the prophets are called "sons of the prophets," as I shall explain when treating of the homonymity of *ben* (son). In this figurative sense, the verb *yalad* (to bear) is employed when it is said of Adam, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat (*va-yoled*) a son in his own likeness, in his form" (Gen. V. 3). As regards the words, "the form of Adam, and his likeness," we have already stated (ch. i.) their meaning. Those sons of Adam who were born before that time were not human in the true sense of the word, they had not

"the form of man." With reference to Seth who had been instructed, enlightened and brought to human perfection, it could rightly be said, "he (Adam) begat a son in his likeness, in his form." It is acknowledged that a man who does not possess this "form" (the nature of which has just been explained) is not human, but a mere animal in human shape and form. Yet such a creature has the power of causing harm and injury, a power which does not belong to other creatures. For those gifts of intelligence and judgment with which he has been endowed for the purpose of acquiring perfection, but which he has failed to apply to their proper aim, are used by him for wicked and mischievous ends; he begets evil things, as though he merely resembled man, or simulated his outward appearance. Such was the condition of those sons of Adam who preceded Seth. In reference to this subject the Midrash says: "During the 130 years when Adam was under rebuke he begat spirits," i.e., demons; when, however, he was again restored to divine favour "he begat in his likeness, in his form." This is the sense of the passage, "Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and he begat in his likeness, in his form" (Gen. v. 3).

CHAPTER VIII

ORIGINALLY the Hebrew term *makom* (place) applied both to a particular spot and to space in general subsequently it received a wider signification and denoted "position," or "degree," as regards the perfection of man in certain things. We say, e.g., this man occupies a certain place in such and such a subject. In this sense this term, as is well known, is frequently used by authors, e.g., "He fills his ancestors' place (*makom*) in point of wisdom

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and piety"; "the dispute still remains in its place" (*makom*), i.e., *in statu quo* [*ante*]. In the verse, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place" (*mekomo*) (Ezek. iii. 12), *makom* has this figurative meaning, and the verse may be paraphrased "Blessed be the Lord according to the exalted nature of His existence," and wherever *makom* is applied to God, it expresses the same idea, namely, the distinguished position of His existence, to which nothing is equal or comparable, as will be shown below (chap. lvi.).

It should be observed that when we treat in this work of any homonym, we do not desire you to confine yourself to that which is stated in that particular chapter; but we open for you a portal and direct your attention to those significations of the word which are suited to our purpose, though they may not be complete from a philological point of view. You should examine the prophetic books and other works composed by men of science, notice the meaning of every word which occurs in them, and take homonyms in that sense which is in harmony with the context. What I say in a particular passage is a key for the comprehension of all similar passages. For example, we have explained here *makom* in the sentence "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place" (*mekomo*); but you must understand that the word *makom* has the same signification in the passage "Behold, a place (*makom*) is with me" (Exod. xxxiii. 26), viz., a certain degree of contemplation and intellectual intuition (not of ocular inspection), in addition to

its literal meaning "a place," viz., the mountain which was pointed out to Moses for seclusion and for the attainment of perfection.

CHAPTER IX

THE original meaning of the word *kisse*, "throne," requires no comment. Since men of greatness and authority, as, e.g., kings, use the throne as a seat, and "the throne" thus indicates the rank, dignity, and position of the person for whom it is made, the Sanctuary has been styled "the throne," inasmuch as it likewise indicates the superiority of Him who manifests Himself, and causes His light and glory to dwell therein. Comp. "A glorious throne on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary" (Jer. xvii. 12). For the same reason the heavens are called "throne," for to the mind of him who observes them with intelligence they suggest the Omnipotence of the Being which has called them into existence, regulates their motions, and governs the sublunary world by their beneficial influence: as we read, "Thus saith the Lord, The heavens are my throne and the earth my footstool" (Isa. lxvi. 1); i.e., they testify to my Existence, my Essence, and my Omnipotence, as the throne testifies to the greatness of him who is worthy to occupy it.

This is the idea which true believers should entertain; not, however, that the Omnipotent, Supreme God is supported by any material object; for God is incorporeal, as we shall prove further on; how, then, can He be said to occupy any space, or rest on a body? The fact which I wish to point out is this: every place distinguished by the Almighty, and chosen to receive His light and splendour, as, for instance, the Sanctuary or the Heavens, is termed "throne"; and, taken in a wider sense, as in the passage "For my hand is upon the throne of God" (Exod. xvii. 16), "the throne" denotes

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here the Essence and Greatness of God. These, however (the Essence and Greatness of God) need not be considered as something separate from the God Himself or as part of the Creation, so that God would appear to have existed both without the throne, and with the throne: such a belief would be undoubtedly heretical. It is distinctly stated, "Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; Thy throne from generation to generation" (Lam. v. 19). By "Thy throne" we must, therefore, understand something inseparable from God. On that account, both here and in all similar passages. the word "throne" denotes God's Greatness and Essence, which are inseparable from His Being.

Our opinion will be further elucidated in the course of this Treatise.

CHAPTER X

WE have already remarked that when we treat in this work of homonyms, we have not the intention to exhaust the meanings of a word (for this is not a philological treatise); we shall

mention no other significations but those which bear on our subject. We shall thus proceed in our treatment of the terms *'alah* and *yarad*.

These two words, *'alah*, "he went up," and *yarad*, "he went down," are Hebrew terms used in the sense of ascending and descending. When a body moves from a higher to a lower place, the verb *yarad*, "to go down," is used; when it moves from a lower to a higher place, *'alah*, "to go up," is applied. These two verbs were afterwards employed with regard to greatness and power. When a man falls from his high position, we say "he has come down," and when he rises in station "he has gone up." Thus the Almighty says, "The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high, and thou shalt come down very low" (Deut. xxviii. 43). Again, "The Lord thy God will set thee on high (*'elyon*) above all nations of the earth" (Deut. xxviii. 1): "And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly" (*lema 'alah*) (1 Chron. xxix. 25). The Sages often employ these expressions, as: "In holy matters men must ascend (*ma 'alin*) and not descend (*moridin*)." The two words are also applied to intellectual processes, namely, when we reflect on something beneath ourselves we are said to go down, and when our attention is raised to a subject above us we are said to rise.

Now, we occupy a lowly position, both in space and rank in comparison with the heavenly sphere, and the Almighty is Most High not in space, but with respect to absolute existence, greatness and power. When it pleased the Almighty to grant to a human being a certain degree of wisdom or prophetic inspiration, the divine communication thus made to the prophet and the entrance of the Divine Presence into a certain place is termed (*yeridah*), "descending," while the termination of the prophetic communication or the departure of the divine glory from a place is called *'aliyah*, "ascending."

The expressions "to go up" and "to go down," when used in reference to God, must be interpreted in this sense. Again, when, in accordance with the divine will, some misfortune befalls a nation or a region of the earth, and when the biblical account of that misfortune is preceded by the statement that the Almighty visited the actions of the people, and that He punished

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them accordingly, then the prophetic author employs the term "to descend": for man is so low and insignificant that his actions would not be visited and would not bring punishment on him, were it not for the divine will: as is clearly stated in the Bible, with regard to this idea, "What is man that thou shouldst remember him, and the son of man that thou shouldst visit him" (Ps. viii. 5).

The design of the Deity to punish man is, therefore, introduced by the verb "to descend": comp. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language" (Gen. xi. 7) "And the Lord came down to see" (Gen. xi. 5); "I will go down now and see" (Gen. xviii. 21). All these instances convey the idea that man here below is going to be punished.

More numerous, however, are the instances of the first case, viz., in which these verbs are used in connection with the revelation of the word and of the glory of God, e.g., "And I will come down and talk with thee there" (Num. xi. 17); "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 20); "The Lord will come down in the sight of all the people (Exod. xix. 11); "And God went up from him" (Gen. xxxv. 13); "And God went up from Abraham" (Gen. xvii. 22). When, on the other hand, it says, "And Moses went up unto God" (Exod. xix. 3), it must be taken in the third signification of these verbs, in addition to its literal meaning that Moses also ascended to the top of the mount, upon which a certain material light (the manifestation of God's glory) was visible; but we must not imagine that the Supreme Being occupies a place to which we can ascend, or from which we can descend. He is far from what the ignorant imagine.

CHAPTER XI

THE primary meaning of the Hebrew *yashab* is "he was seated," as "Now Eli the priest sat (*yashab*) upon a seat" (1 Sam. i. 9); but, since a person can best remain motionless and at rest when sitting, the term was applied to everything that is permanent and unchanging; thus, in the promise that Jerusalem should remain constantly and permanently in an exalted condition, it is stated, "She will rise and sit in her place" (Zech. xiv. 10); further, "He maketh the woman who was childless to sit as a joyful mother of children" (Ps. cxiii. 9); i.e., He makes her happy condition to be permanent and enduring.

When applied to God, the verb is to be taken in that latter sense: "Thou O Lord, remainest (*tesheb*) for ever" (Lam. v. 19); "O thou who sittest (*ha-yoshebi*) in the heavens" (Ps. cxxiii. 1); "He who sitteth in the heavens" (ii. 4), i.e., He who is everlasting, constant, and in no way subject to change; immutable in His Essence, and as He consists of nought but His Essence, He is mutable in no way whatever; not mutable in His relation to other things: for there is no relation whatever existing between Him and any other being, as will be explained below, and therefore no change as regard; such relations can take place in Him. Hence He is immutable in every respect, as He expressly declares, "I, the Lord, do not change" (Mal. iii. 6); i.e., in Me there is not any change whatever. This idea is expressed by the term *yashab* when referring to God.

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The verb, when employed of God, is frequently complemented by "the Heavens," inasmuch as the heavens are without change or mutation, that is to say, they do not individually change, as the individual beings on earth, by transition from existence into non-existence.

The verb is also employed in descriptions of God's relation (the term "relation" is here used as a homonym) to existing species of evanescent things: for those *species* are as constant, well organized, and unvarying as the individuals of the heavenly hosts. Thus we find, "Who sitteth over the circle of the earth" (Isa. xl. 22), Who remains constantly and unremittingly over the sphere of the earth; that is to say, over the things that come into existence within that sphere.

Again, "The Lord sitteth upon the flood" (Ps. xxix. 10), i.e., despite the change and variation of earthly objects, no change takes place with respect to God's relation (to the earth): His relation to each of the things which come into existence and perish again is stable and constant, for it concerns only the existing species and not the individuals. It should therefore be borne in mind, that whenever the term "sitting" is applied to God, it is used in this sense.

CHAPTER XII

THE term *kam* (he rose) is a homonym. In one of its significations it is the opposite of "to sit," as "He did not rise (*kam*) nor move for him" (Esth. v. 9). It further denotes the confirmation and verification of a thing, e.g.: "The Lord will verify (*yakem*) His promise" (1 Sam. i. 23); "The field of Ephron was made sure (*va-yakom*) as the property of Abraham" (Gen. xxiii. 17). "The house that is in the walled city shall be established (*ve-kam*)" (Lev. xxv. 30); "And the kingdom of Israel shall be firmly established (*ve-kamah*) in thy hand" (1 Sam. xxiv. 20). It is always in this sense that the verb is employed with reference to the Almighty; as "Now shall I rise (*akum*), saith the Lord" (Ps. xii. 7), which is the same as saying, "Now shall I verify my word and my dispensation for good or evil." "Thou shalt arise (*takum*) and have mercy upon Zion" (Ps. cii. 13), which means: Thou wilt establish what thou hast promised, viz., that thou wouldst pity Zion.

Generally a person who resolves to set about a matter, accompanies his resolve by rising, hence the verb is employed to express "to resolve" to do a certain thing; as, "That my son hath stirred up my servant against me" (1 Sam. xxii. 8). The word is figuratively used to signify the execution of a divine decree against a people sentenced to extermination, as "And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam" (Amos vii. 9); "but he will arise against the house of the evildoers" (Isa. xxxi. 2). Possibly in Psalm xii. 7 the verb has this latter sense, as also in Psalm cii. 13, namely: Thou wilt rise up against her enemies.

There are many passages to be interpreted in this manner, but in no way should it be understood that He rises or sits--far be such a notion! Our Sages expressed this idea in the formula, "In the world above there is neither sitting nor standing (*'amidah*)"; for the two verbs *'amad* and *kam* are synonyms [and what is said about the former is also applicable to the latter].

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CHAPTER XIII

THE term *'amad* (he stood) is a homonym signifying in the first instance "to stand upright," as "When he stood (*be-'omdo*) before Pharaoh" (Gen. xli. 46); "Though Moses and Samuel stood (*ya-'amod*)" (Jer. xv. 1); "He stood by them" (Gen. xviii. 8). It further denotes "cessation and interruption," as "but they stood still (*'amedu*) and answered no more" (Job xxxii. 16); "and she ceased (*va-ta-'amod*) to bear" (Gen. xxix. 35). Next it signifies "to be enduring and lasting," as, "that they may continue (*yo-'amedu*) many days" (Jer. xxxii. 14); "Then shalt thou be able to endure (*'amod*)" (Exod. xviii. 23); "His taste remained (*'amad*) in him" (Jer. xlviii. 11), i.e., it

has continued and remained in existence without any change: "His righteousness standeth for ever" (Ps. cxi. 3), i.e., it is permanent and everlasting. The verb applied to God must be understood in this latter sense, as in Zechariah xiv. 4, "And his feet shall stand (*ve-‘amedu*) in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 4), "His causes, i.e., the events of which He is the cause, will remain efficient," etc. This will be further elucidated when we speak of the meaning of *regel* (foot). (*Vide infra*, chap. xxviii.) In the same sense is this verb employed in Deuteronomy v. 28, "But as for thee, stand thou here by me," and Deuteronomy v. 5, "I stood between the Lord and you."

CHAPTER XIV

THE homonymous term *adam* is in the first place the name of the first man, being, as Scripture indicates, derived from *adamah*, "earth." Next, it means "mankind," as "My spirit shall not strive with man (*adam*)" (Gen. vi. 3). Again "Who knoweth the spirit of the children of man (*adam*)" (Eccles. iii. 21); "so that a man (*adam*) has no pre-eminence above a beast" (Eccles. iii. 19). *Adam*. signifies also "the multitude," "the lower classes" as opposed to those distinguished from the rest, as "Both low (*bene adam*) and high (*bene ish*)" (Ps. xlix. 3).

It is in this third signification that it occurs in the verses, "The sons of the higher order (*Elohim*) saw the daughters of the lower order (*adam*)" (Gen. vi. 2); and "Forsooth! as the humble man (*adam*) you shall die" (Ps. lxxxii. 7).

CHAPTER XV

ALTHOUGH the two roots *nazab* and *yazab* are distinct, yet their meaning is, as you know, identical in all their various forms.

The verb has several meanings: in some instances it signifies "to stand or "to place oneself," as "And his sister stood (*va-tetazzab*) afar off" (Exod. ii. 4); "The kings of the earth set themselves" (*viyazzebu*) (Ps. ii. 2); "They came out and stood" (*nizzabim*) (Num. xvi. 27). In other instances it denotes continuance and permanence, as, "Thy word is established (*nizzab*) in Heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89), i.e., it remains for ever.

Whenever this term is applied to God it must be understood in the latter sense, as, "And, behold, the Lord stood (*nizzab*) upon it" (Gen. xxviii. 13), i.e., appeared as eternal and everlasting "upon it," namely, upon the ladder,

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the upper end of which reached to heaven, while the lower end touched the earth. This ladder all may climb up who wish to do so, and they must ultimately attain to a knowledge of Him who is above the summit of the ladder, because He remains upon it permanently. It must be well understood that the term "upon it" is employed by me in harmony with this metaphor. "Angels of God" who were going up represent the prophets. That the term "angel" was applied to prophets

may clearly be seen in the following passages: "He sent an angel" (Num. xx. 16); "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim" (Judges ii. 1). How suggestive, too, is the expression "ascending and descending on it"! The ascent is mentioned before the descent, inasmuch as the "ascending" and arriving at a certain height of the ladder precedes the "descending," i.e., the application of the knowledge acquired in the ascent for the training and instruction of mankind. This application is termed "descent," in accordance with our explanation of the term *yarad* (chapter x.).

To return to our subject. The phrase "stood upon it" indicates the permanence and constancy of God, and does not imply the idea of physical position. This is also the sense of the phrase "Thou shalt stand upon the rock" (Exod. xxxiii. 21). It is therefore clear that *nizzab* and *'amad* are identical in this figurative signification. Comp. "Behold, I will stand (*'omed*) before thee there upon the rock in Horeb" (Exod. xvii. 6).

CHAPTER XVI

THE word *zur* (rock) is a homonym. First, it denotes "rock," as "And thou shalt smite the rock" (*zur*) (Exod. xvii. 6). Then, "hard stone," like the flint, e.g., "Knives of stone" (*zurim*) (Josh. V. 2). It is next employed to signify the quarry from which the stones are hewn; comp. "Look unto the rock (*zur*) whence ye are hewn" (Isa. li. 1). From this latter meaning of the term another figurative notion was subsequently derived, viz., "the root and origin" of all things. It is on this account that after the words "Look to the rock whence ye are hewn," the Prophet continues, "Look unto Abraham your father," from which we evidently may infer that the words "Abraham your father" serve to explain "the rock whence ye are hewn"; and that the Prophet meant to say, "Walk in his ways, put faith in his instruction, and conduct yourselves according to the rule of his life! for the properties contained in the quarry should be found again in those things which are formed and hewn out of it."

It is in the latter sense that the Almighty is called "rock," He being the origin and the *causa efficiens* of all things besides Himself. Thus we read, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect" (Deut. xxxii. 4); "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful" (Deut. xxxii. 18); "Their Rock had sold them" (xxxii. 30); "There is no rock like our God" (1 Sam. ii. 2); "The Rock of Eternity" (Isa. xxvi. 4). Again, "And thou shalt stand upon the Rock" (Exod. xxxiii. 21), i.e., Be firm and steadfast in the conviction that God is the source of all things, for this will lead you towards the knowledge of the Divine Being. We have shown (chap. viii.) that the words "Behold, a place is with me" (Exod. xxxiii. 21) contain the same idea.

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CHAPTER XVII

Do not imagine that only Metaphysics should be taught with reserve to the common people and to the uninitiated: for the same is also the case with the greater part of Natural Science. In this

sense we have repeatedly made use of the expression of the Sages, "Do not expound the chapter on the Creation in the presence of two" [*vide* Introd. page 2]. This principle was not peculiar to our Sages: ancient philosophers and scholars of other nations were likewise wont to treat of the *principia rerum* obscurely, and to use figurative language in discussing such subjects. Thus Plato and his predecessors called Substance the female, and Form the male. (You are aware that the *principia* of all existing transient things are three, viz., Substance, Form, and Absence of a particular form; the last-named principle is always inherent in the substance, for otherwise the substance would be incapable of receiving a new form: and it is from this point of view that absence [of a particular form] is included among the *principia*. As soon, then, as a substance has received a certain form, the privation of that form, namely, of that which has just been received, has ceased, and is replaced by the privation of another form, and so on with all possible forms, as is explained in treatises on natural philosophy.)--Now, if those philosophers who have nothing to fear from a lucid explanation of these metaphysical subjects still were in the habit of discussing them in figures and metaphors, how much more should we, having the interest of religion at heart, refrain from elucidating to the mass any subject that is beyond their comprehension, or that might be taken in a sense directly opposite to the one intended. This also deserves attention.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE three words *karab*, "to come near," *naga* ' , "to touch," and *nagash*, "to approach," sometimes signify "contact" or "nearness in space," sometimes the approach of man's knowledge to an object, as if it resembled the physical approach of one body to another. As to the use of *karab* in the first meaning, viz., to draw near a certain spot, comp. "As he drew near (*karab*) the camp" (Exod. xxxii. 19); "And Pharaoh drew near (*hikrib*)" (Exod. xiv. 10). *Naga* ' , in the first sense, viz., expressing the contact of two bodies, occurs in "And she cast it (*va-tagga* ') at his feet" (Exod. iv. 25); "He caused it to touch (*va-yagga* ') my mouth" (Isa. vi. 7). And *nagash* in the first sense, viz., to approach or move towards another person, is found, e.g., in "And Judah drew near (*va-yiggash*) unto him" (Gen. xlv. 1).

The second meaning of these three words is "approach by means of knowledge," or "contact by comprehension," not in reference to space. As to *naga* ' in this second sense, comp. "for her judgment reacheth (*naga* ') unto heaven" (Jer. li. 9). An instance of *karab* being used in this meaning is contained in the following passage, "And the cause that is too hard for you, bring (*takribun*) it unto me" (Deut. i. 17); this is equivalent to saying, "Ye shall make it known unto me." The verb *karab* (in the Hiphil) is thus employed in the sense of giving information concerning a thing. The verb *nagash* is used figuratively in the phrase, "And Abraham drew near (*va-yiggash*), and said" (Gen. xviii. 23); this took place in a prophetic vision and

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in a trance, as will be explained (Part I. chap. xxi., and Part II. chap. xli.; also in "Forasmuch as this people draw near (*niggash*) me with their mouths and with their lips" (Isa. xxix. 13).

Wherever a word denoting approach or contact is employed in the prophetic writings to describe a certain relation between the Almighty and any created being, it has to be understood in this latter sense [viz., to approach mentally]. For, as will be proved in this treatise (II. chap. iv.), the Supreme is incorporeal, and consequently He does not approach or draw near a thing, nor can aught approach or touch Him; for when a being is without corporeality, it cannot occupy space, and all idea of approach, contact, distance, conjunction, separation, touch, or proximity is inapplicable to such a being.

There can be no doubt respecting the verses "The Lord is nigh (*karob*) unto all them that call upon him" (Ps. cxlv. 18); "They take delight in approaching (*kirbat*) to God" (Isa. lviii. 2); "The nearness (*kirbat*) of God is pleasant to me" (Ps. lxxii. 28); all such phrases intimate a spiritual approach, i.e., the attainment of some knowledge, not, however, approach in space. Thus also "who hath God so nigh (*kerobim*) unto him" (Deut. iv. 7); "Draw thou near (*kerab*) and hear" (Deut. v. 27); "And Moses alone shall draw near (*ve-niggash*) the Lord; but they shall not come nigh (*yiggashu*)" (Exod. xxiv. 2).

If, however, you wish to take the words "And Moses shall draw near" to mean that he shall draw near a certain place in the mountain, whereon the Divine Light shone, or, in the words of the Bible, "where the glory of the Lord abode," you may do so, provided you do not lose sight of the truth that there is no difference whether a person stand at the centre of the earth or at the highest point of the ninth sphere, if this were possible: he is no further away from God in the one case, or nearer to Him in the other; those only approach Him who obtain a knowledge of Him; while those who remain ignorant of Him recede from Him. In this approach towards, or recession from God there are numerous grades one above the other, and I shall further elucidate, in one of the subsequent chapters of the Treatise (I. chap. lx., and II. chap. xxxvi.) what constitutes the difference in our perception of God.

In the passage, "Touch (*ga`*) the mountains, and they shall smoke" (Ps. cxliv. 5), the verb "touch" is used in a figurative sense, viz., "Let thy word touch them." So also the words, "Touch thou him himself" (Job ii. 5), have the same meaning as "Bring thy infliction upon him." In a similar manner must this verb, in whatever form it may be employed be interpreted in each place, according to the context; for in some cases it denotes contact of two material objects, in others knowledge and comprehension of a thing, as if he who now comprehends anything which he had not comprehended previously had thereby approached a subject which had been distant from him. This point is of considerable importance.

CHAPTER XIX

THE term *male* is a homonym which denotes that one substance enters another, and fills it, as "And she filled (*va-temalle*) her pitcher" (Gen. xxiv. 16); "An omer-full (*melo*) for each" (Exod. xvi. 32), and many other instances. Next, it signifies the expiration or completion of a fixed period

of time, as "And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled (*va-yimleü*)" (Gen. xxv. 24); "And forty days were completed (*va-yimleü*) for him" (Gen. 1. 3). It further denotes attainment of the highest degree of excellency, as "Full (*male*) with the blessing of the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 23); "Them hath he filled (*mille*) with wisdom of heart" (Exod. xxxv. 35) He was filled (*va-yimmale*) with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning" (1 Kings vii. 14). In this sense it is said "The whole earth is full (*melo*) of his glory" (Isa. vi. 4), "All the earth gives evidence of his perfection," i.e. leads to a knowledge of it. Thus also "The glory of the Lord filled (*male*) the tabernacle" (Exod. xl. 34); and, in fact, every application of the word to God must be interpreted in this manner; and not that He has a body occupying space. If, on the other hand, you prefer to think that in this passage by "the glory of the Lord," a certain light created for the purpose is to be understood, that such light is always termed "glory," and that such light "filled the tabernacle," we have no objection.

CHAPTER XX

THE word *ram* (high) is a homonym, denoting elevation in space, and elevation in dignity, i.e., greatness, honour, and power. It has the first meaning in "And the ark was lifted up (*va-tarom*) above the earth" (Gen. vii. 17); and the latter meaning in "I have exalted (*harimoti*) one chosen out of the people" (Ps. lxxxix. 20); "Forasmuch as I have exalted (*harimoti*) thee from amongst the dust" (1 Kings xvi. 2); "Forasmuch as I exalted (*harimoti*) thee from among the people" (1 Kings xiv. 7).

Whenever this term is employed in reference to God, it must be taken in the second sense: "Be thou exalted (*rumah*), O God, above the heavens" (Ps. lvii. 12). In the same manner does the root *nasa* (to lift up) denote both elevation in space and elevation in rank and dignity. In the former sense it occurs in "And they lifted up (*va-yisseü*) their corn upon their asses" (Gen. xlii. 26) and there are many instances like this in which this verb has the meaning "to carry," "to move" from place to place: for this implies elevation in space. In the second sense we have "And his kingdom shall be exalted" (*ve-tinnase*) (Num. xxiv. 7); "And he bare them, and carried them" (*va-yenasseëm*) (Isa. lxiii. 9); "Wherefore do ye exalt yourselves" (*titnasseü*) (Num. xvi. 3).

Every form of this verb when applied to God has this latter sense--e.g., "Lift up thyself (*hinnase*), thou judge of the earth" (Ps. xciv. 2); "Thus saith the High (*ram*) and Exalted (*nissa*) One" (Isa. lvii. 15)--denoting elevation in rank, quality, and power, and not elevation in space.

You may be surprised that I employ the expression, "elevation in rank, quality, and power," and you may say, "How can you assert that several distinct expressions denote the same thing?" It will be explained later on (chap. 1. *seqq.*) that those who possess a true knowledge of God do not consider that He possesses many attributes, but believe that these various attributes which describe His Might, Greatness, Power, Perfection, Goodness, etc., are identical, denoting His

Essence, and not anything extraneous to His Essence. I shall devote special chapters to the Names and Attributes of

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[paragraph continues] God; our intention here is solely to show that "high and exalted" in the passage quoted denote elevation in rank, not in space.

CHAPTER XXI

IN its primary signification the Hebrew *'abar*, "to pass," refers to the motion of a body in space, and is chiefly applied to living creatures moving at some distance in a straight line, e.g., "And He passed over (*'abar*) before them" (Gen. xxxiii. 3); "Pass (*'abor*) before the people" (Exod. xvii. 5). Instances of this kind are numerous. The verb was next applied to the passage of sound through air, as "And they caused a sound to pass (*va-ya'abiru*) through out the camp" (Exod. xxxvi. 6); "That I hear the Lord's people spreading the report" (*ma'abirim*) (1 Sam. ii. 24).

Figuratively it denoted the appearance of the Light and the Divine Presence (Shechinah) which the prophets perceived in their prophetic visions, as it is said, "And behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed (*'abar*) between those pieces" (Gen. xv. 17). This took place in a prophetic vision, for the narrative commences, "And a deep sleep fell upon Abram." The verb has this latter meaning in Exodus xii. 12, "And I shall pass (*ve-'abarti*) through the land of Egypt" (denoting "I shall reveal myself," etc.), and in all similar phrases.

The verb is next employed to express that a person has gone too far, and transgressed the usual limit, in the performance of some act, as "And as a man who is drinking wine has passed (*'abarv*) the proper limit" (Jer. xxiii. 9).

It is also used figuratively to denote: to abandon one aim, and turn to a different aim and object, e.g., "He shot an arrow, causing it to miss the aim (*leha'abiro*)" (1 Sam. xx. 36). This is the sense, it appears to me, of this verb in "And the Lord passed by (*va-ya'abor*) before his face" (Exod. xxxiv. 6). I take "his face" to mean "the face of God"; our Teachers likewise interpreted "his face" as being identical with "the face of God." And, although this is found in the midst of Agadic interpretations which would be out of place in this our work, yet it is some support of our view, that the pronoun "his" is employed in this passage as a substitute for "God's"--and the whole passage could in my opinion be explained as follows: Moses sought to attain to a certain perception which is called "the perception of the Divine face," a term occurring in the phrase "My face cannot be seen"; but God vouchsafed to him a perception of a lower degree, viz., the one called, "the seeing of the back," in the words, "And thou shalt see my back" (Exod. xxxiii. 23). We have mentioned this subject in our work *Mishneh Torah*. Accordingly, it is stated in the above-mentioned passage that the Lord withheld from Moses that perception which is termed "the seeing of the Divine face," and substituted for it another gift, viz., the knowledge of the acts attributed to God, which, as I shall explain (chap. liv.) are considered to be different and separate

attributes of the Supreme. In asserting that God withheld from Moses (the higher knowledge) I mean to say that this knowledge was unattainable, that by its nature it was inaccessible to Moses; for man, whilst able to gain perfection by applying his reasoning faculties to the attainment of what is within the reach of his intellect, either weakens his reason or loses

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it altogether as soon as he ventures to seek a higher degree of knowledge--as I shall elucidate in one of the chapters of this work--unless he be granted a special aid from heaven, as is described in the words, "And I will cover thee with my hand until I pass by" (Exod. xxxiii. 23)

Onkelos, in translating this verse, adopts the same method which he applies to the explanation of similar passages, viz., every expression implying corporeality or corporal properties, when referring to God, he explains by assuming an ellipsis of a *nomen regens* before "God," thus connecting the expression (of corporeality) with another word which is supplied, and which governs the genitive "God": e.g., "And behold the Lord stood upon it" (Gen. xxviii. 13), he explains, "The glory of the Lord stood arrayed above it." Again, "The Lord watch between me and thee" (Gen. xxxi. 49), he paraphrases, "The word of the Lord shall watch." This is his ordinary method in explaining Scripture. He applies it also to Exod. xxxiv. 6, which he paraphrases, "The Lord caused his Presence to pass before his face and called." According to this rendering the thing which passed was unquestionably some physical object, the pronoun "his" refers to Moses, and the phrase '*al panav* is identical with *lefanav*, "before him." Comp. "So went the present over before him" ('*al panav*) (Gen. xxxii. 22). This is likewise an appropriate and satisfactory explanation: and I can adduce still further support for the opinion of Onkelos from the words "while my glory passeth by" (*ba- 'abor*) (Exod. xxxiii. 22), which expressly state that the passing object was something ascribed to God, not God Himself: and of this Divine glory it is also said, "until I pass by," and "And the Lord passed by before him."

Should it, however, be considered necessary to assume here an ellipsis, according to the method of Onkelos, who supplies in some instances the term "the Glory," in others "the Word," and in others "the Divine Presence," as the context may require in each particular case, we may also supply here the word "voice," and explain the passage, "And a voice from the Lord passed before him and called." We have already shown that the verb '*abar*, "he passed," can be applied to the voice, as in "And they caused a voice to pass through the camp" (Exod. xxxvi. 6). According to this explanation, it was the voice which called. No objection can be raised to applying the verb *kara* (he called) to *kol* (voice), for a similar phrase occurs in the Bible in reference to God's commands to Moses, "He heard the voice speaking unto him"; and, in the same manner as it can be said "the voice spoke," we may also say "the voice called"; indeed, we can even support this application of the verbs "to say," and "to call," to "the voice," by parallel passages, as "A voice saith 'Cry,' and it says 'What shall I cry?'" (Isa. xl. 6). According to this view, the meaning of the passage under discussion would be: "A voice of God passed before him and called, 'Eternal, Eternal, All-powerful, All-merciful, and All-gracious!'" (The word Eternal is repeated; it is in the

vocative, for the Eternal is the one who is called. Comp. Moses, Moses! Abraham, Abraham!) This, again, is a very appropriate explanation of the text.

You will surely not find it strange that this subject, so profound and difficult, should bear various interpretations; for it will not impair the force of the argument with which we are here concerned. Either explanation may be adopted: you may take that grand scene altogether as a prophetic vision,

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and the whole occurrence as a mental operation, and consider that what Moses sought, what was withheld from him, and what he attained, were things perceived by the intellect without the use of the senses (as we have explained above): or you may assume that in addition there was a certain ocular perception of a material object, the sight of which would assist intellectual perception. The latter is the view of Onkelos, unless he assumes that in this instance the ocular perception was likewise a prophetic vision, as was the case with "a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" (Gen. xv. 17), mentioned in the history of Abraham. You may also assume that in addition there was a perception of sound, and that there was a voice which passed before him, and was undoubtedly something material. You may choose either of these opinions, for our sole intention and purpose is to guard you against the belief that the phrase "and the Lord passed," is analogous to "pass before the people" (Exod. xvii. 5), for God, being incorporeal, cannot be said to move, and consequently the verb "to pass" cannot with propriety be applied to Him in its primary signification.

CHAPTER XXII

IN Hebrew, the verb *bo* signifies "to come" as applied to a living being, i.e., its arrival at a certain place, or approach to a certain person, as "Thy brother came (*ba*) with subtilty" (Gen. xxvii. 35). It next denotes (with regard to a living being) "to enter" a certain place, e.g., "And when Joseph came (*va-yabo*) into the house" (Gen. xliii. 26); "When ye come (*ta-boï*) into the land" (Exod. Xii. 25). The term was also employed metaphorically in the sense of "to come" applied to a certain event, that is, to something incorporeal, as "When thy sayings come to pass (*yabo*)" (Judg. xiii. 17); "Of that which will come (*yaboï*) over thee" (Isa. xlvii. 13). Nay, it is even applied to privatives, e.g., "Yet evil came (*va-yabo*)" (Job iii. 26); "And darkness came (*va-yabo*)" Now, since the word has been applied to incorporeal things, it has also been used in reference to God-to the fulfilment of His word, or to the manifestation of His Presence (the Shechinah). In this figurative sense it is said, "Lo, I come (*ba*) unto thee in a thick cloud" (Exod. xix. 9); "For the Lord the God of Israel cometh (*ba*) through it" (Ezek. xlv. 2). In these and all similar passages, the coming of the Shechinah is meant, but the words, "And the Lord my God shall come (*u-ba*)" (Zech. xiv. 5) are identical with "His word will come," that is to say, the promises which He made through the Prophets will be fulfilled; therefore Scripture adds "all the

holy ones that are with thee," that is to say, "The word of the Lord my God will be performed, which has been spoken by all the holy ones who are with thee, who address the Israelites."

CHAPTER XXIII

Yaza ("he came out") is the opposite of *ba* ("he came in"). The term *yaza* is applied to the motion of a body from a place in which it had previously rested, to another place (whether the body be a living being or not), e.g., "And when they were gone out (*yazei*) if the city" (Gen. xlv. 4); "If fire break out (*teze*)" (Exod. xxii. .5). It was then figuratively employed to

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denote the appearance of something incorporeal, as, "The word went out (*yaza*) of the king's mouth" (Esth. vii. 8); "When this deed of the queen shall come abroad (*yeze*) unto all women" (Esth. i. 17), that is to say, "the report will spread." Again, "For out of Zion shall go forth (*teze*) the Law" (Isa. ii. 3); further, "The sun had risen (*yaza*) upon the earth" (Gen. xix. 23), i.e., its light became visible.

In this figurative sense we must take every expression of coming out when applied to the Almighty, e.g., "Behold, the Lord cometh out (*yoze*) of his place" (Isa. xxvi. 21), i.e., "The word of God, which until now has been in secret, cometh out, and will become manifest," i.e., something will come into being which had not existed before: for everything new emanating from God is ascribed to His word. Comp. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. xxxiii. 6). This is a simile taken from the conduct of kings, who employ the word as the means of carrying their will into effect. God, however, requires no instrument wherewith to operate in order to perform anything; the effect is produced solely by His will alone. He does not employ any kind of speech, as will be explained further on (chap. Iv.).

The verb "to come out" is thus employed to designate the manifestation of a certain work of God, as we noticed in our interpretation of the phrase, "Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place." In a similar manner the term *shub*, "to return," has been figuratively employed to denote the discontinuance of a certain act according to the will of God, as in "I will go and return to my place" (Hosea v. 15); that is to say, the Divine presence (*Shechinah*) which had been in our midst departed from us, the consequence of which has been the absence of Divine protection from amongst us. Thus the Prophet foretelling misfortune says, "And I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured" (Deut. xxxi. 17); for, when man is deprived of Divine protection he is exposed to all dangers, and becomes the butt of all fortuitous circumstances: his fortune and misfortune then depend on chance. Alas! how terrible a threat!--This is the idea contained in the words, "I will go and return to my place" (Hos. v. 15).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE term *halak* is likewise one of the words which denote movements performed by living beings, as in "And Jacob went (*halak*) on his way" (Gen. xxxii. 1), and in many other instances. The verb "to go" was next employed in describing movements of objects less solid than the bodies of living beings, comp. "And the waters were going on (*halok*) decreasing" (Gen. viii. 5); "And the fire went along (*va-tihalak*) upon the ground" (Exod. ix. 23). Then it was employed to express the spreading and manifestation of something incorporeal, comp. "The voice thereof shall go like a serpent" (Jer. xlvi. 22); again, "The voice of the Lord God walking in the garden" (Gen. iii. 8). It is "the voice" that is qualified by "walking."

Whenever the word "to go" is used in reference to God, it must be taken in this figurative sense, i.e., it applies to incorporeal things, and signifies either the manifestation of something incorporeal, or the withdrawal of the Divine protection, an act corresponding in lifeless beings to the removal of

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a thing, in living beings to the departure of a living being, "walking." The withdrawal of God's protection is called in the Bible "the hiding of God's countenance," as in Deuteronomy xxxi. 18, "As for me, I will hide my countenance." On the same ground it has been designated "going away," or moving away from a thing. comp. "I will depart and return to my place" (Hos. v. 15). But in the passage, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he went" (Num. xii. 9), the two meanings of the verb are combined. viz., the withdrawal of the Divine protection, expressed by "and he went," and the revelation, manifestation, and appearance of something namely, of the anger which went forth and reached them, in consequence of which Miriam became "leprous, white as snow." The expression "to walk" was further applied to conduct, which concerns only the inner life, and which requires no bodily motion, as in the following passages, "And thou shalt walk in his ways" (Deut. xxviii. 9); "Ye shall walk after the Lord your God" (Deut. xiii. 5); "Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isa. ii. 5).

CHAPTER XXV

THE Hebrew *shakan*, as is well known, signifies "to dwell," as, "And he was dwelling (*shoken*) in the plains of Mamre" (Gen. xiv. 13); "And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt (*bishekon*)" (Gen. xxxv. 22). This is the most common meaning of the word. But "dwelling in a place" consists in the continued stay in a place, general or special; when a living being dwells long in a place, we say that it stays in that place, although it unquestionably moves about in it, comp. "And he was staying in the plains of Mamre" (Gen. xiv. 13), and, "And it came to pass, when Israel stayed" (Gen. xxxv 22).

The term was next applied metaphorically to inanimate objects, i.e., to everything which has settled and remains fixed on one object, although the object on which the thing remains is not a place, and the thing itself is not a living being; for instance, "Let a cloud dwell upon it [the day]"

(Job iii. 5); there is no doubt that the cloud is not a living being, and that the day is not a corporeal thing, but a division of time.

In this sense the term is employed in reference to God, that is to Say, to denote the continuance of His Divine Presence (Shechinah) or of His Providence in some place where the Divine Presence manifested itself constantly, or in some object which was constantly protected by Providence. Comp. "And the glory of the Lord abode" (Exod. xxiv. 16); "And I will dwell among the children of Israel" (Exod. xxix. 45); "And for the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush" (Deut. xxxiii. 16). Whenever the term is applied to the Almighty, it must be taken consistently with the context in the sense either as referring to the Presence of His Shechinah (i.e., of His light that was created for the purpose) in a certain place, or of the continuance of His Providence protecting a certain object.

CHAPTER XXVI

You, no doubt, know the Talmudical saying, which includes in itself all the various kinds of interpretation connected with our subject. It runs thus:

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[paragraph continues] "The Torah speaks according to the language of man," that is to say, expressions, which can easily be comprehended and understood by all, are applied to the Creator. Hence the description of God by attributes implying corporeality, in order to express His existence: because the multitude of people do not easily conceive existence unless in connection with a body, and that which is not a body nor connected with a body has for them no existence. Whatever we regard as a state of perfection, is likewise attributed to God, as expressing that He is perfect in every respect, and that no imperfection or deficiency whatever is found in Him. But there is not attributed to God anything which the multitude consider a defect or want; thus He is never represented as eating, drinking, sleeping, being ill, using violence, and the like. Whatever, on the other hand, is commonly regarded as a state of perfection is attributed to Him, although it is only a state of perfection in relation to ourselves; for in relation to God, what we consider to be a state of perfection, is in truth the highest degree of imperfection. If, however, men were to think that those human perfections were absent in God, they would consider Him as imperfect.

You are aware that locomotion is one of the distinguishing characteristics of living beings, and is indispensable for them in their progress towards perfection. As they require food and drink to supply animal waste, so they require locomotion, in order to approach that which is good for them and in harmony with their nature, and to escape from what is injurious and contrary to their nature. It makes, in fact, no difference whether we ascribe to God eating and drinking or locomotion; but according to human modes of expression, that is to say, according to common notions, eating and drinking would be an imperfection in God, while motion would not, in spite of the fact that the necessity of locomotion is the result of some want. Furthermore, it has been clearly proved, that everything which moves is corporeal and divisible; it will be shown below

that God is incorporeal and that He can have no locomotion; nor can rest be ascribed to Him; for rest can only be applied to that which also moves. All expressions, however, which imply the various modes of movement in living beings, are employed with regard to God in the manner we have described and in the same way as life is ascribed to Him: although motion is an accident pertaining to living beings, and there is no doubt that, without corporeality, expressions like the following could not be imagined: "to descend, to ascend, to walk, to place, to stand, to surround, to sit, to dwell, to depart, to enter, to pass, etc.

It would have been superfluous thus to dilate on this subject, were it not for the mass of the people, who are accustomed to such ideas. It has been necessary to expatiate on the subject, as we have attempted, for the benefit of those who are anxious to acquire perfection, to remove from them such notions as have grown up with them from the days of youth.

CHAPTER XXVII

ONKELOS the Proselyte, who was thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew and Chaldaic languages, made it his task to oppose the belief in God's corporeality. Accordingly, any expression employed in the Pentateuch in reference to God, and in any way implying corporeality, he paraphrases in

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consonance with the context. All expressions denoting any mode of motion, are explained by Him to mean the appearance or manifestation of a certain light that had been created [for the occasion], i.e., the Shekhinah (Divine Presence), or Providence. Thus he paraphrases "the Lord will come down" (Exod. xix. 11), "The Lord will manifest Himself"; "And God came down" (xvi. 20), "And God manifested Himself"; and does not say "And God came down"; "I will go down now and see" (Gen. xviii. 21), he paraphrases, "I will manifest myself now and see." This is his rendering [of the verb *yarad*, "he went down," when used in reference to God] throughout his version, with the exception of the following passage, "I will go down (*ered*) with thee into Egypt" (Gen. xli. 4), which he renders literally. A remarkable proof of this great man's talents, the excellence of his version, and the correctness of his interpretation! By this version he discloses to us an important principle as regards prophecy.

This narrative begins: "And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob, etc. And He said, I am God, etc., I will go down with thee into Egypt" (Gen. xli. 2, 3). Seeing that the whole narrative is introduced as a vision of the night, Onkelos did not hesitate to translate literally the words addressed to Jacob in the nocturnal vision, and thus gave a faithful account of the occurrence. For the passage in question contains a statement of what Jacob was told, not what actually took place, as is the case in the words, "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai" (Exod. xix. 20). Here we have an account of what actually occurred in the physical world; the verb *yarad* is therefore paraphrased "He manifested Himself," and entirely detached

from the idea of motion. Accounts of what happened in the imagination of man, I mean of what he was told, are not altered. A most remarkable distinction!

Hence you may infer that there is a great difference between a communication, designated as having been made in a dream, or a vision of the night, and a vision or a manifestation simply introduced with phrases like "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying"; "And the Lord spake unto me, saying."

According to my opinion, it is also possible that Onkelos understood *Elohim* in the above passage to signify "angel," and that for this reason he did not hesitate to translate literally, "I will go down with thee to Egypt." Do not think it strange that Onkelos should have believed the *Elohim*, who said to Jacob, "I am God, the God of thy father" (*ib.* 3), to be an angel, for this sentence can, in the same form, also have been spoken by an angel. Thus Jacob says, "And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob. And I said, Here am I," etc. (Gen. xxxi. 11); and concludes the report of the angel's words to him in the following way, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me" (*ib.* 13), although there is no doubt that Jacob vowed to God, not to the angel. It is the usual practice of prophets to relate words addressed to them by an angel in the name of God, as though God Himself had spoken to them. Such passages are all to be explained by supplying the *nomen regens*, and by considering them as identical with "I am the messenger of the God of thy father," "I am the messenger of God who appeared to thee in Bethel," and the like. Prophecy with its various degrees, and the nature of angels, will be fully

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discussed in the sequel, in accordance with the object of this treatise (II. chap. xiv.).

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE term *regel* is homonymous, signifying, in the first place, the foot of a living being; comp. "Foot for foot" (Exod. xxi. 24). Next it denotes an object which follows another: comp. "And all the people that follow thee" (lit. that are at thy feet) (*ib.* xi. 18). Another signification of the word is "cause"; comp. "And the Lord hath blessed thee, I being the cause" (*leragli*) (Gen. xxx. 30), i.e., for my sake; for that which exists for the sake of another thing has the latter for its final cause. Examples of the term used in this sense are numerous. It has that meaning in Genesis xxxiii. 14, "Because (*leregel*) of the cattle that goeth before me, and because (*leregel*) of the children."

Consequently, the Hebrew text, of which the literal rendering is: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 4) can be explained in the following way: "And the things caused by him (*raglav*) on that day upon the Mount of Olives, that is to say, the wonders which will then be seen, and of which God will be the Cause or the Maker, will remain permanently." To this explanation does Jonathan son of Uziel incline in paraphrasing the

passage," And he will appear in his might on that day upon the Mount of Olives. He generally expresses terms denoting those parts of the body by which contact and motion are effected, by "his might" [when referring to God], because all such expressions denote acts done by His Will.

In the passage (Exod. xxiv. 10, lit., "And there was under his feet, like the action of the whiteness of a sapphire stone"), Onkelos, as you know, in his version, considers the word (*raglav*) "his feet" as a figurative expression and a substitute for "throne"; the words "under his feet" he therefore paraphrases, "And under the throne of his glory." Consider this well, and you will observe with wonder how Onkelos keeps free from the idea of the corporeality of God, and from everything that leads thereto, even in the remotest degree. For he does not say, "and under His throne"; the direct relation of the throne to God, implied in the literal sense of the phrase "His throne," would necessarily suggest the idea that God is supported by a material object, and thus lead directly to the corporeality of God: he therefore refers the throne to His glory, i.e., to the Shekhinah, which is a light created for the purpose.

Similarly he paraphrases the words, "For my hand I lift up to the throne of God" (Exod. xvii. 16), "An oath has been uttered by God, whose Shekhinah is upon the throne of his glory." This principle found also expression in the popular phrase, "the Throne of the Glory."

We have already gone too far away from the subject of this chapter, and touched upon things which will be discussed in other chapters; we will now return to our present theme. You are acquainted with the version of Onkelos [of the passage quoted]. He contents himself with excluding from his version all expressions of corporeality in reference to God, and does not show us what they (the nobles of the children of Israel Exod. xxiv. 10) perceived,

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or what is meant by that figure. In all similar instances Onkelos also abstains from entering into such questions, and only endeavours to exclude every expression implying corporeality; for the incorporeality of God is a demonstrative truth and an indispensable element in our faith; he could decidedly state all that was necessary in that respect. The interpretation of a simile is a doubtful thing: it may possibly have that meaning, but it may also refer to something else. It contains besides very profound matter, the understanding of which is not a fundamental element in our faith, and the comprehension of which is not easy for the common people. Onkelos, therefore, did not enter at all into this subject.

We, however, remaining faithful to our task in this treatise, find ourselves compelled to give our explanation. According to our opinion "under his feet" (*raglav*) denotes "under that of which He is the cause," "that which exists through Him," as we have already stated. They (the nobles of the children of Israel) therefore comprehended the real nature of the *materia prima*, which emanated from Him, and of whose existence He is the only cause. Consider well the phrase, "like the action of the whiteness of the sapphire stone." If the colour were the point of comparison, the words, "as the whiteness of the sapphire stone" would have sufficed; but the addition of "like the

action" was necessary, because matter, as such, is, as you are well aware, always receptive and passive, active only by some accident. On the other hand, form, as such, is always active, and only passive by some accident, as is explained in works on Physics. This explains the addition of "like the action" in reference to the *materia prima*. The expression "the whiteness of the sapphire" refers to the transparency, not to the white colour: for "the whiteness" of the sapphire is not a white colour, but the property of being transparent. Things, however, which are transparent, have no colour of their own, as is proved in works on Physics: for if they had a colour they would not permit all the colours to pass through them nor would they receive colours: it is only when the transparent object is totally colourless, that it is able to receive successively all the colours. In this respect it (the whiteness of the sapphire) is like the *materia prima*, which as such is entirely formless, and thus receives all the forms one after the other. What they (the nobles of the children of Israel) perceived was therefore the *materia prima*, whose relation to God is distinctly mentioned, because it is the source of those of his creatures which are subject to genesis and destruction, and has been created by him. This subject also will be treated later on more fully.

Observe that you must have recourse to an explanation of this kind, even when adopting the rendering of Onkelos, "And under the throne of His glory"; for in fact the *materia prima* is also under the heavens, which are called "throne of God," as we have remarked above. I should not have thought of this unusual interpretation, or hit on this argument were it not for an utterance of R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, which will be discussed in one of the parts of this treatise (II. chap. xxvi.). The primary object of every intelligent person must be to deny the corporeality of God, and to believe that all those perceptions (described in the above passage) were of a spiritual not of a material character. Note this and consider it well.

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CHAPTER XXIX

THE term 'ezeb is homonymous, denoting, in the first place, pain and trembling; comp. "In sorrow (*be- 'ezeb*) thou shalt bring forth children" (Gen. iii. 16). Next it denotes anger; comp. "And his father had not made him angry ('*ažabo*) at any time" (1 Kings i. 6); "for he was angry (*ne 'ezab*) for the sake of David" (1 Sam. xx. 34). The term signifies also provocation: comp. "They rebelled, and vexed ('*ižzebu*) his holy spirit" (Isa. lxiii. 10); "and provoked (*ya 'ažibahu*) him in the desert" (Ps. lxxviii. 40); "If there be any way of provocation ('*ožeb*) in me" (*ib.* cxxxix. 24); "Every day they rebel (*ye 'ažzebu*) against my words" (*ib.* lvi. 6).

In Genesis vi. 6 the word has either the second or the third signification. In the first case, the sense of the Hebrew *va-yit 'ažzeb el libbo* is "God was angry with them on account of the wickedness of their deeds" as to the words "to his heart" used here, and also in the history of Noah (*ib.* viii. 21) I will here explain what they mean. With regard to man, we use the expression "he said to himself," or "he said in his heart," in reference to a subject which he did not utter or

communicate to any other person. Similarly the phrase "And God said in his heart," is used in reference to an act which God decreed without mentioning it to any prophet at the time the event took place according to the will of God. And a figure of this kind is admissible, since "the Torah speaketh in accordance with the language of man" (*supra* c. xxvi.). This is plain and clear. In the Pentateuch no distinct mention is made of a message sent to the wicked generation of the flood, cautioning or threatening them with death; therefore, it is said concerning them, that God was angry with them in His heart; likewise when He decreed that no flood should happen again, He did not tell a prophet to communicate it to others, and for that reason the words "in his heart" are added.

Taking the verb in the third signification, we explain the passage thus: "And man rebelled against God's will concerning him"; for *leb* (heart) also signifies "will," as we shall explain when treating of the homonymy of *leb* (heart).

CHAPTER XXX

IN its primary meaning *akal* (to eat) is used in the sense of taking food by animals: this needs no illustration. It was afterwards observed that eating includes two processes--(1) the loss of the food, i.e., the destruction of its form, which first takes place; (2) the growth of animals, the preservation of their strength and their existence, and the support of all the forces of their body, caused by the food they take.

The consideration of the first process led to the figurative use of the verb in the sense of "consuming," "destroying"; hence it includes all modes of depriving a thing of its form comp. "And the land of your enemies shall destroy (lit. eat) you" (Lev. xxvi. 38); "A land that destroyeth (lit. eateth) the inhabitants thereof" (Num. xiii. 32); "Ye shall be destroyed (lit. eaten) with the sword" (Isa. i. 6); "Shall the sword destroy (lit. eat)" (2 Sam. ii. 26); "And the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and destroyed (lit. ate) them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp" (Num. xi. 1);

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[paragraph continues] "(God) is a destroying (lit. eating) fire" (Deut. iv. 24), that is, He destroys those who rebel against Him, as the fire destroys everything that comes within its reach. Instances of this kind are very frequent.

With reference to the second effect of the act of eating, the verb "to eat" is figuratively used in the sense of "acquiring wisdom," "learning"; in short, for all intellectual perceptions. These preserve the human form (intellect) constantly in the most perfect manner, in the same way as food preserves the body in its best condition. Comp. "Come ye, buy and eat" (Isa. lv. 1); "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good" (*ib.* 2); "It is not good to eat much honey" (Prov. xxv. 27); "My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul" (*ib.* xxiv. 13, 14).

This figurative use of the verb "to eat" in the sense of "acquiring wisdom" is frequently met with in the Talmud, e.g., "Come, eat fat meat at Raba's" (Baba Bathra 22a); comp. "All expressions of 'eating' and 'drinking' found in this book (of Proverbs) refer to wisdom," or, according to another reading, "to the Law" (Koh. rabba on Eccl. iii. 13) Wisdom has also been frequently called "water," e.g., "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. lv. 1).

The figurative meaning of these expressions has been so general and common, that it was almost considered as its primitive signification, and led to the employment "of hunger" and "thirst" in the sense of "absence of wisdom and intelligence"; comp. "I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord"; "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Ps. xlii. 3). Instances of this kind occur frequently. The words, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. Xii. 3), are paraphrased by Jonathan son of Uzziel thus: "You will joyfully receive new instruction from the chosen of the righteous." Consider how he explains "water" to indicate "the wisdom which will then spread," and "the wells" (*ma'ayene*) as being identical with "the eyes of the congregation" (Num. XV. 24), in the sense of "the chiefs," or "the wise." By the phrase, "from the chosen of the righteous," he expresses his belief that righteousness is true salvation. You now see how he gives to every word in this verse some signification referring to wisdom and study. This should be well considered.

CHAPTER XXXI

KNOW that for the human mind there are certain objects of perception which are within the scope of its nature and capacity; on the other hand, there are, amongst things which actually exist, certain objects which the mind can in no way and by no means grasp: the gates of perception are dosed against it. Further, there are things of which the mind understands one part, but remains ignorant of the other; and when man is able to comprehend certain things, it does not follow that he must be able to comprehend everything. This also applies to the senses: they are able to perceive things, but not at every distance: and all other power; of the body are limited in a similar way. A man can, e.g., carry two kikkar, but he cannot carry ten kikkar. How individuals of the same species surpass each other in these sensations and in

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other bodily faculties is universally known, but there is a limit to them, and their power cannot extend to every distance or to every degree.

All this is applicable to the intellectual faculties of man. There is a considerable difference between one person and another as regards these faculties, as is well known to philosophers. While one man can discover a certain thing by himself, another is never able to understand it, even if taught by means of all possible expressions and metaphors, and during a long period; his mind can in no way grasp it, his capacity is insufficient for it. This distinction is not unlimited. A boundary is undoubtedly set to the human mind which it cannot pass. There are things (beyond

that boundary) which are acknowledged to be inaccessible to human understanding, and man does not show any desire to comprehend them, being aware that such knowledge is impossible, and that there are no means of overcoming the difficulty: e.g., we do not know the number of stars in heaven, whether the number is even or odd; we do not know the number of animals, minerals, or plants, and the like. There are other things, however, which man very much desires to know, and strenuous efforts to examine and to investigate them have been made by thinkers of all classes, and at all times. They differ and disagree, and constantly raise new doubts with regard to them, because their minds are bent on comprehending such things, that is to say, they are moved by desire

and every one of them believes that he has discovered the way leading to a true knowledge of the thing, although human reason is entirely unable to demonstrate the fact by convincing evidence.- For a proposition which can be proved by evidence is not subject to dispute, denial, or rejection: none but the ignorant would contradict it, and such contradiction is called "denial of a demonstrated proof." Thus you find men who deny the spherical form of the earth, or the circular form of the line in which the stars move, and the like: such men are not considered in this treatise. This confusion prevails mostly in metaphysical subjects, less in problems relating to physics, and is entirely absent from the exact sciences. Alexander Aphrodisius said that there are three causes which prevent men from discovering the exact truth: first, arrogance and vainglory; secondly, the subtlety, depth, and difficulty of any subject which is being examined; thirdly, ignorance and want of capacity to comprehend what might be comprehended. These causes are enumerated by Alexander. At the present time there is a fourth cause not mentioned by him, because it did not then prevail, namely, habit and training. We naturally like what we have been accustomed to, and are attracted towards it. This may be observed amongst villagers; though they rarely enjoy the benefit of a douche or bath, and have few enjoyments, and pass a life of privation, they dislike town life and do not desire its pleasures, preferring the inferior things to which they are accustomed, to the better things to which they are strangers; it would give them no satisfaction to live in palaces, to be clothed in silk, and to indulge in baths, ointments, and perfumes.

The same is the case with those opinions of man to which he has been accustomed from his youth; he likes them, defends them, and shuns the opposite views. This is likewise one of the causes which prevent men from finding truth, and which make them cling to their habitual opinions. Such is, e.g., the case with the vulgar notions with respect to the corporeality of God, and many other metaphysical questions, as we shall explain. It is the

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result of long familiarity with passages of the Bible, which they are accustomed to respect and to receive as true, and the literal sense of which implies the corporeality of God and other false notions; in truth, however, these words were employed as figures and metaphors for reasons to be mentioned below. Do not imagine that what we have said of the insufficiency of our

understanding and of its limited extent is an assertion founded only on the Bible: for philosophers likewise assert the same, and perfectly understand it, without having regard to any religion or opinion. It is a fact which is only doubted by those who ignore things fully proved. This chapter is intended as an introduction to the next.

CHAPTER XXXII

You must consider, when reading this treatise, that mental perception, because connected with matter, is subject to conditions similar to those to which physical perception is subject. That is to say, if your eye looks around, you can perceive all that is within the range of your vision: if, however, you overstrain your eye, exerting it too much by attempting to see an object which is too distant for your eye, or to examine writings or engravings too small for your sight, and forcing it to obtain a correct perception of them, you will not only weaken your sight with regard to that special object, but also for those things which you otherwise are able to perceive: your eye will have become too weak to perceive what you were able to see before you exerted yourself and exceeded the limits of your vision.

The same is the case with the speculative faculties of one who devotes himself to the study of any science. If a person studies too much and exhausts his reflective powers, he will be confused, and will not be able to apprehend even that which had been within the power of his apprehension. For the powers of the body are all alike in this respect.

The mental perceptions are not exempt from a similar condition. If you admit the doubt, and do not persuade yourself to believe that there is a proof for things which cannot be demonstrated, or to try at once to reject and positively to deny an assertion the opposite of which has never been proved, or attempt to perceive things which are beyond your perception, then you have attained the highest degree of human perfection, then you are like R. Akibha, who "in peace entered [the study of these theological problems], and came out in peace." If, on the other hand, you attempt to exceed the limit of your intellectual power, or at once to reject things as impossible which have never been proved to be impossible, or which are in fact possible, though their possibility be very remote, then you will be like Elisha Aḥer; you will not only fail to become perfect, but you will become exceedingly imperfect. Ideas founded on mere imagination will prevail over you, you will incline toward defects, and toward base and degraded habits, on account of the confusion which troubles the mind, and of the dimness of its light, just as weakness of sight causes invalids to see many kinds of unreal images, especially when they have looked for a long time at dazzling or at very minute objects.

Respecting this it has been said, "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it" (Prov. xxv. 16). Our Sages also applied this verse to Elisha Aḥer.

How excellent is this simile! In comparing knowledge to food (as we observed in chap. xxx.), the author of Proverbs mentions the sweetest food, namely, honey, which has the further property of irritating the stomach, and of causing sickness. He thus fully describes the nature of knowledge. Though great, excellent, noble and perfect, it is injurious if not kept within bounds or not guarded properly; it is like honey which gives nourishment and is pleasant, when eaten in moderation, but is totally thrown away when eaten immoderately. Therefore, it is not said "lest thou be filled and loathe it," but "lest thou vomit it." The same idea is expressed in the words, "It is not good to eat much honey" (Prov. xxv. 27); and in the words, "Neither make thyself over-wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" (Eccles. vii. 16); comp. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God" (*ibid.* v. 1). The same subject is alluded to in the words of David, "Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me" (Ps. cxxxix. 2), and in the sayings of our Sages: "Do not inquire into things which are too difficult for thee, do not search what is hidden from thee: study what you are allowed to study, and do not occupy thyself with mysteries." They meant to say, Let thy mind only attempt things which are within human perception; for the study of things which lie beyond man's comprehension is extremely injurious, as has been already stated. This lesson is also contained in the Talmudical passage, which begins, "He who considers four things," etc., and concludes, "He who does not regard the honour of his Creator"; here also is given the advice which we have already mentioned, viz., that man should not rashly engage in speculation with false conceptions, and when he is in doubt about anything, or unable to find a proof for the object of his inquiry, he must not at once abandon, reject and deny it; he must modestly keep back, and from regard to the honour of his Creator, hesitate [from uttering an opinion] and pause. This has already been explained.

It was not the object of the Prophets and our Sages in these utterances to close the gate of investigation entirely, and to prevent the mind from comprehending what is within its reach, as is imagined by simple and idle people, whom it suits better to put forth their ignorance and incapacity as wisdom and perfection, and to regard the distinction and wisdom of others as irreligion and imperfection, thus taking darkness for light and light for darkness. The whole object of the Prophets and the Sages was to declare that a limit is set to human reason where it must halt. Do not criticise the words used in this chapter and in others in reference to the mind, for we only intended to give some idea of the subject in view, not to describe the essence of the intellect: for other chapters have been dedicated to this subject.

CHAPTER XXXIII

You must know that it is very injurious to begin with this branch of philosophy, viz., Metaphysics: or to explain [at first] the sense of the similes occurring in prophecies, and interpret the metaphors which are employed in historical accounts and which abound in the writings of the Prophets. On the contrary, it is necessary to initiate the young and to instruct the less intelligent according to their comprehension: those who

appear to be talented and to have capacity for the higher method of study, i.e., that based on proof and on true logical argument, should be gradually advanced towards perfection, either by tuition or by self-instruction. He, however, who begins with Metaphysics, will not only become confused in matters of religion, but will fall into complete infidelity. I compare such a person to an infant fed with wheaten bread, meat and wine; it will undoubtedly die, not because such food is naturally unfit for the human body, but because of the weakness of the child, who is unable to digest the food, and cannot derive benefit from it. The same is the case with the true principles of science. They were presented in enigmas, and in riddles, and taught by an wise men in the most mysterious way that could be devised, not because they contain some secret evil, or are contrary to the fundamental principles of the Law (as fools think who are only philosophers in their own eyes), but because of the incapacity of man to comprehend them at the beginning of his studies: only slight allusions have been made to them to serve for the guidance of those who are capable of understanding them. These sciences were, therefore, called Mysteries (*sodoth*), and Secrets of the Law (*sitre torah*), as we shall explain.

This also is the reason why "the Torah speaks the language of man," as we have explained, for it is the object of the Torah to serve as a guide for the instruction of the young, of women, and of the common people; and as all of them are incapable to comprehend the true sense of the words, tradition was considered sufficient to convey all truths which were to be established; and as regards ideals, only such remarks were made as would lead towards a knowledge of their existence, though not to a comprehension of their true essence. When a man attains to perfection, and arrives at a knowledge of the "Secrets of the Law," either through the assistance of a teacher or by self-instruction, being led by the understanding of one part to the study of the other, he will belong to those who faithfully believe in the true principles, either because of conclusive proof, where proof is possible, or by forcible arguments, where argument is admissible; he will have a true notion of those things which he previously received in similes and metaphors, and he will fully understand their sense. We have frequently mentioned in this treatise the principle of our Sages "not to discuss the *Ma'aseh Mercabah* even in the presence of one pupil, except he be wise and intelligent; and then only the headings of the chapters are to be given to him." We must, therefore, begin with teaching these subjects according to the capacity of the pupil, and on two conditions, first, that he be wise, i.e., that he should have successfully gone through the preliminary studies, and secondly that he be intelligent, talented, clear-headed, and of quick perception, that is, "have a mind of his own" (*mebin midda'ato*), as our Sages termed it.

I will now proceed to explain the reasons why we should not instruct the multitude in pure metaphysics, or begin with describing to them the true essence of things, or with showing them that a thing must be as it is, and cannot be otherwise. This will form the subject of the next chapter; and I proceed to say

CHAPTER XXXIV

THERE are five reasons why instruction should not begin with Metaphysics,

but should at first be restricted to pointing out what is fitted for notice and what may be made manifest to the multitude.

First Reason--The subject itself is difficult, subtle and profound, "Far off and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" (Eccles. vii. 24). The following words of Job may be applied to it: "Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?" (Job xxviii. 20).

Instruction should not begin with abstruse and difficult subjects. In one of the similes contained in the Bible, wisdom is compared to water, and amongst other interpretations given by our Sages of this simile, occurs the following: He who can swim may bring up pearls from the depth of the sea, he who is unable to swim will be drowned, therefore only such persons as have had proper instruction should expose themselves to the risk.

Second Reason--The intelligence of man is at first insufficient; for he is not endowed with perfection at the beginning, but at first possesses perfection only *in potentiâ*, not in fact. Thus it is said, "And man is born a wild ass" (Job xi. 12). If a man possesses a certain faculty *in potentiâ*, it does not follow that it must become in him a reality. He may possibly remain deficient either on account of some obstacle, or from want of training in practices which would turn the possibility into a reality. Thus it is distinctly stated in the Bible, "Not many are wise" (*ib.*, xxxii. 9); also our Sages say, "I noticed how few were those who attained to a higher degree of perfection" (B. T. Succah 45a). There are many things which obstruct the path to perfection, and which keep man away from it. Where can he find sufficient preparation and leisure to learn all that is necessary in order to develop that perfection which he has *in potentiâ*?

Third Reason.--The preparatory studies are of long duration, and man, in his natural desire to reach the goal, finds them frequently too wearisome, and does not wish to be troubled by them. Be convinced that, if man were able to reach the end without preparatory studies, such studies would not be preparatory but tiresome and utterly superfluous. Suppose you awaken any person, even the most simple, as if from sleep, and you say to him, Do you not desire to know what the heavens are, what is their number and their form; what beings are contained in them; what the angels are; how the creation of the whole world took place; what is its purpose, and what is the relation of its various parts to each other; what is the nature of the soul; how it enters the body; whether it has an independent existence, and if so, how it can exist independently of the body; by what means and to what purpose, and similar problems. He would undoubtedly say "Yes," and show a natural desire for the true knowledge of these things; but he will wish to satisfy that desire and to attain to that knowledge by listening to a few words from you. Ask him to interrupt his usual pursuits for a week, till he learn all this, he would not do it, and would be satisfied and contented with imaginary and misleading notions; he would refuse to believe that there is anything which requires preparatory studies and persevering research.

You, however, know how all these subjects are connected together; for there is nothing else in existence but God and His works, the latter including all existing things besides Him: we can only obtain a knowledge of Him through His works; His works give evidence of His existence, and show what must be assumed concerning Him, that is to say, what must be attributed to Him

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either affirmatively or negatively. It is thus necessary to examine all things according to their essence, to infer from every species such true and well established propositions as may assist us in the solution of metaphysical problems. Again, many propositions based on the nature of numbers and the properties of geometrical figures, are useful in examining things which must be negated in reference to God, and these negations will lead us to further inferences. You will certainly not doubt the necessity of studying astronomy and physics, if you are desirous of comprehending the relation between the world and Providence as it is in reality, and not according to imagination. There are also many subjects of speculation, which, though not preparing the way for metaphysics, help to train the reasoning power, enabling it to understand the nature of a proof, and to test truth by characteristics essential to it. They remove the confusion arising in the minds of most thinkers, who confound accidental with essential properties, and likewise the wrong opinions resulting therefrom. We may add, that although they do not form the basis for metaphysical research, they assist in forming a correct notion of these things, and are certainly useful in many other things connected with that discipline.

Consequently he who wishes to attain to human perfection, must therefore first study Logic, next the various branches of Mathematics in their proper order, then Physics, and lastly Metaphysics. We find that many who have advanced to a certain point in the study of these disciplines become weary, and stop: that others, who are endowed with sufficient capacity, are interrupted in their studies by death, which surprises them while still engaged with the preliminary course. Now, if no knowledge whatever had been given, to us by means of tradition, and if we had not been brought to the belief in a thing through the medium of similes, we would have been bound to form a perfect notion of things with their essential characteristics, and to believe only what we could prove: a goal which could only be attained by long preparation. In such a case most people would die, without having known whether there was a God or not, much less that certain things must be asserted about Him, and other things denied as defects. From such a fate not even "one of a city or two of a family" (Jer. iii. 14) would have escaped.

As regards the privileged few, "the remnant whom the Lord calls" (Joel iii. 5), they only attain the perfection at which they aim after due preparatory labour. The necessity of such a preparation and the need of such a training for the acquisition of real knowledge, has been plainly stated by King Solomon in the following words: "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: and it is profitable to prepare for wisdom" (Eccles. x. 10); "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end" (Prov. xix. 20).

There is still another urgent reason why the preliminary disciplines should be studied and understood. During the study many doubts present themselves, and the difficulties, or the objections raised against certain assertions, are soon understood, just as the demolition of a building is easier than its erection: while, on the other hand, it is impossible to prove an assertion, or to remove any doubts, without having recourse to several propositions taken from these preliminary studies. He who approaches metaphysical problems without proper preparation is like a person who journeys towards a certain place, and

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on the road falls into a deep pit, out of which he cannot rise, and he must perish there: if he had not gone forth, but had remained at home, it would have been better for him.

Solomon has expatiated in the book of Proverbs on sluggards and their indolence, by which he figuratively refers to indolence in the search after wisdom. He thus speaks of a man who desires to know the final results, but does not exert himself to understand the preliminary disciplines which lead to them, doing nothing else but desire. "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth, and spareth not" (Prov. xxi. 25, 26); that is to say, if the desire killeth the slothful, it is because he neglects to seek the thing which might satisfy his desire, he does nothing but desire, and hopes to obtain a thing without using the means to reach it. It would be better for him were he without that desire. Observe how the end of the simile throws light on its beginning. It concludes with the words "but the righteous giveth, and spareth not"; the antithesis of "righteous" and "slothful" can only be justified on the basis of our interpretation. Solomon thus indicates that only such a man is righteous who gives to everything its due portion; that is to say, who gives to the study of a thing the whole time required for it, and does not devote any part of that time to another purpose. The passage may therefore be paraphrased thus: "And the righteous man devotes his ways to wisdom, and does not withhold any of them." Comp. "Give not thy strength unto women" (Prov. xxxi. 3).

The majority of scholars, that is to say, the most famous in science, are afflicted with this failing, viz., that of hurrying at once to the final results, and of speaking about them, without treating of the preliminary disciplines. Led by folly or ambition to disregard those preparatory studies, for the attainment of which they are either incapable or too idle, some scholars endeavour to prove that these are injurious or superfluous. On reflection the truth will become obvious.

The Fourth Reason is taken from the physical constitution of man. It has been proved that moral conduct is a preparation for intellectual progress, and that only a man whose character is pure, calm and steadfast, can attain to intellectual perfection: that is, acquire correct conceptions. Many men are naturally so constituted that all perfection is impossible: e.g., he whose heart is very warm and is himself very powerful, is sure to be passionate, though he tries to counteract that disposition by training; he whose testicles are warm, humid, and vigorous, and the organs

connected therewith are surcharged, will not easily refrain from sin, even if he makes great efforts to restrain himself. You also find persons of great levity and rashness, whose excited manners and wild gestures prove that their constitution is in disorder, and their temperament so bad that it cannot be cured. Such persons can never attain to perfection: it is utterly useless to occupy oneself with them on such a subject [as Metaphysics]. For this science is, as you know, different from the science of Medicine and of Geometry, and, from the reason already mentioned, it is not every person who is capable of approaching it. It is impossible for a man to study it successfully without moral preparation; he must acquire the highest degree of uprightness and integrity, "for the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but His secret is

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with the righteous" (Prov. iii. 32). Therefore it was considered inadvisable to teach it to young men; nay, it is impossible for them to comprehend it, on account of the heat of their blood and the flame of youth, which confuses their minds: that heat, which causes all the disorder, must first disappear; they must have become moderate and settled, humble in their hearts, and subdued in their temperament; only then will they be able to arrive at the highest degree of the perception of God, i.e., the study of Metaphysics, which is called *Ma'aseh Mercabah* Comp. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart" (Ps. xxxiv. 18) "I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit: to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. lvii. 15).

Therefore the rule, "the headings of the sections may be confided to him," is further restricted in the Talmud, in the following way: The headings of the sections must only be handed down to an Ab-bet-din (President of the Court), whose heart is full of care, i.e., in whom wisdom is united with humility, meekness, and a great dread of sin. It is further stated there: "The secrets of the Law can only be communicated to a counsellor, scholar, and good orator." These qualities can only be acquired if the physical constitution of the student favour their development. You certainly know that some persons, though exceedingly able, are very weak in giving counsel, while others are ready with proper counsel and good advice in social and political matters. A person so endowed is called "counsellor" and may be unable to comprehend purely abstract notions, even such as are similar to common sense. He is unacquainted with them, and has no talent whatever for them; we apply to him the words: "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" (Prov. xvii. 16). Others are intelligent and naturally clear-sighted, able to convey complicated ideas in concise and well chosen language,--such a person is called "a good orator," but he has not been engaged in the pursuit of science, or has not acquired any knowledge of it. Those who have actually acquired a knowledge of the sciences, are called "wise in arts" (or "scholars"); the Hebrew term for "wise in arts"--*hakam ḥarashim*--has been explained in the Talmud as implying, that when such a man speaks, all become, as it were, speechless.

Now, consider how, in the writings of the Rabbis, the admission of a person into discourses on metaphysics is made dependent on distinction in social qualities, and study of philosophy, as well as on the possession of clear-sightedness, intelligence, eloquence, and ability to communicate things by slight allusions. If a person satisfies these requirements, the secrets of the Law are confided to him. In the same place we also read the following passage:--R. Jochanan said to R. Elasar, "Come, I will teach you *Ma'aseh Mercabah*." The reply was, "I am not yet old," or in other words, I have not yet become old, I still perceive in myself the hot blood and the rashness of youth. You learn from this that, in addition to the above-named good qualities, a certain age is also required. How, then, could any person speak on these metaphysical themes in the presence of ordinary people, of children, and of women!

Fifth Reason.--Man is disturbed in his intellectual occupation by the necessity of looking after the material wants of the body, especially if the

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necessity of providing for wife and children be superadded: much more so if he seeks superfluities in addition to his ordinary wants, for by custom and bad habits these become a powerful motive. Even the perfect man to whom we have referred, if too busy with these necessary things, much more so if busy with unnecessary things, and filled with a great desire for them--must weaken or altogether lose his desire for study, to which he will not apply himself with interruption, lassitude, and want of attention. He will not attain to that for which he is fitted by his abilities, or he will acquire imperfect knowledge, a confused mass of true and false ideas. For these reasons it was proper that the study of Metaphysics should have been exclusively cultivated by privileged persons, and not entrusted to the common people. It is not for the beginner, and he should abstain from it, as the little child has to abstain from taking solid food and from carrying heavy weights.

CHAPTER XXXV

Do not think that what we have laid down in the preceding chapters on the importance, obscurity, and difficulty of the subject, and its unsuitableness for communication to ordinary persons, includes the doctrine of God's incorporeality and His exemption from all affections (πάθη). This is not the case. For in the same way as all people must be informed, and even children must be trained in the belief that God is One, and that none besides Him is to be worshipped, so must all be taught by simple authority that God is incorporeal; that there is no similarity in any way whatsoever between Him and His creatures: that His existence is not like the existence of His creatures, His life not like that of any living being, His wisdom not like the wisdom of the wisest of men; and that the difference between Him and His creatures is not merely quantitative, but absolute [as between two individuals of two different classes]: I mean to say that all must understand that our wisdom and His, or our power and His do not differ quantitatively or qualitatively, or in a similar manner; for two things, of which the one is strong and the other

weak, are necessarily similar, belong to the same class, and can be included in one definition. The same is the case with an other comparisons: they can only be made between two things belonging to the same class, as has been shown in works on Natural Science. Anything predicated of God is totally different from our attributes; no definition can comprehend both; therefore His existence and that of any other being totally differ from each other, and the term existence is applied to both homonymously, as I shall explain.

This suffices for the guidance of children and of ordinary persons who must believe that there is a Being existing, perfect, incorporeal, not inherent in a body as a force in it-God, who is above all kinds of deficiency, above A affections. But the question concerning the attributes of God, their inadmissibility, and the meaning of those attributes which are ascribed to Him; concerning the Creation, His Providence, in providing for everything; concerning His will, His perception, His knowledge of everything; concerning prophecy and its various degrees: concerning the meaning of His names which imply the idea of unity, though they are more than one; all these things are very difficult problems, the true "Secrets of the Law" the

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[paragraph continues] "secrets" mentioned so frequently in the books of the Prophets, and in the words of our Teachers, the subjects of which we should only mention the headings of the chapters, as we have already stated, and only in the presence of a person satisfying the above-named conditions.

That God is incorporeal, that He cannot be compared with His creatures, that He is not subject to external influence; these are things which must be explained to every one according to his capacity, and they must be taught by way of tradition to children and women, to the stupid and ignorant, as they are taught that God is One, that He is eternal, and that He alone is to be worshipped. Without incorporeality there is no unity, for a corporeal thing is in the first case not simple, but composed of matter and form which are two separate things by definition, and secondly, as it has extension it is also divisible. When persons have received this doctrine, and have been trained in this belief, and are in consequence at a loss to reconcile it with the writings of the Prophets, the meaning of the latter must be made clear and explained to them by pointing out the homonymity and the figurative application of certain terms discussed in this part of the work. Their belief in the unity of God and in the words of the Prophets will then be a true and perfect belief.

Those who are not sufficiently intelligent to comprehend the true interpretation of these passages in the Bible, or to understand that the same term admits of two different interpretations, may simply be told that the scriptural passage is clearly understood by the wise, but that they should content themselves with knowing that God is incorporeal, that He is never subject to external influence, as passivity implies a change, while God is entirely free from all change, that He cannot be compared to anything besides Himself, that no definition includes Him together with

any other being, that the words of the Prophets are true, and that difficulties met with may be explained on this principle. This may suffice for that class of persons, and it is not proper to leave them in the belief that God is corporeal, or that He has any of the properties of material objects, just as there is no need to leave them in the belief that God does not exist, that there are more Gods than one, or that any other being may be worshipped.

CHAPTER XXXVI

I SHALL explain to you, when speaking on the attributes of God, in what sense we can say that a particular thing pleases Him, or excites His anger and His wrath, and in reference to certain persons that God was pleased with them, was angry with them, or was in wrath against them. This is not the subject of the present chapter; I intend to explain in it what I am now going to say. You must know, that in examining the Law and the books of the Prophets, you will not find the expressions "burning anger," "provocation," or "jealousy" applied to God except in reference to idolatry; and that none but the idolater called "enemy," "adversary," or "hater of the Lord." Comp. "And ye serve other gods, . . . and then the Lord's wrath will be kindled against you" (Deut. xi. 16, 17); "Lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee." etc. (*ib.* vi. 15); "To provoke him to anger through the work of your hands" (*ib.* xxxi. 29); "They have moved

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me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities" (*ib.* xxxii. 21); "For the Lord thy God is a jealous God" (*ib.* vi. 15); "Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?" (Jer. viii. 19); "Because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters" (Deut. xxxii. 19); "For a fire is kindled in mine anger" (*ib.* 22); "The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies" (Nah. i. 2); "And repayeth them that hate Him" (Deut. vii. 10); "Until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him" (Num. xxxii. 2 1); "Which the Lord thy God hateth" (Deut. xvi. 22); "For every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods" (*ib.* xii. 31). Instances like these are innumerable; and if you examine all the examples met with in the holy writings, you will find that they confirm our view.

The Prophets in their writings laid special stress on this, because it concerns errors in reference to God, i.e., it concerns idolatry. For if any one believes that, e.g., Zaid is standing, while in fact he is sitting, he does not deviate from truth so much as one who believes that fire is under the air, or that water is under the earth, or that the earth is a plane, or things similar to these. The latter does not deviate so much from truth as one who believes that the sun consists of fire, or that the heavens form a hemisphere, and similar things: in the third instance the deviation from truth is less than the deviation of a man who believes that angels eat and drink, and the like. The latter again deviates less from truth than one who believes that something besides God is to be worshipped; for ignorance and error concerning a great thing, i.e., a thing which has a high position in the universe, are of greater importance than those which refer to a thing which

occupies a lower place:--by "error" I mean the belief that a thing is different from what it really is: by "ignorance," the want of knowledge respecting things the knowledge of which can be obtained.

If a person does not know the measure of the cone, or the sphericity of the sun, it is not so important as not to know whether God exists, or whether the world exists without a God; and if a man assumes that the cone is half (of the cylinder), or that the sun is a circle, it is not so injurious as to believe that God is more than One. You must know that idolaters when worshipping idols do not believe that there is no God besides them: and no idolater ever did assume that any image made of metal, stone, or wood has created the heavens and the earth, and still governs them. Idolatry is founded on the idea that a particular form represents the agent between God and His creatures. This is plainly said in passages like the following: "Who would not fear thee, O king of nations?" (Jer. x. 7); "And in every place incense is offered unto my name" (Mal. i. 11); by "my name" allusion is made to the Being which is called by them [i.e., the idolaters] "the First Cause." We have already explained this in our larger work (*Mishneh Torah*, I. On Idolatry, chap. i.), and none of our co-religionists can doubt it.

The infidels, however, though believing in the existence of the Creator, attack the exclusive prerogative of God, namely, the service and worship which was commanded, in order that the belief of the people in His existence should be firmly established, in the words, "And you shall serve the Lord," etc. (Exod. xxiii. 25). By transferring that prerogative to other beings, they

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cause the people, who only notice the rites, without comprehending their meaning or the true character of the being which is worshipped, to renounce their belief in the existence of God. They were therefore punished with death: comp. "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deut. xx. 16). The object of this commandment, as is distinctly stated, is to extirpate that false opinion, in order that other men should not be corrupted by it any more: in the words of the Bible "that they teach you not," etc. (*ib.* is). They are called "enemies," "foes," "adversaries"; by worshipping idols they are said to provoke God to jealousy, anger, and wrath. How great, then, must be the offence of him who has a wrong opinion of God Himself, and believes Him to be different from what He truly is, i.e., assumes that He does not exist, that He consists of two elements, that He is corporeal, that He is subject to external influence, or ascribes to Him any defect whatever. Such a person is undoubtedly worse than he who worships idols in the belief that they, as agents, can do good or evil.

Therefore bear in mind that by the belief in the corporeality or in anything connected with corporeality, you would provoke God to jealousy and wrath, kindle His fire and anger, become His foe, His enemy, and His adversary in a higher degree than by the worship of idols. If you think that there is an excuse for those who believe in the corporeality of God on the ground of their training, their ignorance or their defective comprehension, you must make the same

concession to the worshippers of idols: their worship is due to ignorance, or to early training, "they continue in the custom of their fathers." (TB. Hullin, 13a) You will perhaps say that the literal interpretation of the Bible causes men to fall into that doubt, but you must know that idolaters were likewise brought to their belief by false imaginations and ideas. There is no excuse whatever for those who, being unable to think for themselves, do not accept [the doctrine of the incorporeality of God] from the true philosophers. I do not consider those men as infidels who are unable to prove the incorporeality, but I hold those to be so Who do not believe it, especially when they see that Onkelos and Jonathan avoid [in reference to God] expressions implying corporeality as much as possible. This is all I intended to say in this chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE Hebrew term *panim* (face) is homonymous: most of its various meanings have a figurative character. It denotes in the first place the face of a living being: comp. "And all *faces* are turned into paleness" (Jer. xxx. 6); "Wherefore are your *faces* so sad (Gen. xl. 7). In this sense the term occurs frequently.

The next meaning of the word is "anger"; comp. "And her anger (*paneha*) was gone" (1 Sam. i. 18). Accordingly, the term is frequently used in reference to God in the sense of anger and wrath; comp. "The anger (*pene*) of the Lord hath divided them" (Lam. iv. 16); "The anger (*pene*) of the Lord is against them that do evil" (Ps. xxxiv. 17); "Mine anger (*panai*) shall go and I will give thee rest" (Exod. xxxiii. 14); "Then will I set mine anger" (*panai*) (Lev. xx. 3); there are many other instances.

Another meaning of the word is "the presence and existence of a person";

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comp. "He died in the presence (*pene*) [i.e., in the lifetime] of all his brethren" (Gen. xxv. 18); "And in the presence (*pene*) of all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. x. 3); "He will surely curse thee in thy very presence" (*paneka*) (Job i. 11). In the same sense the word is used in the following passage, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face," i.e., both being present, without any intervening medium between them. Comp. "Come, let us look one another in the face" (2 Kings xiv. 8); and also "The Lord talked with you face to face" (Deut. v. 4); instead of which we read more plainly in another place, "Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude: only ye heard a voice" (*ib.* iv. 12). The hearing of the voice without seeing any similitude is termed "face to face." Similarly do the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face" correspond to "There he heard the voice of one speaking unto him" (Num. vii. 89), in the description of God's speaking to Moses. Thus it will be clear to you that the perception of the Divine voice without the intervention of an angel is expressed by "face to face." In the same sense the word *panim* must be understood in "And my face (*panai*) shall not be seen" (Exod. xxxiii. 23); i.e., my true existence, as it is, cannot be comprehended.

The word *panim* is also used in Hebrew as an adverb of place, in the sense of "before," or "between the hands." In this sense it is frequently employed in reference to God: so also in the passage, "And my face (*panai*) shall not be seen," according to Onkelos, who renders it, "And those before me shall not be seen." He finds here an allusion to the fact, that there are also higher created beings of such superiority that their true nature cannot be perceived by man: viz., the ideals, separate intellects, which in their relation to God are described as being constantly before Him, or between His hands, i.e., as enjoying uninterruptedly the closest attention of Divine Providence. He, i.e., Onkelos, considers that the things which are described as completely perceptible are those beings which, as regards existence, are inferior to the ideals, viz., substance and form: in reference to which we are told, "And thou shalt see that which is behind me" (*ibid.*), i.e., beings, from which, as it were, I turn away, and which I leave behind me. This figure is to represent the utter remoteness of such beings from the Deity. You shall later on (chap. liv.) hear my explanation of what Moses, our teacher, asked for.

The word is also used as an adverb of time, meaning "before." Comp. In former time (*le-phanim*) in Israel" (Ruth iv. 7); "Of old (*le-phanim*) hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth" (Ps. Cii. 25).

Another signification of the word is "attention and regard." Comp. "Thou shalt not have regard (*pene*) to the poor (Lev. xx. 15); "And a person receiving attention (*panim*)" (Isa. iii. 3); Who does not show regard (*panim*)," etc. (Deut. x. 17, etc.). The word *panim* (face) has a similar signification in the blessing, "The Lord turn his face to thee" (i.e., The Lord let his providence accompany thee), "and give thee peace."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE Hebrew term *aḥor* is a homonym. It is a noun, signifying "back." Comp. "Behind (*aḥare*) the tabernacle" (Exod. xxvi. 12); "The spear came out behind him (*aḥarav*)" (2 Sam. ii. 23).

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It is next used in reference to time, signifying "after"; "neither after him (*aḥarav*) arose there any like him" (2 Kings xxiii. 25) "After (*aḥar*) these things" (Gen. xv. 1). In this sense the word occurs frequently.

The term includes also the idea of following a thing and of conforming with the moral principles of some other being. Comp. "Ye shall walk after (*aḥare*) the Lord, your God" (Deut. xiii. 5); "They shall walk after (*aḥare*) the Lord" (Hos. xi. 10), i.e., follow His will, walk in the way of His actions, and imitate His virtues: "He walked after (*aḥare*) the commandment" (*ib.* v.11). In this sense the word occurs in Exodus xxxiii. 20, "And thou shalt see my back" (*aḥorai*); thou shalt perceive that which follows me, is similar to me, and is the result of my will, i.e., all things created by me, as will be explained in the course of this treatise.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE Hebrew *leb* (heart) is a homonymous noun, signifying that organ which is the source of life to all beings possessing a heart. Comp. "And thrust them through the heart of Absalom" (1 Sam. xviii. 14).

This organ being in the middle of the body, the word has been figuratively applied to express "the middle part of a thing." Comp. "unto the midst (*leb*) of heaven" (Deut. iv. 11); "the midst (*labbath*) of fire" (Exod. iii. 2).

It further denotes "thought." Comp. "Went not mine heart with thee?" (2 Kings v. 26), i.e., I was with thee in my thought when a certain event happened. Similarly must be explained, "And that ye seek not after your own heart" (Num. xv. 39), i.e., after your own thoughts: "Whose heart (i.e., whose thought), turneth away this day" (Deut. xxix. is).

The word further signifies "counsel." Comp. "All the rest of Israel were of one heart (i.e., had one plan) to make David king" (1 Chron. xii. 38); "but fools die for want of heart," i.e., of counsel; "My heart (i.e., my counsel) shall not turn away from this so long as I live" (Job xxvii. 6); for this sentence is preceded by the words, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go"; and then follows, "my heart shall never turn away from this."--As regards the expression *yeheraf*, I think that it may be compared with the same verb in the form *nehrefet*, "a handmaid betrothed (*nehrefet*) to a man" (Lev. xix. 20), where *neherfeth* is similar in meaning to the Arabic *munharifat*, "turning away," and signifies "turning from the state of slavery to that of marriage."

Leb (heart) denotes also "will"; comp. "And I shall give you pastors according to my will (*libbi*)" (Jer. iii. 15), "Is thine heart right as my heart is?" (2 Kings x. 15), i.e., is thy will right as my will is? In this sense the word has been figuratively applied to God. Comp. "That shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my soul" (1 Sam. ii. 35), i.e., according to My will; "And mine eyes and mine heart (i.e., My providence and My will) shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings ix. 3).

The word is also used in the sense of "understanding." Comp. "For vain man will be endowed with a heart" (Job. xi. 12), i.e., will be wise; "A wise man's heart is at his right hand" (Eccles. x. 2), i.e., his understanding is engaged in perfect thoughts, the highest problems. Instances of this kind are numerous. It is in this sense, namely, that of understanding, that the

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word is used whenever figuratively applied to God; but exceptionally it is also used in the sense of "will." It must, in each passage, be explained in accordance with the context. Also, in the following and similar passages, it signifies "understanding"; "Consider it in thine heart" (Deut. iv. 39); "And none considereth in his heart" (Isa. xliv. 19). Thus, also, "Yet the Lord hath not

given you an heart to perceive," is identical in its meaning with "Unto thee it was shown that thou mightest know" (Deut. iv. 35).

As to the passage, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (Ib. vi. 5), I explain "with all thine heart" to mean "with all the powers of thine heart," that is, with all the powers of the body, for they all have their origin in the heart: and the sense of the entire passage is: make the knowledge of God the aim of all thy actions, as we have stated in our Commentary on the Mishnah (Aboth, *Eight Chapters*, v.), and in our Mishneh Torah, yesode hatorah, chap. ii. 2.

CHAPTER XL

Ruah is a homonym, signifying "air," that is, one of the four elements. Comp. "And the air of God moved" (Gen. i. 2).

It denotes also, "wind." Comp. "And the east wind (*ruah*) brought the locusts" (Exod. x. 13); "west wind" (*ruah*) (*ib.* 19). In this sense the word occurs frequently.

Next, it signifies "breath." Comp. "A breath (*ruah*) that passeth away, and does not come again" (Ps. lxxviii. 39); "wherein is the breath (*ruah*) of life" (Gen. vii. 15).

It signifies also that which remains of man after his death, and is not subject to destruction. Comp. "And the spirit (*ruah*) shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7).

Another signification of this word is "the divine inspiration of the prophets whereby they prophesy"--as we shall explain, when speaking on prophecy, as far as it is opportune to discuss this subject in a treatise like this.--Comp. "And I will take of the spirit (*ruah*) which is upon thee, and will put it upon them" (Num. xi. 17); "And it came to pass, when the spirit (*ruah*) rested upon them" (*ib.* 25); "The spirit (*ruah*) of the Lord spake by me" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). The term is frequently used in this sense.

The meaning of "intention," "will," is likewise contained in the word *ruah*. Comp. "A fool uttereth all his spirit" (*ruah*) (Prov. xxix. 11), i.e., his intention and will; "And the spirit (*ruah*) of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof, and I will destroy the counsel thereof" (Isa. xix. 3), i.e., her intentions will be frustrated, and her plans will be obscured; "Who has comprehended the spirit (*ruah*) of the Lord, or who is familiar with his counsel that he may tell us?" (Isa. xl. 13), i.e., Who knows the order fixed by His will, or perceives the system of His Providence in the existing world, that he may tell us? as we shall explain in the chapters in which we shall speak on Providence.

Thus the Hebrew *ruah* when used in reference to God, has generally the fifth signification: sometimes, however, as explained above, the last signification, viz., "will." The meaning of the word in each individual case is therefore to be determined by the context.

CHAPTER XLI

THE Hebrew *nefesh* (soul) is a homonymous noun, signifying the vitality which is common to all living, sentient beings. E.g. "wherein there is a living soul" (*nefesh*) (Gen. i. 30). It denotes also blood," as in "Thou shalt not eat the blood (*nefesh*) with the meat" (Deut. xii. 23). Another signification of the term is "reason," that is, the distinguishing characteristic of man, as in "As the Lord liveth that made us this soul" (Jer. xxxviii. 16). It denotes also the part of man that remains after his death (*nefesh*, soul) comp. "But the soul (*nefesh*) of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life (1 Sam. xxv. 29). Lastly, it denotes "will"; comp. "To bind his princes at his will" (*be-nafsho*) (Ps. cv. 22); "Thou wilt not deliver me unto the will (*be-nefesh*) of my enemies" (Ps. xli. 3); and according to my opinion, it has this meaning also in the following passages, "If it be your will (*nafshekem*) that I should bury my dead" (Gen. xxiii. 8); "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my will (*nafshi*) could not be toward this people" (Jer. xv. 1), that is, I had no pleasure in them, I did not wish to preserve them. When *nefesh* is used in reference to God, it has the meaning "will," as we have already explained with reference to the passage, "That shall do according to that which is in my will (*bi-lebabi*) and in mine intention (*be-nafshi*)" (1 Sam. ii. 35). Similarly we explain the phrase, "And his will (*nafsho*) to trouble Israel ceased" (Judg. x. 16). Jonathan, the son of Uzziel [in the Targum of the Prophets], did not translate this passage, because he understood *nafshi* to have the first signification, and finding, therefore, in these words sensation ascribed to God, he omitted them from his translation. If, however, *nefesh* be here taken in the last signification, the sentence can well be explained. For in the passage which precedes, it is stated that Providence abandoned the Israelites, and left them on the brink of death: then they cried and prayed for help, but in vain. When, however, they had thoroughly repented, when their misery had increased, and their enemy had had power over them, He showed mercy to them, and His will to continue their trouble and misery ceased. Note it well, for it is remarkable. The preposition *ba* in this passage has the force of the preposition *min* ("from" or "of"); and *ba 'amal* is identical with *me 'amal*. Grammarians give many instances of this use of the preposition *ba*: "And that which remaineth of (*ba*) the flesh and of (*ba*) the bread" (Lev. viii. 32); "If there remains but few of (*ba*) the years" (*ib.* xxv. 52); "Of (*ba*) the strangers and of (*ba*) those born in the land" (Exod. xii. 19).

CHAPTER XLII

Hai ("living") signifies a sentient organism (lit. "growing" and "having sensation"), comp. "Every moving thing that liveth" (Gen. ix. 3); it also denotes recovery from a severe illness: "And was recovered (*va-yehi*) of his sickness" (Isa. xxxviii. 9); "In the camp till they recovered" (*hayotam*) (Josh. v. 8); "quick, raw (*hai*) flesh" (Lev. xiii. 10).

Mavet signifies "death" and "severe illness," as in "His heart died (*va-yamot*) within him, and he became as a stone" (1 Sam. xxv. 37), that is, his illness was severe. For this reason it is stated concerning the son of the

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woman of Zarephath, "And his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him" (1 Kings xvii. 17). The simple expression *va-yamoth* would have given the idea that he was very ill, near death, like Nabal when he heard what had taken place.

Some of the Andalusian authors say that his breath was suspended, so that no breathing could be perceived at all, as sometimes an invalid is seized with a fainting fit or an attack of asphyxia, and it cannot be discovered whether he is alive or dead: in this condition the patient may remain a day or two.

The term *hai* has also been employed in reference to the acquisition of wisdom. Comp. "So shall they be life (*hayyim*) unto thy soul" (Prov. iii. 22); "For whoso findeth me findeth life" (*ib.* viii. 35); "For they are life (*hayyim*) to those that find them" (*ib.* iv. 22). Such instances are numerous. In accordance with this metaphor, true principles are called life, and corrupt principles death. Thus the Almighty says, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil" (Deut. xxx. 15), showing that "life" and "good," "death" and "evil," are identical, and then He explains these terms. In the same way I understand His words, "That ye may live" (*ib.* v. 33), in accordance with the traditional interpretation of "That it may be well with thee" [*scil.* in the life to come] (*ib.* xxii. 7). In consequence of the frequent use of this figure in our language our Sages said, "The righteous even in death are called living, while the wicked even in life are called dead." (*Talm. B. Berakkoth*, p. 78). Note this well.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE Hebrew *kanaf* is a homonym; most of its meanings are metaphorical. Its primary signification is "wing of a flying creature," e.g., "Any winged (*kanaf*) fowl that flieth in the air" (Deut. iv. 17).

The term was next applied figuratively to the wings or comers of garments comp. "upon the four corners (*kanfoth*) of thy vesture" (*ib.* xxii. 12).

It was also used to denote the ends of the inhabited part of the earth, and the corners that are most distant from our habitation. Comp. "That it might take hold of the ends (*kanfoth*) of the earth" (Job xxxviii. 13); "From the uttermost part (*kenaf*) of the earth have we heard songs" (Isa. xxiv. 16).

Ibn Ganah (in his Book of Hebrew Roots) says that *kenaf* is used in the sense of "concealing," in analogy with the Arabic *kanafu alshaian*, "I have hidden something," and accordingly explains, Isaiah xxx. 20, "And thy teacher will no longer be hidden or concealed." It is a good explanation,

and I think that *kenaf* has the same meaning in Deuteronomy xxiii. 1, "He shall not take away the cover (*kenaf*) of his father"; also in, "Spread, therefore, thy cover (*kenafeka*) over thine handmaid" (Ruth iii. 9). In this sense, I think, the word is figuratively applied to God and to angels (for angels are not corporeal, according to my opinion, as I shall explain). Ruth ii. 12 must therefore be translated "Under whose protection (*kenafav*) thou art come to trust"; and wherever the word occurs in reference to angels, it means concealment. You have surely noticed the words of Isaiah (Isa. vi. 2), "With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet." Their meaning is this: The cause of his (the angel's) existence is hidden and concealed; this is meant by

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the covering of the face. The things of which he (the angel) is the cause, and which are called "his feet" (as I stated in speaking of the homonym *regel*, are likewise concealed: for the actions of the intelligences are not seen, and their ways are, except after long study, not understood, on account of two reasons--the one of which is contained in their own properties, the other in ourselves: that is to say, because our perception is imperfect and the ideals are difficult to be fully comprehended. As regards the phrase "and with twain he flieth," I shall explain in a special chapter (xlix.) why flight has been attributed to angels.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE Hebrew *'ayin* is a homonym, signifying "fountain"; e.g., "By a fountain (*'en*) of water" (Gen. xvi. 7). It next denotes "eye"; comp. (*'ayin*) "Eye for eye" (Exod. xxi. 24). Another meaning of the word is "providence," as it is said concerning Jeremiah, "Take him and direct thine attention (*eneka*) to him" (Jer. xxxix. 12). In this figurative sense it is to be understood when used in reference to God; e.g., "And my providence and my pleasure shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings ix. 3), as we have already explained (page 140); "The eyes (*'ene*), i.e., the Providence of the Lord thy God, are always upon it" (Deut. xi. 12); "They are the eyes (*'ene*) of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. iv. 10), i.e., His providence is extended over everything that is on earth, as will be explained in the chapters in which we shall treat of Providence. When, however, the word "eye" is connected with the verb "to see," (*raah* or *hazah*) as in "Open thine eyes, and see" (1 Kings xix. 16); "His eyes behold" (Ps. xi. 4), the phrase denotes perception of the mind, not that of the senses: for every sensation is a passive state, as is well known to you, and God is active, never passive, as will be explained by me.

CHAPTER XLV

Shama' is used homonymously. It signifies "to hear," and also "to obey." As regards the first signification, comp. "Neither let it be heard out of thy mouth" (Exod. xxiii. 13); "And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house" (Gen. xlv. 26). Instances of this kind are numerous.

Equally frequent are the instances of this verb being used in the sense of "to obey": "And they hearkened (*shama'*) not unto Moses" (Exod. vi. 9). "If they obey (*yishme'u*) and serve him (Job

xxxvi. 11); "Shall we then hearken (*nishma* ') unto you" (Neh. xiii. 27); "Whosoever will not hearken (*yishma* ') unto thy words" (Josh. i. 18).

The verb also signifies "to know" ("to understand"), comp. "A nation whose tongue, i.e., its language, thou shalt not understand" (*tishma* ') (Deut. xxviii. 49). The verb *shama* ', used in reference to God, must be taken in the sense of perceiving, which is part of the third signification, whenever, according to the literal interpretation of the passage, it appears to have the first meaning: comp. "And the Lord heard it" (Num. xi. 1); "For that He heareth your murmurings" (Exod. xvi. 7). In all such passages mental perception is meant. When, however, according to the literal interpretation

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the verb appears to have the second signification, it implies that God responded to the prayer of man and fulfilled his wish, or did not respond and did not fulfil his wish: "I will surely hear his cry" (Exod. xxii. 23); "I will hear, for I am gracious" (*ib.* 27); "Bow down thine ear, and hear" (2 Kings xix. 16); "But the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you" (Deut. i. 45); "Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear" (Isa. i. 15); "For I will not hear thee" (Jer. vii. 16). There are many instances in which *shama* ' has this sense.

Remarks will now be presented to you on these metaphors and similes, which will quench your thirst, and explain to you all their meanings without leaving a doubt.

CHAPTER XLVI

WE have already stated, in one of the chapters of this treatise, that there is a great difference between bringing to view the existence of a thing and demonstrating its true essence. We can lead others to notice the existence of an object by pointing to its accidents, actions, or even most remote relations to other objects: e.g., if you wish to describe the king of a country to one of his subjects who does not know him, you can give a description and an account of his existence in many ways. You will either say to him, the tall man with a fair complexion and grey hair is the king, thus describing him by his accidents; or you will say, the king is the person round whom are seen a great multitude of men on horse and on foot, and soldiers with drawn swords, over whose head banners are waving, and before whom trumpets are sounded; or it is the person living in the palace in a particular region of a certain country: or it is the person who ordered the building of that wall, or the construction of that bridge; or by some other similar acts and things relating to him. His existence can be demonstrated in a still more indirect way, e.g., if you are asked whether this land has a king, you will undoubtedly answer in the affirmative. "What proof have you?" "The fact that this banker here, a weak and little person, stands before this large mass of gold pieces, and that poor man, tall and strong, who stands before him asking in vain for alms of the weight of a carob-grain, is rebuked and is compelled to go away by the mere force of words: for had he not feared the king, he would, without hesitation, have killed the banker, or pushed him away and taken as much of the money as he could." Consequently, this is a proof

that this country has a ruler and his existence is proved by the well-regulated affairs of the country, on account of which the king is respected and the punishments decreed by him are feared. In this whole example nothing is mentioned that indicated his characteristics, and his essential properties, by virtue of which he is king. The same is the case with the information concerning the Creator given to the ordinary classes of men in all prophetic books and in the Law. For it was found necessary to teach all of them that God exists, and that He is in every respect the most perfect Being, that is to say, He exists not only in the sense in which the earth and the heavens exist, but He exists and possesses life, wisdom, power, activity, and all other properties which our belief in His existence must include, as will be shown below. That God exists was therefore shown to ordinary

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men by means of similes taken from physical bodies; that He is living, by a simile taken from motion, because ordinary men consider only the body as fully, truly, and undoubtedly existing; that which is connected with a body but is itself not a body, although believed to exist, has a lower degree of existence on account of its dependence on the body for existence. That, however, which is neither itself a body, nor a force within a body, is not existent according to man's first notions, and is above all excluded from the range of imagination. In the same manner motion is considered by the ordinary man as identical with life; what cannot move voluntarily from place to place has no life, although motion is not part of the definition of life, but an accident connected with it. The perception by the senses, especially by hearing and seeing, is best known to us; we have no idea or notion of any other mode of communication between the soul of one person and that of another than by means of speaking, i.e., by the sound produced by lips, tongue, and the other organs of speech. When, therefore, we are to be informed that God has *a knowledge* of things, and that communication is made by Him to the Prophets who convey it to us, they represent Him to us as seeing and hearing, i.e., as perceiving and knowing those things which can be seen and heard. They represent Him to us as speaking, i.e., that communications from Him reach the Prophets; that is to be understood by the term "prophecy," as will be fully explained. God is described as working, because we do not know any other mode of producing a thing except by direct touch. He is said to have a soul in the sense that He is living, because all living beings are generally supposed to have a soul; although the term soul is, as has been shown, a homonym.

Again, since we perform all these actions only by means of corporeal organs, we figuratively ascribe to God the organs of locomotion, as feet, and their soles; organs of hearing, seeing, and smelling, as ear, eye, and nose; organs and substance of speech, as mouth, tongue, and sound; organs for the performance of work, as hand, its fingers, its palm, and the arm. In short, these organs of the body are figuratively ascribed to God, who is above all imperfection, to express that He performs certain acts; and these acts are figuratively ascribed to Him to express that He possesses certain perfections different from those acts themselves. E.g., we say that He has eyes, ears, hands, a mouth, a tongue, to express that He sees, hears, acts, and speaks: but seeing and

hearing are attributed to Him to indicate simply that He perceives. You thus find in Hebrew instances in which the perception of the one sense is named instead of the other; thus, "See the word of the Lord" (Jer. ii, 31), in the same meaning as "Hear the word of the Lord," for the sense of the phrase is, "Perceive what He says"; similarly the phrase, "See the smell of my son" (Gen. xxvii. 27) has the same meaning as "Smell the smell of my son," for it relates to the perception of the smell. In the same way are used the words, "And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings" (Exod. xx. 15), although the passage also contains the description of a prophetic vision, as is well known and understood among our people. Action and speech are likewise figuratively applied to God, to express that a certain influence has emanated from Him, as will be explained (chap. lxv and chap. lxvi.). The physical organs which are attributed to God in the writings of the Prophets are either organs of locomotion, indicating

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life; organs of sensation, indicating perception: organs of touch, indicating action: or organs of speech, indicating the divine inspiration of the Prophets, as will be explained.

The object of all these indications is to establish in our minds the notion of the existence of a living being, the Maker of everything, who also possesses a knowledge of the things which He has made. We shall explain, when we come to speak of the inadmissibility of Divine attributes, that all these various attributes convey but one notion, viz., that of the essence of God. The sole object of this chapter is to explain in what sense physical organs are ascribed to the Most Perfect Being, namely, that they are mere indications of the actions generally performed by means of these organs. Such actions being perfections respecting ourselves, are predicated of God, because we wish to express that He is most perfect in every respect, as we remarked above in explaining the Rabbinical phrase, "The language of the Torah is like the language of man." Instances of organs of locomotion being applied to the Creator occur as follows:--"My footstool" (Isa. lxvi. 1); "the place of the soles of my feet" (Ezek. xliii. 7). For examples of organs of touch applied to God, comp. "the hand of the Lord" (Exod. ix. 3); "with the finger of God" (*ib.* xxxi. 18); "the work of thy fingers" (Ps. viii. 4), "And thou hast laid thine hand upon me" (*ib.* cxxxix. 5); "The arm of the Lord" (Isa. liii. 1); "Thy right hand, O Lord" (Exod. xv. 6). In instances like the following, organs of speech are attributed to God: "The mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isa. i. 20); "And He would open His lips against thee" (Job xi. 5); "The voice of the Lord is powerful" (Ps. xxix. 4); "And his tongue as a devouring fire" (Isa. xxx. 27). Organs of sensation are attributed to God in instances like the following: "His eyes behold, His eyelids try" (Ps. xi. 4); "The eyes of the Lord which run to and fro" (Zech. iv. 10); "Bow down thine ear unto me, and hear" (2 Kings xix. 16); "You have kindled a fire in my nostril" (Jer. xvii. 5). Of the inner parts of the human body only the heart is figuratively applied to God, because "heart" is a homonym, and denotes also "intellect"; it is besides the source of animal life. In phrases like "my bowels are troubled for him" (Jer. xxxi. 20); "The sounding of thy bowels" (Isa. lxiii. 15), the term "bowels" is used in the sense of "heart"; for the term "bowels" is used both in a general and in a specific meaning; it denotes specifically "bowels," but more generally it can be used as the name of any

inner organ, including "heart." The correctness of this argument can be proved by the phrase "And thy law is within my bowels" (Ps. xl. 9), which is identical with "And thy law is within my heart." For that reason the prophet employed in this verse the phrase "my bowels are troubled" (and "the sounding of thy bowels"); the verb *hamah* is in fact used more frequently in connection with "heart," than with any other organ; comp. "My heart maketh a noise (*homeh*) in me" (Jer. iv. 19). Similarly, the shoulder is never used as a figure in reference to God, because it is known as a mere instrument of transport, and also comes into close contact with the thing which it carries. With far greater reason the organs of nutrition are never attributed to God: they are at once recognized as signs of imperfection. In fact all organs, both the external and the internal, are employed in the various actions of the soul: some, as e.g., all inner organs, are the means of preserving the individual for

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a certain time: others, as the organs of generation, are the means of preserving the species; others are the means of improving the condition of man and bringing his actions to perfection, as the hands, the feet, and the eyes, all of which tend to render motion, action, and perception more perfect. Animate beings require motion in order to be able to approach that which is conducive to their welfare, and to move away from the opposite: they require the senses in order to be able to discern what is injurious to them and what is beneficial. In addition, man requires various kinds of handiwork, to prepare his food, clothing, and dwelling; and he is compelled by his physical constitution to perform such work, namely, to prepare what is good for him. Some kinds of work also occur among certain animals, as far as such work is required by those animals. I do not believe that any man can doubt the correctness of the assertion that the Creator is not in need of anything for the continuance of His existence, or for the improvement of His condition. Therefore, God has no organs, or, what is the same, He is not corporeal; His actions are accomplished by His Essence, not by any organ, and as undoubtedly physical forces are connected with the organs, He does not possess any such forces, that is to say, He has, besides His Essence, nothing that could be the cause of His action, His knowledge, or His will, for attributes are nothing but forces under a different name. It is not my intention to discuss the question in this chapter. Our Sages laid down a general principle, by which the literal sense of the physical attributes of God mentioned by the prophets is rejected; a principle which evidently shows that our Sages were far from the belief in the corporeality of God, and that they did not think any person capable of misunderstanding it, or entertaining any doubt about it. For that reason they employ in the Talmud and the Midrashim phrases similar to those contained in the prophecies, without any circumlocution; they knew that there could not be any doubt about their metaphorical character, or any danger whatever of their being misunderstood; and that all such expressions would be understood as figurative [language], employed to communicate to the intellect the notion of His existence. Now, it was well known that in figurative language God is compared to a king who commands, cautions, punishes, and rewards, his subjects, and whose servants and attendants publish his orders, so that they might be acted upon, and they also

execute whatever he wishes. Thus the Sages adopted that figure, used it frequently, and introduced such speech, consent, and refusal of a king, and other usual acts of kings, as became necessary by that figure. In all these instances they were sure that no doubt or confusion would arise from it. The general principle alluded to above is contained in the following saying of our Sages, mentioned in Bereshith Rabba (c. xxvii.), "Great was the power of the Prophets; they compared the creature to its Creator; comp. 'And over the resemblance of the throne was a resemblance like the appearance of man'" (Ezek. i. 26). They have thus plainly stated that all those images which the Prophets perceived, i.e. in prophetic visions, are images created by God. This is perfectly correct; for every image in our imagination has been created. How pregnant is the expression, "Great is their boldness!" They indicated by it, that they themselves found it very remarkable; for whenever they perceived a word or act difficult to explain, or apparently objectionable, they used that

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phrase; e.g., a certain Rabbi has performed the act (of "ḥali ah") with a slipper, alone and by night. Another Rabbi, thereupon exclaimed "How great is his boldness to have followed the opinion of the minority." The Chaldee phrase *rab gubreh* in the original of the latter quotation, and the Hebrew *gadol koḥo* in that of the former quotation, have the same meaning, viz., Great is the power of (or the boldness of). Hence, in the preceding quotation, the sense is, How remarkable is the language which the Prophets were obliged to use when they speak of God the Creator in terms signifying properties of beings created by Him. This deserves attention. Our Sages have thus stated in distinct and plain terms that they are far from believing in the corporeality of God; and in the figures and forms seen in a prophetic vision, though belonging to created beings, the Prophets, to use the words of our Sages, "compared the creature to its Creator." If, however, after these explanations, any one wishes out of malice to cavil at them, and to find fault with them, though their method is neither comprehended nor understood by him, the Sages obm. will sustain no injury by it.

CHAPTER XLVII

WE have already stated several times that the prophetic books never attribute to God anything which ordinary men consider a defect, or which they cannot in their imagination combine with the idea of the Almighty, although such terms may not otherwise be different from those which were employed as metaphors in relation to Goa. Indeed all things which are attributed to God are considered in some way to be perfection, or can at least be imagined [as appertaining to Him].

We must now show why, according to this principle, the senses of hearing, sight and smell, are attributed to God, but not those of taste and touch. He is equally elevated above the use of all the five senses: they are all defective as regards perception, even for those who have no other source of knowledge: because they are passive, receive impressions from without, and are subject to interruptions and sufferings, as much as the other organs of the body. By saying that God sees,

we mean to state that He perceives visible things; "He hears" is identical with saying "He perceives audible things"; in the same way we might say, "He tastes and He touches," in the sense of "He perceives objects which man perceives by means of taste and touch." For, as regards perception, the senses are identical: if we deny the existence of one sensation in God, we must deny that of all other sensations, i.e., the perceptions of the five senses: and if we attribute the existence of one sensation to Him, i.e., the perception appertaining to one of the senses, we must attribute all the five sensations. Nevertheless, we find in Holy Writ, "And God saw" (Gen. vi. 5); "And God heard" (Num. xi. 1); "And God smelt" (Gen. viii. 21); but we do not meet with the expressions, "And God tasted," "And God touched." According to our opinion the reason of this is to be found in the idea, which has a firm hold in the minds of all men, that God does not come into contact with a body in the same manner as one body comes into contact with another, since He is not even seen by the eye. While these two senses, namely, taste and touch, only act when in close contact with the object, by sight, hearing, and smell, even distant

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objects are perceived. These, therefore, were considered by the multitude appropriate expressions [to be figuratively applied to God]. Besides, the object in figuratively applying the sensations to Him, could only have been to express that He perceives our actions: but hearing and sight are sufficient for that, namely, for the perception of what a man does or says. Thus our Sages, among other admonitions, gave the following advice and warning: "Know what is above thee, a seeing eye, and a hearing ear." (Mishnah Abot, ii. 1.)

You, however, know that, strictly speaking, the condition of all the sensations is the same, that the same argument which is employed against the existence of touch and taste in God, may be used against sight, hearing, and smell; for they all are material perceptions and impressions which are subject to change. There is only this difference, that the former, touch and taste, are at once recognized as deficiencies, while the others are considered as perfections. In a similar manner the defect of the imagination is easily seen, less easily that of thinking and reasoning. Imagination (*ra'ayon*) therefore, was never employed as a figure in speaking of God, while thought and reason are figuratively ascribed to Him. Comp. "The thoughts which the Lord thought" (Jer. xlix. 20); "And with his understanding he stretched out the heavens" (*ib.* x. 12). The inner senses were thus treated in the same way as the external; some are figuratively applied to God, some not. All this is according to the language of man; he ascribes to God what he considers a perfection, and does not ascribe to Him what he considers a defect. In truth, however, no real attribute, implying an addition to His essence, can be applied to Him, as will be proved.

CHAPTER XLVIII

WHENEVER in the Pentateuch the term "to hear" is applied to God, Onkelos, the Proselyte, does not translate it literally, but paraphrases it, merely expressing that a certain speech reached Him, i.e., He perceived it, or that He accepted it or did not accept, when it refers to supplication

and prayer as its object. The words "God heard" are therefore paraphrased by him regularly either, "It was heard before the Lord," or "He accepted" when employed in reference to supplication and prayer; [e.g.] "I will surely accept," lit. "I will surely hear" (Exod. xxii. 22). This principle is followed by Onkelos in his translation of the Pentateuch without any exception. But as regards the verb "to see," (*raah*), his renderings vary in a remarkable manner, and I was unable to discern his principle or method. In some instances he translates literally, "and God saw"; in others he paraphrases "it was revealed before the Lord." The use of the phrase *va-haza adonai* by Onkelos is sufficient evidence that the term *haza* in Chaldee is homonymous, and that it denotes mental perception as well as the sensation of sight. This being the case, I am surprised that, in some instances avoiding the literal rendering, he substituted for it "And it was revealed before the Lord." When I, however, examined the various readings in the version of Onkelos, which I either saw myself or heard from others during the time of my studies, I found that the term "to see" when connected with wrong, injury, or violence, was paraphrased, "It was manifest before the Lord."

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[paragraph continues] There is no doubt that the term *haza* in Chaldee denotes complete apprehension and reception of the object in the state in which it has been perceived. When Onkelos, therefore, found the verb "to see" connected with the object "wrong," he did not render it literally, but paraphrased it, "It was revealed before the Lord." Now, I noticed that in all instances of the Pentateuch where seeing is ascribed to God, he translated it literally, except those instances which I will mention to you: "For my affliction was revealed before the Lord" (Gen. xxix. 32); "For all that Laban doeth unto thee is revealed before me" (*ib.* xxxi. 12);-- although the first person in the sentence refers to the angel [and not to God], Onkelos does not ascribe to him that perception which implies complete comprehension of the object, because the object is "iniquity"--"The oppression of the children of Israel was known to the Lord" (Exod. ii. 25); "The oppression of my people was surely known to me" (*ib.* iii. 7); "The affliction is known to me" (*ib.* 9); "Their oppression is known to me" (*ib.* iv. 31); "This people is known to me" (*ib.* xxxii. 9), i.e., their rebellion is known to me--comp. the Targum of the passage, "And God saw the children of Israel" (*ib.* ii. 25), which is equal to "He saw their affliction and their trouble"--"And it was known to the Lord, and he abhorred them" (Deut. xxxii. 19); "It was known to him that their power was gone" (*ib.* 36); in this instance the object of the perception is likewise the wrong done to the Israelites, and the increasing power of the enemy. In all these examples Onkelos is consistent, following the maxim expressed in the words, "Thou canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13); wherefore he renders the verb "to see," when referring to oppression or rebellion, It is revealed before him, etc. This appropriate and satisfactory explanation, the correctness of which I do not doubt, is weakened by three passages, in which, according to this view, I expected to find the verb "to see" paraphrased "to be revealed before him," but found instead the literal rendering "to see" in the various copies of the Targum. The following are the three passages "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth" (Gen. vi. 6);

"And the Lord saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt" (*ib.* vi. 12); "and God saw that Leah was hated" (*ib.* xxx. 3). It appears to me that in these passages there is a mistake, which has crept into the copies of the Targum, since we do not possess the Targum in the original manuscript of Onkelos, for in that case we should have assumed that he had a satisfactory explanation of it.

In rendering Genesis xxii. 8, "the lamb is known to the Lord," he either wished to indicate that the Lord was not expected to seek and to bring it, or he considered it inappropriate, in Chaldee to connect the divine perception with one of the lower animals.

However, the various copies of the Targum must be carefully examined with regard to this point, and if you still find those passages the same as I quoted them, I cannot explain what he meant.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE angels are likewise incorporeal: they are intelligences without matter, but they are nevertheless created beings, and God created them, as will be

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explained below. In Bereshith Rabbah (on Gen. iii. 24) we read the following remark of our Sages: "The angel is called 'the flame of the sword which turned every way' (Gen. iii. 24), in accordance with the words, 'His ministers a flaming fire' (Ps. civ. 4); the attribute, 'which turned every way' is added, because angels are changeable in form they appear at one time as males, at another as females; now as spirits; now as angels." By this remark they clearly stated that angels are incorporeal, and have no permanent bodily form independent of the mind [of him who perceives them], they exist entirely in prophetic vision, and depend on the action of the imaginative power, as will be explained when speaking on the true meaning of prophecy. As to the words "at another time as females," which imply that the Prophets in prophetic vision perceived angels also in the form of women, they refer to the vision of Zechariah (v. 9), "And, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings." You know very well how difficult it is for men to form a notion of anything immaterial, and entirely devoid of corporeality, except after considerable training: it is especially difficult for those who do not distinguish between objects of the intellect and objects of the imagination, and depend mostly on the mere imaginative power. They believe that all imagined things exist or at least have the possibility of existing: but that which cannot be imagined does not exist, and cannot exist. For persons of this class--and the majority of thinkers belong to it--cannot arrive at the true solution of any question, or at the explanation of anything doubtful. On account of this difficulty the prophetic books contain expressions which, taken literally, imply that angels are corporeal, moving about, endowed with human form, receiving commands of God, obeying His word and performing whatever He wishes, according to His command. All this only serves to lead to the belief that angels exist, and are alive and perfect, in the same way as we have explained in reference to God. If the figurative representation of angels were limited to this, their true essence would be believed to be the same as the essence of God, since, in reference to the Creator

expressions are likewise employed, which literally imply that He is corporeal, living, moving and endowed with human form. In order, therefore, to give to the mind of men the idea that the existence of angels is lower than the existence of God, certain forms of lower animals were introduced in the description of angels. It was thereby shown, that the existence of God is more perfect than that of angels, as much as man is more perfect than the lower animals. Nevertheless no organ of the brute creation was attributed to the angels except wings. Without wings the act of flying appears as impossible as that of walking without legs: for these two modes of motion can only be imagined in connection with these organs. The motion of flying has been chosen as a symbol to represent that angels possess life, because it is the most perfect and most sublime movement of the brute creation. Men consider this motion a perfection to such an extent that they themselves wish to be able to fly, in order to escape easily what is injurious, and to obtain quickly what is useful, though it be at a distance. For this reason this motion has been attributed to the angels.

There is besides another reason. The bird in its flight is sometimes visible, sometimes withdrawn from our sight; one moment near to us, and in the

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next far off: and these are exactly the circumstances which we must associate with the idea of angels, as will be explained below. This imaginary perfection, the motion of flight, being the exclusive property of the brute creation, has never been attributed to God. You must not be misled by the passage, "And he rode upon a cherub, and he did fly" (Ps. xviii. 10), for it is the cherub that did fly, and the simile only serves to denote the rapid arrival of that which is referred to in that passage. Comp.: "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt" (Isa. xix. 1); that is, the punishment alluded to will come down quickly upon Egypt. Nor should expressions like "the face of an ox," "the face of a lion," "the face of an eagle," "the sole of the foot of a calf," found in the prophecies of Ezekiel (i. 10 and 7) mislead you; for all these are explained in a different manner, as you will learn later, and besides, the prophet only describes the animals (*hayyot*). The subject will be explained (III. 1.), though by mere hints, as far as necessary, for directing your attention to the true interpretation.

The motion of flying, frequently mentioned in the Bible, necessitates, according to our imagination, the existence of wings: wings are therefore given to the angels as symbols expressive of their existence, not of their true essence. You must also bear in mind that whenever a thing moves very quickly, it is said to fly, as that term implies great velocity of motion. Comp. "As the eagle flieth" (Deut. xxviii. 49). The eagle flies and moves with greater velocity than any other bird, and therefore it is introduced in this simile. Furthermore, the wings are the organs [lit. causes] of flight; hence the number of the wings of angels in the prophetic vision corresponds to the number of the causes which set a thing in motion, but this does not belong to the theme of this chapter. (Comp. II. iv. and x.)

CHAPTER L

WHEN reading my present treatise, bear in mind that by "faith" we do not understand merely that which is uttered with the lips, but also that which is apprehended by the soul, the conviction that the object [of belief] is exactly as it is apprehended. If, as regards real or supposed truths, you content yourself with giving utterance to them in words, without apprehending them or believing in them, especially if you do not seek real truth, you have a very easy task as, in fact, you will find many ignorant people professing articles of faith without connecting any idea with them.

If, however, you have a desire to rise to a higher state, viz., that of reflection, and truly to hold the conviction that God is One and possesses true unity, without admitting plurality or divisibility in any sense whatever, you must understand that God has no essential attribute in any form or in any sense whatever, and that the rejection of corporeality implies the rejection of essential attributes. Those who believe that God is One, and that He has many attributes, declare the unity with their lips, and assume plurality in their thoughts. This is like the doctrine of the Christians, who say that He is one and He is three, and that the three are one. Of the same character is the doctrine of those who say that God is One, but that He has many attributes; and that He with His attributes is One, although they deny corporeality and affirm His most absolute freedom from matter; as if our

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object were to seek forms of expression, not subjects of belief. For belief is only possible after the apprehension of a thing; it consists in the conviction that the thing apprehended has its existence beyond the mind [in reality] exactly as it is conceived in the mind. If in addition to this we are convinced that the thing cannot be different in any way from what we believe it to be, and that no reasonable argument can be found for the rejection of the belief or for the admission of any deviation from it, then the belief is true. Renounce desires and habits, follow your reason, and study what I am going to say in the chapters which follow on the rejection of the attributes; you will then be fully convinced of what we have said: you will be of those who truly conceive the Unity of God, not of those who utter it with their lips without thought, like men of whom it has been said, "Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins" (Jer. xii. 2). It is right that a man should belong to that class of men who have a conception of truth and understand it, though they do not speak of it. Thus the pious are advised and addressed, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still. Selah." (Ps. iv. 5.)

CHAPTER LI

THERE are many things whose existence is manifest and obvious; some of these are innate notions or objects of sensation, others are nearly so: and in fact they would require no proof if man had been left in his primitive state. Such are the existence of motion, of man's free will, of phases of production and destruction, and of the natural properties perceived by the senses, e.g.,

the heat of fire, the coldness of water, and many other similar things. False notions, however, may be spread either by a person labouring under error, or by one who has some particular end in view, and who establishes theories contrary to the real nature of things, by denying the existence of things perceived by the senses, or by affirming the existence of what does not exist. Philosophers are thus required to establish by proof things which are self-evident, and to disprove the existence of things which only exist in man's imagination. Thus Aristotle gives a proof for the existence of motion, because it had been denied: he disproves the reality of atoms, because it had been asserted.

To the same class belongs the rejection of essential attributes in reference to God. For it is a self-evident truth that the attribute is not inherent in the object to which it is ascribed, but it is superadded to its essence, and is consequently an *accident*; if the attribute denoted the essence [τὸ τὸ ἦν εἶναι] of the object, it would be either mere tautology, as if, e.g., one would say "man is man," or the explanation of a name, as, e.g., "man is a speaking animal"; for the words "speaking animal" include the true essence of man, and there is no third element besides life and speech in the definition of man; when he, therefore, is described by the attributes of life and speech, these are nothing but an explanation of the name "man," that is to say, that the thing which is called man, consists of life and speech. It will now be clear that the attribute must be one of two things, either the essence of the object described--in that case it is a mere explanation of a name, and on that account we might admit the attribute in reference to God, but we reject it from another cause as will be shown--or the attribute is something different

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from the object described, some extraneous superadded element; in that case the attribute would be an accident, and he who merely rejects the appellation "accidents" in reference to the attributes of God, does not thereby alter their character: for everything superadded to the essence of an object joins it without forming part of its essential properties, and that constitutes an accident. Add to this the logical consequence of admitting many attributes, viz., the existence of many eternal beings. There cannot be any belief in the unity of God except by admitting that He is one simple substance, without any composition or plurality of elements: one from whatever side you view it, and by whatever test you examine it: not divisible into two parts in any way and by any cause, nor capable of any form of plurality either objectively or subjectively, as will be proved in this treatise.

Some thinkers have gone so far as to say that the attributes of God are neither His essence nor anything extraneous to His essence. This is like the assertion of some theorists, that the ideals, i.e., the *universalia*, are neither existing nor non-existent, and like the views of others, that the atom does not fill a definite place, but keeps an atom of space occupied; that man has no freedom of action at all, but has acquirement. Such things are only said: they exist only in words, not in thought, much less in reality. But as you know, and as all know who do not delude themselves, these theories are preserved by a multitude of words, by misleading similes sustained by

declamation and invective, and by numerous methods borrowed both from dialectics and sophistry. If after uttering them and supporting them by such words, a man were to examine for himself his own belief on this subject, he would see nothing but confusion and stupidity in an endeavour to prove the existence of things which do not exist, or to find a mean between two opposites that have no mean. Or is there a mean between existence and non-existence, or between the identity and non-identity of two things? But, as we said, to such absurdities men were forced by the great licence given to the imagination, and by the fact that every existing material thing is necessarily imagined as a certain substance possessing several attributes; for nothing has ever been found that consists of one simple substance without any attribute. Guided by such imaginations, men thought that God was also composed of many different elements, viz., of His essence and of the attributes superadded to His essence. Following up this comparison, some believed that God was corporeal, and that He possessed attributes: others, abandoning this theory, denied the corporeality, but retained the attributes. The adherence to the literal sense of the text of Holy Writ is the source of all this error, as I shall show in some of the chapters devoted to this theme.

CHAPTER LII

EVERY description of an object by an affirmative attribute, which includes the assertion that an object is of a certain kind, must be made in one of the following five ways:--

First. The object is described by its *definition*, as e.g., man is described as a being that lives and has reason; such a description, containing the true essence of the object, is, as we have already shown, nothing else but the explanation of a name. All agree that this kind of description cannot be given

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of God: for there are no previous causes to His existence, by which He could be defined: and on that account it is a well-known principle, received by all the philosophers, who are precise in their statements, that no definition can be given of God.

Secondly. An object is described by *part of its definition*, as when, e.g., man is described as a living being or as a rational being. This kind of description includes the necessary connection [of the two ideas]; for when we say that every man is rational we mean by it that every being which has the characteristics of man must also have reason. All agree that this kind of description is inappropriate in reference to God; for if we were to speak of a portion of His essence, we should consider His essence to be a compound. The inappropriateness of this kind of description in reference to God is the same as that of the preceding kind.

Thirdly. An object is described by something different from its true essence, by something that does not complement or establish the essence of the object. The description, therefore, relates to a *quality*; but quality, in its most general sense, is an accident. If God could be described in this

way, He would be the substratum of accidents: a sufficient reason for rejecting the idea that He possesses quality, since it diverges from the true conception of His essence. It is surprising how those who admit the application of attributes to God can reject, in reference to Him, comparison and qualification. For when they say "He cannot be qualified," they can only mean that He possesses no quality; and yet every positive essential attribute of an object either constitutes its essence,--and in that case it is identical with the essence,--or it contains a quality of the object.

There are, as you know, four kinds of quality; I will give you instances of attributes of each kind, in order to show you that this class of attributes cannot possibly be applied to God. (*a*) A man is described by any of his intellectual or moral qualities, or by any of the dispositions appertaining to him as an animate being, when, e.g., we speak of a person who is a carpenter, or who shrinks from sin, or who is ill. It makes no difference whether we say. a carpenter, or a sage, or a physician: by all these we represent certain physical dispositions: nor does it make any difference whether we say "sin-fearing" or "merciful." Every trade, every profession, and every settled habit of man are certain physical dispositions. All this is clear to those who have occupied themselves with the study of Logic. (*b*) A thing is described by some physical quality it possesses, or by the absence of the same, e.g., as being soft or hard. It makes no difference whether we say "soft or hard," or "strong or weak"; in both cases we speak of physical conditions. (*c*) A man is described by his passive qualities, or by his emotions; we speak, e.g., of a person who is passionate, irritable, timid, merciful, without implying that these conditions have become permanent. The description of a thing by its colour, taste, heat, cold, dryness, and moisture, belongs also to this class of attributes. (*d*) A thing is described by any of its qualities resulting from quantity as such; we speak, e.g. of a thing which is long, short, curved, straight, etc.

Consider all these and similar attributes, and you will find that they cannot be employed in reference to God. He is not a magnitude that any quality resulting from quantity as such could be possessed by Him; He is not

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affected by external influences, and therefore does not possess any quality resulting from emotion. He is not subject to physical conditions, and therefore does not possess strength or similar qualities; He is not an animate being, that He should have a certain disposition of the soul, or acquire certain properties, as meekness, modesty, etc., or be in a state to which animate beings as such are subject, as, e.g., in that of health or of illness. Hence it follows that no attribute coming under the head of quality in its widest sense, can be predicated of God. Consequently, these three classes of attributes, describing the essence of a thing, or part of the essence, or a quality of it, are clearly inadmissible in reference to God, for they imply composition, which, as we shall prove, is out of question as regards the Creator. We say, with regard to this latter point, that He is absolutely One.

Fourthly. A thing is described by its *relation* to another thing, e.g., to time, to space, or to a different individual; thus we say, Zaid, the father of A, or the partner of B, or who dwells at a certain place, or who lived at a stated time. This kind of attribute does not necessarily imply plurality or change in the essence of the object described; for the same Zaid, to whom reference is made, is the partner of Amru, the father of Becr, the master of Khalid, the friend of Zaid, dwells in a certain house, and was born in a certain year. Such relations are not the essence of a thing, nor are they so intimately connected with it as qualities. At first thought, it would seem that they may be employed in reference to God, but after careful and thorough consideration we are convinced of their inadmissibility. It is quite clear that there is no relation between God and time or space. For time is an accident connected with motion, in so far as the latter includes the relation of anteriority and posteriority, and is expressed by number, as is explained in books devoted to this subject; and since motion is one of the conditions to which only material bodies are subject, and God is immaterial, there can be no relation between Him and time. Similarly there is no relation between Him and space. But what we have to investigate and to examine is this: whether some real relation exists between God and any of the substances created by Him, by which He could be described? That there is no correlation between Him and any of His creatures can easily be seen; for the characteristic of two objects correlative to each other is the equality of their reciprocal relation. Now, as God has absolute existence, while all other beings have only possible existence, as we shall show, there consequently cannot be any correlation [between God and His creatures]. That a certain kind of relation does exist between them is by some considered possible, but wrongly. It is impossible to imagine a relation between intellect and sight, although, as we believe, the same kind of existence is common to both; how, then, could a relation be imagined between any creature and God, who has nothing in common with any other being; for even the term existence is applied to Him and other things, according to our opinion, only by way of pure homonymity. Consequently there is no relation whatever between Him and any other being. For whenever we speak of a relation between two things, these belong to the same kind; but when two things belong to different kinds though of the same class, there is no relation between them. We therefore do not say, this red compared with that green, is more, or less, or equally intense, although both belong to the same class--colour;

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when they belong to two different classes, there does not appear to exist any relation between them, not even to a man of ordinary Intellect, although the two things belong to the same category: e.g., between a hundred cubits and the heat of pepper there is no relation, the one being a quality, the other a quantity; or between wisdom and sweetness, between meekness and bitterness, although all these come under the head of quality in its more general signification. How, then, could there be any relation between God and His creatures, considering the important difference between them in respect to true existence, the greatest of all differences. Besides, if any relation existed between them, God would be subject to the accident of relation; and although that would not be an accident to the essence of God, it would still be, to some extent, a

kind of accident. You would, therefore, be wrong if you applied affirmative attributes in their literal sense to God, though they contained only relations: these, however, are the most appropriate of all attributes, to be employed, in a less strict sense, in reference to God, because they do not imply that a plurality of eternal things exists, or that any change takes place in the essence of God, when those things change to which God is in relation.

Fifthly. A thing is described by its *actions*; I do not mean by "its actions" the inherent capacity for a certain work, as is expressed in "carpenter," "painter," or "smith"--for these belong to the class of qualities which have been mentioned above--but I mean the action the latter has performed--we speak, e.g., of Zaid, who made this door, built that wall, wove that garment. This kind of attributes is separate from the essences of the thing described, and, therefore, appropriate to be employed in describing the Creator, especially since we know that these different actions do not imply that different elements must be contained in the substance of the agent, by which the different actions are produced, as will be explained. On the contrary, all the actions of God emanate from His essence, not from any extraneous thing superadded to His essence, as we have shown.

What we have explained in the present chapter is this: that God is one in every respect, containing no plurality or any element superadded to His essence: and that the many attributes of different significations applied in Scripture to God, originate in the multitude of His actions, not in a plurality existing in His essence, and are partly employed with the object of conveying to us some notion of His perfection, in accordance with what we consider perfection, as has been explained by us. The possibility of one simple substance excluding plurality, though accomplishing different actions, will be illustrated by examples in the next chapter.

CHAPTER LIII

THE circumstance which caused men to believe in the existence of divine attributes is similar to that which caused others to believe in the corporeality of God. The latter have not arrived at that belief by speculation, but by following the literal sense of certain passages in the Bible. The same is the case with the attributes: when in the books of the Prophets and of the Law, God is described by attributes, such passages are taken in their literal sense, and it is then believed that God possesses attributes: as if He were to be

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exalted above corporeality, and not above things connected with corporeality, i.e., the accidents, I mean psychical dispositions, all of which are qualities [and connected with corporeality]. Every attribute which the followers of this doctrine assume to be essential to the Creator, you will find to express, although they do not distinctly say so, a quality similar to those which they are accustomed to notice in the bodies of all living beings. We apply to all such passages the principle, "The Torah speaketh in the language of man," and say that the object of all these terms is to describe God as the most perfect being, not as possessing those qualities which are only

perfections in relation to created living beings. Many of the attributes express different acts of God, but that difference does not necessitate any difference as regards Him from whom the acts proceed. This fact, viz., that from one agency different effects may result, although that agency has not free will, and much more so if it has free will, I will illustrate by an instance taken from our own sphere. Fire melts certain things and makes others hard, it boils and burns, it bleaches and blackens. If we described the fire as bleaching, blackening, burning, boiling, hardening and melting, we should be correct, and yet he who does not know the nature of fire, would think that it included six different elements, one by which it blackens, another by which it bleaches, a third by which it boils, a fourth by which it consumes, a fifth by which it melts, a sixth by which it hardens things--actions which are opposed to one another, and of which each has its peculiar property. He, however, who knows the nature of fire, will know that by virtue of one quality in action, namely, by heat, it produces all these effects. If this is the case with that which is done by nature, how much more is it the case with regard to beings that act by free will, and still more with regard to God, who is above all description. If we, therefore, perceive in God certain relations of various kinds--for wisdom in us is different from power, and power from will--it does by no means follow that different elements are really contained in Him, that He contains one element by which He knows, another by which He wills, and another by which He exercises power, as is, in fact, the signification of the attributes of God] according to the Attributists. Some of them express it plainly, and enumerate the attributes as elements added to the essence. Others, however, are more reserved with regard to this matter, but indicate their opinion, though they do not express it in distinct and intelligible words. Thus, e.g., some of them say: "God is omnipotent by His essence, wise by His essence, living by His essence, and endowed with a will by His essence." (I will mention to you, as an instance, man's reason, which being one faculty and implying no plurality, enables him to know many arts and sciences; by the same faculty man is able to sow, to do carpenter's work, to weave, to build, to study, to acquire a knowledge of geometry, and to govern a state. These various acts resulting from one simple faculty, which involves no plurality, are very numerous; their number, that is, the number of the actions originating in man's reason, is almost infinite. It is therefore intelligible how in reference to God, those different actions can be caused by one simple substance, that does not include any plurality or any additional element. The attributes found in Holy Scripture are either qualifications of His actions, without any reference to His essence, or indicate absolute perfection, but do not imply that the essence of God is a compound of various

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elements.) For in not admitting the *term* "compound," they do not reject the *idea* of a compound when they admit a substance with attributes.

There still remains one difficulty which led them to that error, and which I am now going to mention. Those who assert the existence of the attributes do not found their opinion on the variety of God's actions: they say it is true that one substance can be the source of various effects, but His essential attributes cannot be qualifications of His actions, because it is

impossible to imagine that the Creator created Himself. They vary with regard to the so-called essential attributes--I mean as regards their number--according to the text of the Scripture which each of them follows. I will enumerate those on which all agree, and the knowledge of which they believe that they have derived from reasoning, not from some words of the Prophets, namely, the following four:--life, power, wisdom, and will. They believe that these are four different things, and such perfections as cannot possibly be absent from the Creator, and that these cannot be qualifications of His actions. This is their opinion. But you must know that wisdom and life in reference to God are not different from each other: for in every being that is conscious of itself, life and wisdom are the same thing, that is to say, if by wisdom we understand the consciousness of self. Besides, the subject and the object of that consciousness are undoubtedly identical [as regards God]: for according to our opinion, He is not composed of an element that apprehends, and another that does not apprehend; He is not like man, who is a combination of a conscious soul and an unconscious body. If, therefore, by "wisdom" we mean the faculty of self-consciousness, wisdom and life are one and the same thing. They, however, do not speak of wisdom in this sense, but of His power to apprehend His creatures. There is also no doubt that power and will do not exist in God in reference to Himself: for He cannot have power or will as regards Himself: we cannot imagine such a thing. They take these attributes as different relations between God and His creatures, signifying that He has power in creating things, will in giving to things existence as He desires, and wisdom in knowing what He created. Consequently, these attributes do not refer to the essence of God, but express relations between Him and His creatures.

Therefore we, who truly believe in the Unity of God, declare, that as we do not believe that some element is included in His essence by which He created the heavens, another by which He created the [four] elements, a third by which He created the ideals, in the same way we reject the idea that His essence contains an element by which He has power, another element by which He has will, and a third by which He has a knowledge of His creatures. On the contrary, He is a simple essence, without any additional element whatever; He created the universe, and knows it, but not by any extraneous force. There is no difference whether these various attributes refer to His actions or to relations between Him and His works; in fact, these relations, as we have also shown, exist only in the thoughts of men. This is what we must believe concerning the attributes occurring in the books of the Prophets: some may also be taken as expressive of the perfection of God by way of comparison with what we consider as perfections in us, as we shall explain.

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CHAPTER LIV

THE wisest man, our Teacher Moses, asked two things of God, and received a reply respecting both. The one thing he asked was, that God should let him know His true essence: the other, which in fact he asked first, that God should let him know His attributes. In answer to both these petitions God promised that He would let him know all His attributes, and that these were

nothing but His actions. He also told him that His true essence could not be perceived, and pointed out a method by which he could obtain the utmost knowledge of God possible for man to acquire. The knowledge obtained by Moses has not been possessed by any human being before him or after him. His petition to know the attributes of God is contained in the following words: "Show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight" (Exod. xxxiii. 13). Consider how many excellent ideas found expression in the words, "Show me thy way, that I may know thee." We learn from them that God is known by His attributes, for Moses believed that he knew Him, when he was shown the way of God. The words "That I may find grace in thy sight," imply that he who knows God finds grace in His eyes. Not only is he acceptable and welcome to God who fasts and prays, but everyone who knows Him. He who has no knowledge of God is the object of His wrath and displeasure. The pleasure and the displeasure of God, the approach to Him and the withdrawal from Him are proportional to the amount of man's knowledge or ignorance concerning the Creator. We have already gone too far away from our subject, let us now return to it.

Moses prayed to God to grant him knowledge of His attributes, and also pardon for His people; when the latter had been granted, he continued to pray for the knowledge of God's essence in the words, "Show me thy glory" (*ib.* 18), and then received, respecting his first request, "Show me thy way," the following favourable reply, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee" (*ib.* 19); as regards the second request, however, he was told, "Thou canst not see my face" (*ib.* 20). The words "all my goodness" imply that God promised to show him the whole creation, concerning which it has been stated, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31); when I say "to show him the whole creation," I mean to imply that God promised to make him comprehend the nature of all things, their relation to each other, and the way they are governed by God both in reference to the universe as a whole and to each creature in particular. This knowledge is referred to when we are told of Moses, "he is firmly established in all mine house" (Num. xii. 7); that is, "his knowledge of all the creatures in My universe is correct and firmly established"; for false opinions are not firmly established. Consequently the knowledge of the works of God is the knowledge of His attributes, by which He can be known. The fact that God promised Moses to give him a knowledge of His works, may be inferred from the circumstance that God taught him such attributes as refer exclusively to His works, viz., "merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness," etc., (Exod. xxxiv. 6). It is therefore clear that the ways which Moses wished to know, and which God taught him, are the actions emanating from God. Our Sages call them *middot*

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[paragraph continues] (qualities), and speak of the thirteen *middoth* of God (Talm. B. Rosh ha-shanah, p. 17b); they used the term also in reference to man; comp. "there are four different *middoth* (characters) among those who go to the house of learning"; "There are four different *middoth* (characters) among those who give charity" (*Mishnah Abot*, v. 13, 14). They do not mean to say that God really possesses *middot* (qualities), but that He performs actions similar to

such of our actions as originate in certain qualities, i.e., in certain psychical dispositions not that God has really such dispositions. Although Moses was shown "all His goodness," i.e., all His works, only the thirteen middot are mentioned, because they include those acts of God which refer to the creation and the government of mankind, and to know these acts was the principal object of the prayer of Moses. This is shown by the conclusion of his prayer, "that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight, and consider that this nation is thy people" (Exod. xxxiii. 16), that is to say, the people whom I have to rule by certain acts in the performance of which I must be guided by Thy own acts in governing them. We have thus shown that "the ways" used in the Bible, and "*middot*" used in the Mishnah, are identical, denoting the acts emanating from God in reference to the universe.

Whenever any one of His actions is perceived by us, we ascribe to God that emotion which is the source of the act when performed by ourselves, and call Him by an epithet which is formed from the verb expressing that emotion. We see, e.g., how well He provides for the life of the embryo of living beings; how He endows with certain faculties both the embryo itself and those who have to rear it after its birth, in order that it may be protected from death and destruction, guarded against all harm, and assisted in the performance of all that is required [for its development]. Similar acts, when performed by us, are due to a certain emotion and tenderness called mercy and pity. God is, therefore, said to be merciful: e.g., "Like as a father is merciful to his children, so the Lord is merciful to them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13); "And I will spare them, as a man spareth (*yaḥamol*) his own son that serveth him" (Mal. iii. 17). Such instances do not imply that God is influenced by a feeling of mercy, but that acts similar to those which a father performs for his son, out of pity, mercy and real affection, emanate from God solely for the benefit of His pious men, and are by no means the result of any impression or change--[produced in God].--When we give something to a person who has no claim upon us, we perform an act of grace; e.g., "Grant them graciously unto us" (Judges xxi. 22). [The same term is used in reference to God, e.g.] "which God hath graciously given" (Gen. xxxiii. 5); "Because God hath dealt graciously with me" (*ib.* 11). Instances of this kind are numerous. God creates and guides beings who have no claim upon Him to be created and guided by Him; He is therefore called gracious (*ḥannun*)--His actions towards mankind also include great calamities, which overtake individuals and bring death to them, or affect whole families and even entire regions, spread death, destroy generation after generation, and spare nothing whatsoever. Hence there occur inundations, earthquakes, destructive storms, expeditions of one nation against the other for the sake of destroying it with the sword and blotting out its memory, and many other evils of the same kind. Whenever such evils are caused by us to any person,

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they originate in great anger, violent jealousy, or a desire for revenge. God is therefore called, because of these acts, "jealous," "vengeful," "wrathful," and "keeping anger" (Nah. i. 2) that is to say, He performs acts similar to those which, when performed by us, originate in certain psychical dispositions, in jealousy, desire for retaliation, revenge, or anger: they are in

accordance with the guilt of those who are to be punished, and not the result of any emotion: for He is above all defect! The same is the case with all divine acts: though resembling those acts which emanate from our passions and psychological dispositions, they are not due to anything superadded to His essence.--The governor of a country, if he is a prophet, should conform to these attributes. Acts [of punishment] must be performed by him moderately and in accordance with justice, not merely as an outlet of his passion. He must not let loose his anger, nor allow his passion to overcome him: for all passions are bad, and they must be guarded against as far as it lies in man's power. At times and towards some persons he must be merciful and gracious, not only from motives of mercy and compassion, but according to their merits: at other times and towards other persons he must evince anger, revenge, and wrath in proportion to their guilt, but not from motives of passion. He must be able to condemn a person to death by fire without anger, passion, or loathing against him, and must exclusively be guided by what he perceives of the guilt of the person, and by a sense of the great benefit which a large number will derive from such a sentence. You have, no doubt, noticed in the Torah how the commandment to annihilate the seven nations, and "to save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deut. xx. 16) is followed immediately by the words, "That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods: so should you sin against the Lord your God" (*ib.* 18); that is to say, you shall not think that this commandment implies an act of cruelty or of retaliation; it is an act demanded by the tendency of man to remove everything that might turn him away from the right path, and to clear away all obstacles in the road to perfection, that is, to the knowledge of God. Nevertheless, acts of mercy, pardon, pity, and grace should more frequently be performed by the governor of a country than acts of punishment; seeing that all the thirteen *middoth* of God are attributes of mercy with only one exception, namely, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exod. xxxiv. 7); for the meaning of the preceding attribute (in the original *ve-nakkeh lo yenakkeh*) is "and he will not utterly destroy"; (and not "He will by no means clear the guilty"); comp. "And she will be utterly destroyed (*ve-nikketa*), she shall sit upon the ground" (Isa. iii. 26). When it is said that God is visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, this refers exclusively to the sin of idolatry, and to no other sin. That this is the case may be inferred from what is said in the ten commandments, "upon the third and fourth generation of my enemies" (Exod. xx. 5), none except idolaters being called "enemy"; comp. also "every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth" (Deut. xii. 31). It was, however, considered sufficient to extend the punishment to the fourth generation, because the fourth generation is the utmost a man can see of his posterity; and when, therefore, the idolaters of a place are destroyed, the old man worshipping idols is killed, his son, his grandson, and his great-grandson, that is, the fourth generation.

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[paragraph continues] By the mention of this attribute we are, as it were, told that His commandments, undoubtedly in harmony with His acts, include the death even of the little children of idolaters because of the sin of their fathers and grandfathers. This principle we find

frequently applied in the Law, as, e.g., we read concerning the city that has been led astray to idolatry, "destroy it utterly, and all that is therein" (Deut. xiii. 15). All this has been ordained in order that every vestige of that which would lead to great injury should be blotted out, as we have explained.

We have gone too far away from the subject of this chapter, but we have shown why it has been considered sufficient to mention only these (thirteen) out of all His acts: namely, because they are required for the good government of a country; for the chief aim of man should be to make himself, as far as possible, similar to God: that is to say, to make his acts similar to the acts of God, or as our Sages expressed it in explaining the verse, "Ye shall be holy" (Lev. xxi. 2): "He is gracious, so be you also gracious: He is merciful, so be you also merciful."

The principal object of this chapter was to show that all attributes ascribed to God are attributes of His acts, and do not imply that God has any qualities.

CHAPTER LV

WE have already, on several occasions, shown in this treatise that everything that implies corporeality or passiveness, is to be negated in reference to God, for all passiveness implies change: and the agent producing that state is undoubtedly different from the object affected by it; and if God could be affected in any way whatever, another being beside Him would act on Him and cause change in Him. All kinds of non-existence must likewise be negated in reference to Him: no perfection whatever can therefore be imagined to be at one time absent from Him, and at another present in Him: for if this were the case, He would [at a certain time] only be potentially perfect. Potentiality always implies non-existence, and when anything has to pass from potentiality into reality, another thing that exists in reality is required to effect that transition. Hence it follows that all perfections must really exist in God, and none of them must in any way be a mere potentiality. Another thing likewise to be denied in reference to God, is similarity to any existing being. This has been generally accepted, and is also mentioned in the books of the Prophets: e.g., "To whom, then, will you liken me?" (Isa. xl. 25); "To whom, then, will you liken God?" (*ib.* 18); "There is none like unto Thee" (Jer. x. 6). Instances of this kind are frequent. In short, it is necessary to demonstrate by proof that nothing can be predicated of God that implies any of the following four things: corporeality, emotion or change, nonexistence,-- e.g., that something would be potential at one time and real at another--and similarity with any of His creatures. In this respect our knowledge of God is aided by the study of Natural Science. For he who is ignorant of the latter cannot understand the defect implied in emotions, the difference between potentiality and reality, the non-existence implied in all potentiality, the inferiority of a thing that exists *in potentiâ* to that which moves in order to cause its transition from potentiality into reality, and the

inferiority of that which moves for this purpose compared with its condition when the transition has been effected. He who knows these things, but without their proofs, does not know the details which logically result from these general propositions: and therefore he cannot prove that God exists, or that the [four] things mentioned above are inadmissible in reference to God.

Having premised these remarks, I shall explain in the next chapter the error of those who believe that God has essential attributes: those who have some knowledge of Logic and Natural Science will understand it.

CHAPTER LVI

SIMILARITY is based on a certain relation between two things: if between two things no relation can be found, there can be no similarity between them, and there is no relation between two things that have no similarity to each other; e.g., we do not say this heat is similar to that colour, or this voice is similar to that sweetness. This is self-evident. Since the existence of a relation between God and man, or between Him and other beings has been denied, similarity must likewise be denied. You must know that two things of the same kind--i.e., whose essential properties are the same, and which are distinguished from each other by greatness and smallness, strength and weakness, etc.--are necessarily similar, though different in this one way; e.g., a grain of mustard and the sphere of the fixed stars are similar as regards the three dimensions, although the one is exceedingly great, the other exceedingly small, the property of having [three] dimensions is the same in both: or the heat of wax melted by the sun and the heat of the element of fire, are similar as regards heat: although the heat is exceedingly great in the one case, and exceedingly small in the other, the existence of that quality (heat) is the same in both. Thus those who believe in the presence of essential attributes in God, viz., Existence, Life, Power, Wisdom, and Will, should know that these attributes, when applied to God, have not the same meaning as when applied to us, and that the difference does not only consist in magnitude, or in the degree of perfection, stability, and durability. It cannot be said, as they practically believe, that His existence is only more stable, His life more permanent, His power greater, His wisdom more perfect, and His will more general than ours, and that the same definition applies to both. This is in no way admissible, for the expression "more than" is used in comparing two things as regards a certain attribute predicated of both of them in exactly the same sense, and consequently implies similarity [between God and His creatures]. When they ascribe to God essential attributes, these so-called essential attributes should not have any similarity to the attributes of other things, and should according to their own opinion not be included in one of the same definition, just as there is no similarity between the essence of God and that of other beings. They do not follow this principle, for they hold that one definition may include them, and that, nevertheless, there is no similarity between them. Those who are familiar with the meaning of similarity will certainly understand that the term existence, when applied to God and to other beings, is perfectly homonymous. In like manner, the terms Wisdom, Power, Will, and Life are applied to God and to other beings by way of perfect homonymity, admitting

of no comparison whatever. Nor must you think that these attributes are employed as hybrid terms; for hybrid terms are such as are applied to two things which have a similarity to each other in respect to a certain property which is in both of them an accident, not an essential, constituent element. The attributes of God, however, are not considered as accidental by any intelligent person, while all attributes applied to man are accidents, according to the Mutakallemim. I am therefore at a loss to see how they can find any similarity [between the attributes of God and those of man]; how their definitions can be identical, and their significations the same! This is a decisive proof that there is, in no way or sense, anything common to the attributes predicated of God, and those used in reference to ourselves: they have only the same names, and nothing else is common to them. Such being the case, it is not proper to believe, on account of the use of the same attributes, that there is in God something additional to His essence, in the same way as attributes are joined to our essence. This is most important for those who understand it. Keep it in memory, and study it thoroughly in order to be well prepared for that which I am going to explain to you.

CHAPTER LVII

ON attributes; remarks more recondite than the preceding. It is known that existence is an accident appertaining to all things, and therefore an element superadded to their essence. This must evidently be the case as regards everything the existence of which is due to some cause: its existence is an element superadded to its essence. But as regards a being whose existence is not due to any cause--God alone is that being, for His existence, as we have said, is absolute--existence and essence are perfectly identical; He is not a substance to which existence is joined as an accident, as an additional element. His existence is always absolute, and has never been a new element or an accident in Him. Consequently God exists without possessing the attribute of existence. Similarly He lives, without possessing the attribute of life; knows, without possessing the attribute of knowledge; is omnipotent without possessing the attribute of omnipotence; is wise, without possessing the attribute of wisdom: all this reduces itself to one and the same entity; there is no plurality in Him, as will be shown. It is further necessary to consider that unity and plurality are accidents supervening to an object according as it consists of many elements or of one. This is fully explained in the book called Metaphysics. In the same way as number is not the substance of the things numbered, so is unity not the substance of the thing which has the attribute of unity, for unity and plurality are accidents belonging to the category of discrete quantity, and supervening to such objects as are capable of receiving them.

To that being, however, which has truly simple, absolute existence, and in which composition is inconceivable, the accident of unity is as inadmissible as the accident of plurality; that is to say, God's unity is not an element superadded, but He is One without possessing the attribute of unity. The investigation of this subject, which is almost too subtle for our understanding, must not be based on current expressions employed in describing it, for these

are the great source of error. It would be extremely difficult for us to find, in any language whatsoever, words adequate to this subject, and we can only employ inadequate language. In our endeavour to show that God does not include a plurality, we can only say "He is one," although "one" and "many" are both terms which serve to distinguish quantity. We therefore make the subject clearer, and show to the understanding the way of truth by saying He is one but does not possess the attribute of unity.

The same is the case when we say God is the First (*Kadmon*), to express that He has not been created; the term "First" is decidedly inaccurate, for it can in its true sense only be applied to a being that is subject to the relation of time; the latter, however, is an accident to motion which again is connected with a body. Besides the attribute "first" is a relative term, being in regard to time the same as the terms "long" and "short" are in regard to a line. Both expressions, "first" and "created," are equally inadmissible in reference to any being to which the attribute of time is not applicable, just as we do not say "crooked" or "straight" in reference to taste, "salted" or "insipid" in reference to the voice. These subjects are not unknown to those who have accustomed themselves to seek a true understanding of the things, and to establish their properties in accordance with the abstract notions which the mind has formed of them, and who are I not misled by the inaccuracy of the words employed. All attributes, such as "the First," "the Last," occurring in the Scriptures in reference to God, are as metaphorical as the expressions "ear" and "eye." They simply signify that God is not subject to any change or innovation whatever; they do not imply that God can be described by time, or that there is any comparison between Him and any other being as regards time, and that He is called on that account "the first" and "the last." In short, all similar expressions are borrowed from the language commonly used among the people. In the same way we use "One" in reference to God, to express that there is nothing similar to Him, but we do not mean to say that an attribute of unity is added to His essence.

CHAPTER LVIII

This chapter is even more recondite than the preceding. Know that the negative attributes of God are the true attributes: they do not include any incorrect notions or any deficiency whatever in reference to God, while positive attributes imply polytheism, and are inadequate, as we have already shown. It is now necessary to explain how negative expressions can in a certain sense be employed as attributes, and how they are distinguished from positive attributes. Then I shall show that we cannot describe the Creator by any means except by negative attributes. An attribute does not exclusively belong to the one object to which it is related; while qualifying one thing, it can also be employed to qualify other things, and is in that case not peculiar to that one thing. E.g., if you see an object from a distance, and on enquiring what it is, are told that it is a living being, you have certainly learnt an attribute of the object seen, and although that attribute does not exclusively belong to the object perceived, it expresses that the object is not a plant or a mineral. Again, if a man is in a certain house, and

you know that something is in the house, but not exactly what, you ask what is in that house, and you are told, not a plant nor a mineral. You have thereby obtained some special knowledge of the thing; you have learnt that it is a living being, although you do not yet know what kind of a living being it is. The negative attributes have this in common with the positive, that they necessarily circumscribe the object to some extent, although such circumscription consists only in the exclusion of what otherwise would not be excluded. In the following point, however, the negative attributes are distinguished from the positive. The positive attributes, although not peculiar to one thing, describe a portion of what we desire to know, either some part of its essence or some of its accidents: the negative attributes, on the other hand, do not, as regards the essence of the thing which we desire to know, in any way tell us what it is, except it be indirectly, as has been shown in the instance given by us.

After this introduction, I would observe that,--as has already been shown--God's existence is absolute, that it includes no composition, as will be proved, and that we comprehend only the fact that He exists, not His essence. Consequently it is a false assumption to hold that He has any positive attribute: for He does not possess existence in addition to His essence: it therefore cannot be said that the one may be described as an attribute [of the other]; much less has He [in addition to His existence] a compound essence, consisting of two constituent elements to which the attribute could refer: still less has He accidents, which could be described by an attribute. Hence it is clear that He has no positive attribute whatever. The negative attributes, however, are those which are necessary to direct the mind to the truths which we must believe concerning God; for, on the one hand, they do not imply any plurality, and, on the other, they convey to man the highest possible knowledge of God; e.g., it has been established by proof that some being must exist besides those things which can be perceived by the senses, or apprehended by the mind; when we say of this being, that it exists, we mean that its non-existence is impossible. We then perceive that such a being is not, for instance, like the four elements, which are inanimate, and we therefore say that it is living, expressing thereby that it is not dead. We call such a being incorporeal, because we notice that it is unlike the heavens, which are living, but material. Seeing that it is also different from the intellect, which, though incorporeal and living, owes its existence to some cause, we say it is the first, expressing thereby that its existence is not due to any cause. We further notice, that the existence, that is the essence, of this being is not limited to its own existence: many existences emanate from it, and its influence is not like that of the fire in producing heat, or that of the sun in sending forth light, but consists in constantly giving them stability and order by well-established rule, as we shall show: we say, on that account, it has power, wisdom, and will, i.e., it is not feeble or ignorant, or hasty, and does not abandon its creatures: when we say that it is not feeble, we mean that its existence is capable of producing the existence of many other things: by saying that it is not ignorant, we mean "it perceives" or "it lives,"--for everything that perceives is living--by saying "it is not hasty, and does not abandon

its creatures," we mean that all these creatures preserve a certain order and arrangement: they are not left to

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themselves; they are not produced aimlessly, but whatever condition they receive from that being is given with design and intention. We thus learn that there is no other being like unto God, and we say that He is One, i.e., there are not more Gods than one.

It has thus been shown that every attribute predicated of God either denotes the quality of an action, or--when the attribute is intended to convey some idea of the Divine Being itself, and not of His actions--the negation of the opposite. Even these negative attributes must not be formed and applied to God, except in the way in which, as you know, sometimes an attribute is negated in reference to a thing, although that attribute can naturally never be applied to it in the same sense, as, e.g., we say, "This wall does not see." Those who read the present work are aware that, notwithstanding all the efforts of the mind, we can obtain no knowledge of the essence of the heavens--a revolving substance which has been measured by us in spans and cubits, and examined even as regards the proportions of the several spheres to each other and respecting most of their motions--although we know that they must consist of matter and form; but the matter not being the same as sublunary matter, we can only describe the heavens in terms expressing negative properties, but not in terms denoting positive qualities. Thus we say that the heavens are not light, not heavy, not passive and therefore not subject to impressions, and that they do not possess the sensations of taste and smell; or we use similar negative attributes. All this we do, because we do not know their substance. What, then, can be the result of our efforts, when we try to obtain a knowledge of a Being that is free from substance, that is most simple, whose existence is absolute, and not due to any cause, to whose perfect essence nothing can be superadded, and whose perfection consists, as we have shown, in the absence of all defects. All we understand is the fact that He exists, that He is a Being to whom none of His creatures is similar, who has nothing in common with them, who does not include plurality, who is never too feeble to produce other beings, and whose relation to the universe is that of a steersman to a boat; and even this is not a real relation, a real simile, but serves only to convey to us the idea that God rules the universe; that is, that He gives it duration, and preserves its necessary arrangement. This subject will be treated more fully. Praised be He! In the contemplation of His essence, our comprehension and knowledge prove insufficient; in the examination of His works, how they necessarily result from His will, our knowledge proves to be ignorance, and in the endeavour to extol Him in words, all our efforts in speech are mere weakness and failure!

CHAPTER LIX

THE following question might perhaps be asked: Since there is no possibility of obtaining a knowledge of the true essence of God, and since it has also been proved that the only thing that man can apprehend of Him is the fact that He exists, and that all positive attributes are

inadmissible, as has been shown, what is the difference among those who have obtained a knowledge of God? Must not the knowledge obtained by our teacher Moses, and by Solomon, be the same as that obtained by any one of the lowest class of philosophers, since

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there can be no addition to this knowledge? But, on the other hand, it is generally accepted among theologians and also among philosophers, that there can be a great difference between two persons as regards the knowledge of God obtained by them. Know that this is really the case, that those who have obtained a knowledge of God differ greatly from each other; for in the same way as by each additional attribute an object is more specified, and is brought nearer to the true apprehension of the observer, so by each additional negative attribute you advance toward the knowledge of God, and you are nearer to it than he who does not negative, in reference to God, those qualities which you are convinced by proof must be negated. There may thus be a man who after having earnestly devoted many years to the pursuit of one science, and to the true understanding of its principles, till he is fully convinced of its truths, has obtained as the sole result of this study the conviction that a certain quality must be negated in reference to God, and the capacity of demonstrating that it is impossible to apply it to Him. Superficial thinkers will have no proof for this, will doubtfully ask, Is that thing existing in the Creator, or not? And those who are deprived of sight will positively ascribe it to God, although it has been clearly shown that He does not possess it. E.g., while I show that God is incorporeal, another doubts and is not certain whether He is corporeal or incorporeal: others even positively declare that He is corporeal, and appear before the Lord with that belief. Now see how great the difference is between these three men: the first is undoubtedly nearest to the Almighty; the second is remote, and the third still more distant from Him. If there be a fourth person who holds himself convinced by proof that emotions are impossible in God, while the first who rejects the corporeality, is not convinced of that impossibility, that fourth person is undoubtedly nearer the knowledge of God than the first, and go on, so that a person who, convinced by proof, negatives a number of things in reference to God, which according to our belief may possibly be in Him or emanate from Him, is undoubtedly a more perfect man than we are, and would surpass us still more if we positively believed these things to be properties of God. It will now be clear to you, that every time you establish by proof the negation of a thing in reference to God, you become more perfect, while with every additional positive assertion you follow your imagination and recede from the true knowledge of God. Only by such ways must we approach the knowledge of God, and by such researches and studies as would show us the inapplicability of what is inadmissible as regards the Creator, not by such methods as would prove the necessity of ascribing to Him anything extraneous to His essence, or asserting that He has a certain perfection, when we find it to be a perfection in relation to us. The perfections are all to some extent acquired properties, and a property which must be acquired does not exist in everything capable of making such acquisition.

You must bear in mind, that by affirming anything of God, you are removed from Him in two respects; first, whatever you affirm, is only a perfection in relation to us; secondly, He does not possess anything superadded to this essence; His essence includes all His perfections, as we have shown. Since it is a well-known fact that even that knowledge of God which is accessible to man cannot be attained except by negations, and that negations

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do not convey a true idea of the being to which they refer, all people, both of past and present generations, declared that God cannot be the object of human comprehension, that none but Himself comprehends what He is, and that our knowledge consists in knowing that we are unable truly to comprehend Him. All philosophers say, "He has overpowered us by His grace, and is invisible to us through the intensity of His light," like the sun which cannot be perceived by eyes which are too weak to bear its rays. Much more has been said on this topic, but it is useless to repeat it here. The idea is best expressed in the book of Psalms, "Silence is praise to Thee" (lxv. 2). It is a very expressive remark on this subject; for whatever we utter with the intention of extolling and of praising Him, contains something that cannot be applied to God, and includes derogatory expressions; it is therefore more becoming to be silent, and to be content with intellectual reflection, as has been recommended by men of the highest culture, in the words "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" (Ps. iv. 4). You must surely know the following celebrated passage in the Talmud--would that all passages in the Talmud were like that!--although it is known to you, I quote it literally, as I wish to point out to you the ideas contained in it: "A certain person, reading prayers in the presence of Rabbi Haninah, said, 'God, the great, the valiant and the tremendous, the powerful, the strong, and the mighty.'--The rabbi said to him, Have you finished all the praises of your Master? The three epithets, 'God, the great, the valiant and the tremendous,' we should not have applied to God, had Moses not mentioned them in the Law, and had not the men of the Great Synagogue come forward subsequently and established their use in the prayer; and you say all this! Let this be illustrated by a parable. There was once an earthly king, possessing millions of gold coin; he was praised for owning millions of silver coin; was this not really dispraise to him?" Thus far the opinion of the pious rabbi. Consider, first, how repulsive and annoying the accumulation of all these positive attributes was to him; next, how he showed that, if we had only to follow our reason, we should never have composed these prayers, and we should not have uttered any of them. It has, however, become necessary to address men in words that should leave some idea in their minds, and, in accordance with the saying of our Sages, "The Torah speaks in the language of men," the Creator has been described to us in terms of our own perfections; but we should not on that account have uttered any other than the three above-mentioned attributes, and we should not have used them as names of God except when meeting with them in reading the Law. Subsequently, the men of the Great Synagogue, who were prophets, introduced these expressions also into the prayer, but we should not on that account use [in our prayers] any other attributes of God. The principal lesson to be derived from this passage is that there are two reasons for our employing those phrases in our

prayers: first, they occur in the Pentateuch; secondly, the Prophets introduced them into the prayer. Were it not for the first reason, we should never have uttered them; and were it not for the second reason, we should not have copied them from the Pentateuch to recite them in our prayers; how then could we approve of the use of those numerous attributes! You also learn from this that we ought not to mention and employ in our prayers all the attributes we find applied

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to God in the books of the Prophets; for he does not say, "Were it not that Moses, our Teacher, said them, we should not have been able to use them"; but he adds another condition--"and had not the men of the Great Synagogue come forward and established their use in the prayer," because only for that reason are we allowed to use them in our prayers. We cannot approve of what those foolish persons do who are extravagant in praise, fluent and prolix in the prayers they compose, and in the hymns they make in the desire to approach the Creator. They describe God in attributes which would be an offence if applied to a human being; for those persons have no knowledge of these great and important principles, which are not accessible to the ordinary intelligence of man. Treating the Creator as a familiar object, they describe Him and speak of Him in any expressions they think proper; they eloquently continue to praise Him in that manner, and believe that they can thereby influence Him and produce an effect on Him. If they find some phrase suited to their object in the words of the Prophets they are still more inclined to consider that they are free to make use of such texts--which should at least be explained--to employ them in their literal sense, to derive new expressions from them, to form from them numerous variations, and to found whole compositions on them. This license is frequently met with in the compositions of the singers, preachers, and others who imagine themselves to be able to compose a poem. Such authors write things which partly are real heresy, partly contain such folly and absurdity that they naturally cause those who hear them to laugh, but also to feel grieved at the thought that such things can be uttered in reference to God. Were it not that I pitied the authors for their defects, and did not wish to injure them, I should have cited some passages to show you their mistakes; besides, the fault of their compositions is obvious to all intelligent persons. You must consider it, and think thus: If slander and libel is a great sin, how much greater is the sin of those who speak with looseness of tongue in reference to God, and describe Him by attributes which are far below Him; and I declare that they not only commit an ordinary sin, but unconsciously at least incur the guilt of profanity and blasphemy. This applies both to the multitude that listens to such prayers, and to the foolish man that recites them. Men, however, who understand the fault of such compositions, and, nevertheless, recite them, may be classed, according to my opinion, among those to whom the following words are applied: "And the children of Israel used words that were not right against the Lord their God" (2 Kings xvii. 9); and "utter error against the Lord" (Isa. xxxii. 6). If you are of those who regard the honour of their Creator, do not listen in any way to them, much less utter what they say, and still less compose such prayers, knowing how great is the offence of one who hurls aspersions against the Supreme Being. There is no necessity at all for you to use positive attributes of God with the

view of magnifying Him in your thoughts, or to go beyond the limits which the men of the Great Synagogue have introduced in the prayers and in the blessings, for this is sufficient for all purposes, and even more than Sufficient, as Rabbi Haninah said. Other attributes, such as occur in the books of the Prophets, may be uttered when we meet with them in reading those books; but we must bear in mind what has already been explained, that they are either attributes of God's actions, or expressions

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implying the negation of the opposite. This likewise should not be divulged to the multitude; but a reflection of this kind is fitted for the few only who believe that the glorification of God does not consist in *uttering* that which is not to be uttered, but in *reflecting* on that on which man should reflect.

We will now conclude our exposition of the wise words of R. Haninah. He does not employ any such simile as: "A king who possesses millions of gold denarii, and is praised as having hundreds"; for this would imply that God's perfections, although more perfect than those ascribed to man are still of the same kind: but this is not the case, as has been proved. The excellence of the simile consists in the words: "who possesses golden denarii, and is praised as having silver denarii"; this implies that these attributes, though perfections as regards ourselves, are not such as regards God; in reference to Him they would all be defects, as is distinctly suggested in the remark, "Is this not an offence to Him?"

I have already told you that all these attributes, whatever perfection they may denote according to your idea, imply defects in reference to God, if applied to Him in the same sense as they are used in reference to ourselves. Solomon has already given us sufficient instruction on this subject by saying, "For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. v. 2).

CHAPTER LX

I WILL give you in this chapter some illustrations, in order that you may better understand the propriety of forming as many negative attributes as possible, and the impropriety of ascribing to God any positive attributes. A person may know for certain that a "ship" is in existence, but he may not know to what object that name is applied, whether to a substance or to an accident: a second person then learns that the ship is not an accident; a third, that it is not a mineral; a fourth, that it is not a plant growing in the earth; a fifth, that it is not a body whose parts are joined together by nature; a sixth, that it is not a flat object like boards or doors; a seventh, that it is not a sphere; an eighth, that it is not pointed; a ninth, that it is not round-shaped; nor equilateral; a tenth, that it is not solid. It is clear that this tenth person has almost arrived at the correct notion of a "ship" by the foregoing negative attributes, as if he had exactly the same notion as those have who imagine it to be a wooden substance which is hollow, long, and composed of many pieces of wood, that is to say, who know it by positive attributes. Of the other persons in our

illustration, each one is more remote from the correct notion of a ship than the next mentioned, so that the first knows nothing about it but the name. In the same manner you will come nearer to the knowledge and comprehension of God by the negative attributes. But you must be careful, in what you negative, to negative by proof, not by mere words, for each time you ascertain by proof that a certain thing, believed to exist in the Creator, must be negated, you have undoubtedly come one step nearer to the knowledge of God.

It is in this sense that some men come very near to God, and others remain exceedingly remote from Him, not in the sense of those who are deprived of vision, and believe that God occupies a place, which man can physically

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approach or from which he can recede. Examine this well, know it, and be content with it. The way which will bring you nearer to God has been clearly shown to you; walk in it, if you have the desire. On the other hand, there is a great danger in applying positive attributes to God. For it has been shown that every perfection we could imagine, even if existing in God in accordance with the opinion of those who assert the existence of attributes, would in reality not be of the same kind as that imagined by us, but would only be called by the same name, according to our explanation; it would in fact amount to a negation. Suppose, e.g., you say He has knowledge, and that knowledge, which admits of no change and of no plurality, embraces many changeable things; His knowledge remains unaltered, while new things are constantly formed, and His knowledge of a thing before it exists, while it exists, and when it has ceased to exist, is the same without the least change: you would thereby declare that His knowledge is not like ours: and similarly that His existence is not like ours. You thus necessarily arrive at some negation, without obtaining a true conception of an essential attribute: on the contrary, you are led to assume that there is a plurality in God, and to believe that He, though one essence, has several unknown attributes. For if you intend to affirm them, you cannot compare them with those attributes known by us, and they are consequently not of the same kind. You are, as it were, brought by the belief in the reality of the attributes, to say that God is one subject of which several things are predicated: though the subject is not like ordinary subjects, and the predicates are not like ordinary predicates. This belief would ultimately lead us to associate other things with God, and not to believe that He is One. For of every subject certain things can undoubtedly be predicated, and although in reality subject and predicate are combined in one thing, by the actual definition they consist of two elements, the notion contained in the subject not being the same as that contained in the predicate. In the course of this treatise it will be proved to you that God cannot be a compound, and that He is simple in the strictest sense of the word.

I do not merely declare that he who affirms attributes of God has not sufficient knowledge concerning the Creator, admits some association with God, or conceives Him to be different from what He is: but I say that he unconsciously loses his belief in God. For he whose knowledge concerning a thing is insufficient, understands one part of it while he is ignorant of

the other, as, e.g., a person who knows that man possesses life, but does not know that man possesses understanding: but in reference to God, in whose real existence there is no plurality, it is impossible that one thing should be known, and another unknown. Similarly he who associates an object with [the properties of] another object, conceives a true and correct notion of the one object. and applies that notion also to the other; while those who admit the attributes of God, do not consider them as identical with His essence, but as extraneous elements. Again, he who conceives an incorrect notion of an object, must necessarily have a correct idea of the object to some extent, he, however, who says that taste belongs to the category of quantity has not, according to my opinion, an incorrect notion of taste, but is entirely ignorant of its nature, for he does not know to what object the term "taste" is to be applied.--This is a very difficult subject: consider it well.

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According to this explanation you will understand, that those who do not recognize, in reference to God, the negation of things., which others negative by clear proof, are deficient in the knowledge of God, and are remote from comprehending Him. Consequently, the smaller the number of things is which a person can negative in relation to God, the less he knows of Him as has been explained in the beginning of this chapter; but the man who affirms an attribute of God, knows nothing but the same: for the object to which, in his imagination, he applies that name, does not exist; it is a mere fiction and invention, as if he applied that name to a non-existing being, for there is, in reality, no such object. E.g., some one has heard of the elephant, and knows that it is an animal, and wishes to know its form and nature. A person, who is either misled or misleading, tells him it is an animal with one leg, three wings, lives in the depth of the sea, has a transparent body: its face is wide like that of a man, has the same form and shape, speaks like a man, flies sometimes in the air, and sometimes swims like a fish. I should not say, that he described the elephant incorrectly, or that he has an insufficient knowledge of the elephant, but I would say that the thing thus described is an invention and fiction, and that in reality there exists nothing like it: it is a non-existing being, called by the name of a really existing being, and like the griffin, the centaur, and similar imaginary combinations for which simple and compound names have been borrowed from real things. The present case is analogous: namely, God, praised be His name, exists, and His existence has been proved to be absolute and perfectly simple, as I shall explain. If such a simple, absolutely existing essence were said to have attributes, as has been contended, and were combined with extraneous elements, it would in no way be an existing thing, as has been proved by us; and when we say that that essence, which is called "God," is a substance with many properties by which it can be described, we apply that name to an object which does not at all exist. Consider, therefore, what are the consequences of affirming attributes to God! As to those attributes of God which occur in the Pentateuch, or in the books of the Prophets, we must assume that they are exclusively employed, as has been stated by us, to convey to us some notion of the perfections of the Creator, or to express qualities of actions emanating from Him.

CHAPTER LXI

IT is well known that all the names of God occurring in Scripture are derived from His actions, except one, namely, the Tetragrammaton, which consists of the letters *yod*, *hé*, *vau* and *hé*. This name is applied exclusively to God, and is on that account called *Shem ha-meforash*, "The *nomen proprium*." It is the distinct and exclusive designation of the Divine Being; whilst His other names are common nouns, and are derived from actions, to which some of our own are similar, as we have already explained. Even the name *Adonay*, "Lord," which has been substituted for the Tetragrammaton, is derived from the appellative "lord"; comp. "The man who is the lord (*adone*) of the land spake roughly to us" (Gen. xliii. 30). The difference between *Adoni*, "my lord," (with *hirek* under the *nun*), or *Adonay* (with *kamez*), is similar to the difference between *Sari*, "my prince," and

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[paragraph continues] *Sarai*, Abraham's wife (*ib.* xvi. 1), the latter form denoting majesty and distinction. An angel is also addressed as "*Adonay*"; e.g., "*Adonay* (My lord), pass not away, I pray thee" (*ib.* xviii. 3). I have restricted my explanation to the term *Adonay*, the substitute for the Tetragrammaton, because it is more commonly applied to God than any of the other names which are in frequent use, like *dayyan*, "judge," *shadday*, "almighty," *zaddik*, "righteous," *hannun*, "gracious," *rahum*, "merciful," and *elohim* "chief" all these terms are unquestionably appellations and derivatives. The derivation of the name, consisting of *yod*, *hé*, *vau*, and *hé*, is not positively known, the word having no additional signification. This sacred name, which, as you know, was not pronounced except in the sanctuary by the appointed priests, when they gave the sacerdotal blessing, and by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, undoubtedly denotes something which is peculiar to God, and is not found in any other being. It is possible that in the Hebrew language, of which we have now but a slight knowledge, the Tetragrammaton, in the way it was pronounced, conveyed the meaning of "absolute existence." In short, the majesty of the name and the great dread of uttering it, are connected with the fact that it denotes God Himself, without including in its meaning any names of the things created by Him. Thus our Sages say: "'My name' (Num. vi. 27) means the name which is peculiar to Me." All other names of God have reference to qualities, and do not signify a simple substance, but a substance with attributes, they being derivatives. On that account it is believed that they imply the presence of a plurality in God, I mean to say, the presence of attributes, that is, of some extraneous element superadded to His essence. Such is the meaning of all derivative names: they imply the presence of some attribute and its substratum, though this be not distinctly named. As, however, it has been proved, that God is not a substratum capable of attributes, we are convinced that those appellatives when employed as names of God, only indicate the relation of certain actions to Him, or they convey to us some notion of His perfection.

Hence R. Haninah would have objected to the expression "the great, the mighty, and the tremendous," had it not been for the two reasons mentioned by him; because such expressions

lead men to think that the attributes are essential, i.e., they are perfections actually present in God. The frequent use of names of God derived from actions, led to the belief that He had as many [essential] attributes as there were actions from which the names were derived. The following promise was therefore made, implying that mankind will at a certain future time understand this subject, and be free from the error it involves: "In that day will the Lord be One, and His name One" (Zech. xiv. 9). The meaning of this prophecy is this: He being One, will then be called by one name, which will indicate the essence of God; but it does not mean that His sole name will be a derivative [viz., "One"]. In the *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer* (chap. iii.) occurs the following passage: "Before the universe was created, there was only the Almighty and His name." Observe how clearly the author states that all these appellatives employed as names of God came into existence after the Creation. This is true; for they all refer to actions manifested in the Universe. If, however, you consider His essence as separate and as abstracted from all

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actions, you will not describe it by an appellative, but by a proper noun, which exclusively indicates that essence. Every other name of God is a derivative, only the Tetragrammaton is a real *nomen proprium*, and must not be considered from any other point of view. You must beware of sharing the error of those who write amulets (*kameot*). Whatever you hear from them, or read in their works, especially in reference to the names which they form by combination, is utterly senseless; they call these combinations *shemot* (names) and believe that their pronunciation demands sanctification and purification, and that by using them they are enabled to work miracles. Rational persons ought not to listen to such men, nor in any way believe their assertions. No other name is called *shem ha-meforash* except this Tetragrammaton, which is written, but is not pronounced according to its letters. The words, "Thus shall ye bless the children of Israel" (Num. vi. 23) are interpreted in Siphri as follows: "'Thus,' in the holy language; again 'thus,' with the *Shem ha-meforash*." The following remark, is also found there: "In the sanctuary [the name of God is pronounced] as it is spelt, but elsewhere by its substitutes." In the Talmud, the following passage occurs: "'Thus,' i.e., with the *shem ha-meforash*.--You say [that the priests, when blessing the people, had to pronounce] the *shem ha-meforash*; this was perhaps not the case, and they may have used other names instead.--We infer it from the words: 'And they shall put My name' (Num. vi. 27), i.e., My name, which is peculiar to Me." It has thus been shown that the *shem ha-meforash* (the proper name of God) is the Tetragrammaton, and that this is the only name which indicates nothing but His essence, and therefore our Sages in referring to this sacred term said "'My name' means the one which is peculiar to Me alone."

In the next chapter I will explain the circumstances which brought men to a belief in the power of *Shemot* (names of God); I will point out the main subject of discussion, and lay open to you its mystery, and then not any doubt will be left in your mind, unless you prefer to be misguided.

CHAPTER LXII

WE were commanded that, in the sacerdotal blessing, the name of the Lord should be pronounced as it is written in the form of the Tetragrammaton, the *shem ha-me-forash*. It was not known to every one how the name was to be pronounced, what vowels were to be given to each consonant, and whether some of the letters capable of reduplication should receive a dagesh. Wise men successively transmitted the pronunciation of the name: it occurred only once in seven years that the pronunciation was communicated to a distinguished disciple. I must, however, add that the statement, "The wise men communicated the Tetragrammaton to their children and their disciples once in seven years," does not only refer to the pronunciation but also to its meaning, because of which the Tetragrammaton was made a *nomen proprium* of God, and which includes certain metaphysical principles.

Our Sages knew in addition a name of God which consisted of twelve letters, inferior in sanctity to the Tetragrammaton. I believe that this was not a single noun, but consisted of two or three words, the sum of their letters being twelve, and that these words were used by our Sages as a substitute

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for the Tetragrammaton, whenever they met with it in the course of their reading the Scriptures, in the same manner as we at present substitute for it *aleph, daleth*, etc. [i.e., *Adonay*, "the Lord"]. There is no doubt that this name also, consisting of twelve letters, was in this sense more distinctive than the name *Adonay*: it was never withheld from any of the students; whoever wished to learn it, had the opportunity given to him without any reserve: not so the Tetragrammaton: those who knew it did not communicate it except to a son or a disciple, once in seven years. When, however, unprincipled men had become acquainted with that name which consists of twelve letters and in consequence had become corrupt in faith--as is sometimes the case when persons with imperfect knowledge become aware that a thing is not such as they had imagined--the Sages concealed also that name, and only communicated it to the worthiest among the priests, that they should pronounce it when they blessed the people in the Temple; for the Tetragrammaton was then no longer uttered in the sanctuary on account of the corruption of the people. There is a tradition, that with the death of Simeon the just, his brother priests discontinued the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in the blessing; they used, instead, this name of twelve letters. It is further stated, that at first the name of twelve letters was communicated to every man; but when the number of impious men increased it was only entrusted to the worthiest among the priests, whose voice, in pronouncing it, was drowned amid the singing of their brother priests. Rabbi Tarphon said, "Once I followed my grandfather to the *daïs* [where the blessing was pronounced]; I inclined my ear to listen to a priest [who pronounced the name], and noticed that his voice was drowned amid the singing of his brother priests."

There was also a name of forty-two letters known among them. Every intelligent person knows that one word of forty-two letters is impossible. But it was a phrase of several words which had together forty-two letters. There is no doubt that the words had such a meaning as to convey a

correct notion of the essence of God, in the way we have stated. This phrase of so many letters is called a name because, like other proper nouns, they represent one single object, and several words have been employed in order to explain more clearly the idea which the name represents: for an idea can more easily be comprehended if expressed in many words. Mark this and observe now that the instruction in regard to the names of God extended to the signification of each of those names, and did not confine itself to the pronunciation of the single letters which, in themselves, are destitute of an idea. *Shem ha-meforash* applied neither to the name of forty-two letters nor to that of twelve, but only to the Tetragrammaton, the proper name of God, as we have explained. Those two names must have included some metaphysical ideas. It can be proved that one of them conveyed profound knowledge, from the following rule laid down by our Sages: "The name of forty-two letters is exceedingly holy; it can only be entrusted to him who is modest, in the midway of life, not easily provoked to anger, temperate, gentle, and who speaks kindly to his fellow men. He who understands it, is cautious with it, and keeps it in purity, is loved above and is liked here below; he is respected by his fellow men; his learning remaineth with him, and he enjoys both this world and the world to come." So far in the Talmud.

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[paragraph continues] How grievously has this passage been misunderstood! Many believe that the forty-two letters are merely to be pronounced mechanically; that by knowledge of these, without any further interpretation, they can attain to these exalted ends, although it is stated that he who desires to obtain a knowledge of that name must be trained in the virtues named before, and go through all the great preparations which are mentioned in that passage. On the contrary, it is evident that all this preparation aims at a knowledge of Metaphysics, and includes ideas which constitute the "secrets of the Law," as we have explained (chap. xxxv.). In works on Metaphysics it has been shown that such knowledge, i.e., the perception of the active intellect, can never be forgotten: and this is meant by the phrase "his learning remaineth with him."

When bad and foolish men were reading such passages, they considered them to be a support of their false pretensions and of their assertion that they could, by means of an arbitrary combination of letters, form a *shem* ("a name") which would act and operate miraculously when written or spoken in a certain particular way. Such fictions, originally invented by foolish men, were in the course of time committed to writing, and came into the hands of good but weak-minded and ignorant persons who were unable to discriminate between truth and falsehood, and made a secret of these *shemot* (names). When after the death of such persons those writings were discovered among their papers, it was believed that they contained truths; for, "The simple believeth every word" (Prov. xiv. 15).

We have already gone too far away from our interesting subject and recondite inquiry, endeavouring to refute a perverse notion, the absurdity of which every one must perceive who gives a thought to the subject. We have, however, been compelled to mention it, in treating of the divine names, their meanings, and the opinions commonly held concerning them. We shall now

return to our theme. Having shown that all names of God, with the exception of the Tetragrammaton (*Shem ha-meforash*), are appellatives, we must now, in a separate chapter, speak on the phrase *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*, (Exod. iii. 14), because it is connected with the difficult subject under discussion, namely, the inadmissibility of divine attributes.

CHAPTER LXIII

BEFORE approaching the subject of this chapter, we will first consider the words of Moses, "And they shall say unto me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them" (Exod. iii. 13). How far was this question, anticipated by Moses, appropriate, and how far was he justified in seeking to be prepared with the answer? Moses was correct in declaring, "But, behold, they will not believe me, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee" (*ib.* iv. 1); for any man claiming the authority of a prophet must expect to meet with such an objection so long as he has not given a proof of his mission. Again, if the question, as appears at first sight, referred only to the name, as a mere utterance of the lips, the following dilemma would present itself: either the Israelites knew the name, or they had never heard it: if the name was known to them, they would perceive in it no argument in favour of the mission of Moses, his knowledge and their knowledge of the divine name

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being the same. If, on the other hand, they had never heard it mentioned, and if the knowledge of it was to prove the mission of Moses, what evidence would they have that this was really the name of God? Moreover, after God had made known that name to Moses, and had told him, "Go and gather the elders of Israel. . . . and they shall hearken to thy voice" (*ib.* xvi. 18), he replied, "Behold, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice," although God had told him, "And they will hearken to thy voice"; whereupon God answered, "What is that in thine hand?" and he said, "A rod" (*ib.* iv. 2). In order to obviate this dilemma, you must understand what I am about to tell you. You know how widespread were in those days the opinions of the Sabians: all men, except a few individuals, were idolaters, that is to say, they believed in spirits, in man's power to direct the influences of the heavenly bodies, and in the effect of talismans. Any one who in those days laid claim to authority, based it either, like Abraham, on the fact that, by reasoning and by proof he had been convinced of the existence of a Being who rules the whole Universe, or that some spiritual power was conferred upon him by a star, by an angel, or by a similar agency; but no one could establish his claim on prophecy, that is to say, on the fact that God had spoken to him, or had entrusted a mission to him: before the days of Moses no such assertion had ever been made. You must not be misled by the statements that God spoke to the Patriarchs, or that He had appeared to them. For you do not find any mention of a prophecy which appealed to others, or which directed them. Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, or any other person before them did not tell the people, "God said unto me, you shall do this thing, or you shall not do that thing." or "God has sent me to you." Far from it! for God spoke to them on nothing but of what especially concerned them, i.e., He communicated to them things relating to their perfection, directed them in what

they should do, and foretold them what the condition of their descendants would be; nothing beyond this. They guided their fellow-men by means of argument and instruction, as is implied, according to the interpretation generally received amongst us, in the words "and the souls that they had gotten in Haran" (Gen. xii. 5). When God appeared to our Teacher Moses, and commanded him to address the people and to bring them the message, Moses replied that he might first be asked to prove the existence of God in the Universe, and that only after doing so he would be able to announce to them that God had sent him. For all men, with few exceptions, were ignorant of the existence of God; their highest thoughts did not extend beyond the heavenly sphere, its forms or its influences. They could not yet emancipate themselves from sensation, and had not yet attained to any intellectual perfection. Then God taught Moses how to teach them, and how to establish amongst them the belief in the existence of Himself, namely, by saying *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*, a name derived from the verb *hayah* in the sense of "existing," for the verb *hayah* denotes "to be," and in Hebrew no difference is made between the verbs "to be" and "to exist." The principal point in this phrase is that the same word which denotes "existence," is repeated as an attribute. The word *asher*, "that," corresponds to the Arabic *illadi* and *illati*, and is an incomplete noun that must be completed by another noun; it may be considered as the subject of the predicate which follows. The first noun which is to be described

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is *ehyeh*; the second, by which the first is described, is likewise *ehyeh*, the identical word, as if to show that the object which is to be described and the attribute by which it is described are in this case necessarily identical. This is, therefore, the expression of the idea that God exists, but not in the ordinary sense of the term; or, in other words, He is "the existing Being which is the existing Being," that is to say, the Being whose existence is absolute. The proof which he was to give consisted in demonstrating that there is a Being of absolute existence, that has never been and never will be without existence. This I will clearly prove (II. Introd. Prop. 20 and chap. i.).

God thus showed Moses the proofs by which His existence would be firmly established among the wise men of His people. Therefore the explanation of the name is followed by the words, "Go, gather the elders of Israel," and by the assurance that the elders would understand what God had shown to him, and would accept it, as is stated in the words, "And they will hearken to thy voice." Then Moses replied as follows: They will accept the doctrine that God exists convinced by these intelligible proofs. But, said Moses, by what means shall I be able to show that this existing God has sent me? Thereupon God gave him the sign. We have thus shown that the question, "What is His name" means "Who is that Being, which according to thy belief has sent thee?" The sentence, "What is his name" (instead of, Who is He), has here been used as a tribute of praise and homage, as though it had been said, Nobody can be ignorant of Thy essence and of Thy real existence; if, nevertheless, I ask what is Thy name, I mean, What idea is to be expressed by the name? (Moses considered it inappropriate to say to God that any person was ignorant of God's existence, and therefore described the Israelites as ignorant of God's name, not as ignorant of Him who was called by that name.)--The name *Jah* likewise implies eternal existence.

Shadday, however, is derived from *day*, "enough"; comp. "for the stuff they had was sufficient" (*dayyam*, Exod. xxxvi. 7) the *shin* is equal to *asher*, "which," as in *she-kebar*, "which already" (Eccles. ii. 16). The name *Shadday*, therefore, signifies "he who is sufficient"; that is to say, He does not require any other being for effecting the existence of what He created, or its conservation: His existence is sufficient for that. In a similar manner the name *hasin* implies "strength"; comp. "he was strong (*hason*) as the oaks" (Amos ii. 9). The same is the case with "rock," which is a homonym, as we have explained (chap. xvi.). It is, therefore, clear that all these names of God are appellatives, or are applied to God by way of homonymy, like *zur* and others, the only exception being the tetragrammaton, the *Shem ha-meforash* (the *nomen proprium* of God), which is not an appellative; it does not denote any attribute of God, nor does it imply anything except His existence. Absolute existence includes the idea of eternity, i.e., the necessity of existence. Note well the result at which we have arrived in this chapter.

CHAPTER LXIV

KNOW that in some instances by the phrase "the name of the Lord," nothing but the name alone is to be understood; comp. "Thou shalt not take the

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name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Exod. xl. 7); "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord" (Lev. xxiv. 16). This occurs in numerous other passages. In other instances it means the essence and reality of God Himself, as in the phrase "They shall say to me, What is his name?" Sometimes it stands for "the word of God," so that "the name of God," "the word of God," and "the command of God," are identical phrases; comp. "for my name is in him" (Exod. xxiii. 21), that is, My word or My command is in him; i.e., he is the instrument of My desire and will. I shall explain this fully in treating of the homonymy of the term "angel" (II. chap. vi. and xxxiv.).--The same is the case with "The glory of the Lord." The phrase sometimes signifies "the material light," which God caused to rest on a certain place in order to show the distinction of that place, e.g., "And the glory of the Lord (*kebod adonay*) abode upon Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it" (Exod. xxiv. 16); "And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (*ib.* xl. 35). Sometimes the essence, the reality of God is meant by that expression, as in the words of Moses, "Show me thy glory" (*ib.* xxxiii. 18), to which the reply was given, "For no man shall see me and live" (*ib.* xx.). This shows that the glory of the Lord in this instance is the same as He Himself, and that "Thy glory" has been substituted for "Thyself," as a tribute of homage; an explanation which we also gave of the words, "And they shall say unto me, What is his name?" Sometimes the term "glory" denotes the glorification of the Lord by man or by any other being. For the true glorification of the Lord consists in the comprehension of His greatness, and all who comprehend His greatness and perfection, glorify Him according to their capacity, with this difference, that man alone magnifies God in words, expressive of what he has received in his mind, and what he desires to communicate to others. Things not endowed with comprehension, as e.g., minerals, may also be considered as glorifying the Lord, for by their natural properties

they testify to the omnipotence and wisdom of their Creator, and cause him who examines them to praise God, by means of speech or without the use of words, if the power of speech be wanting. In Hebrew this licence has been extended still further, and the use of the verb "to speak" has been admitted as applicable in such a case: things which have no comprehension are therefore said to give utterance to praise, e.g., "All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?" (Ps. xxxv. 10). Because a consideration of the properties of the bones leads to the discovery of that truth, and it is through them that it became known, they are represented as having uttered the divine praise: and since this [cause of God's praise] is itself called "praise," it has been said "the fulness of the whole earth is his praise" (Isa. vi. 3), in the same sense as "the earth is full of his praise" (Hab. iii. 3). As to *kabod* being employed in the sense of praise, comp. "Give praise (*kabod*) to the Lord your God" (Jer. xiii. 16); also "and in his temple does every one speak of his praise (*kabod*)" (Ps. xxix. 9), etc. Consider well the homonymity of this term, and explain it in each instance in accordance with the context; you will thus escape great embarrassment.

CHAPTER LXV

AFTER YOU have advanced thus far, and truly comprehended that God exists

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without having the attribute of existence, and that He is One, without having the attribute of unity, I do not think that I need explain to you the inadmissibility of the attribute of speech in reference to God, especially since our people generally believe that the Law, i.e., the word ascribed to Him, was created. Speech is attributed to Him, in so far as the word which Moses heard, was produced and brought to existence by God in the same manner as He produced all His other works and creations. As we shall have to speak more fully on prophecy, we shall here merely show that speech is attributed to God in the same way as all other actions, which are similar to our own. When we are told that God addressed the Prophets and spoke to them, our minds are merely to receive a notion that there is a Divine knowledge to which the Prophets attain; we are to be impressed with the idea that the things which the Prophets communicate to us come from the Lord, and are not altogether the products of their own conceptions and ideas. This subject, which we have already mentioned above, will receive further explanation. It is the object of this chapter to show that the words "speaking" and "saying" are synonymous terms denoting (a) "Speech"; as, e.g., "Moses shall speak (*yedabber*)" (Exod. xix. 19); "And Pharaoh said (*va-yomer*)" (*ib.* v. 5); (b) "Thought" as formed in the mind without being expressed in words; e.g., "And I thought (*ve-amarti*) in my heart" (Eccles. ii. 15); "And I thought (*vedibbarti*) in my heart" (*ib.*); "And thy heart will imagine (*yedabber*)" (Prov. xxiii. 33); "Concerning Thee my heart thought (*amar*)" (Ps. xxvii. 8); "And Esau thought (*va-yomer*) in his heart" (Gen. xxvii. 41); examples of this kind are numerous; (c) Will; e.g., "And he said (*va-yomer*) to slay David" (2 Sam. xxi. 16), that is to say, he wished or he intended to slay him; "Dost thou desire (*omer*) to

slay me" (Exod. ii. 14); "And the whole congregation intended (*va-yomeru*) to stone them" (Num. xiv. 10). Instances of this kind are likewise numerous.

The two terms, when applied to God, can only have one of the two last-mentioned significations, viz., he wills and he desires, or he thinks, and there is no difference whether the divine thought became known to man by means of an actual voice, or by one of those kinds of inspiration which I shall explain further on (II. chap. xxxviii.). We must not suppose that in speaking God employed voice or sound. or that He has a soul in which the thoughts reside, and that these thoughts are things superadded to His essence; but we ascribe and attribute to Him thoughts in the same manner as we ascribe to Him any other attributes. The use of these words in the sense of will and desire, is based, as I have explained, on the homonymy of these terms. In addition they are figures borrowed from our common practices, as has been already pointed out. For we cannot, at a first glance, see how anything can be produced by a mere desire: we think that he who wishes to produce a thing, must perform a certain act, or command some one else to perform it. Therefore the command is figuratively ascribed to God when that takes place which He wishes, and we then say that He commanded that a certain thing should be accomplished. All this has its origin in our comparing the acts of God to our own acts, and also in the use of the term *amar* in the sense of "He desired," as we have already explained. The words "And He said," occurring in the account of the creation, signify "He wished," or "He desired." This has already been stated by other authors, and is well

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known. A proof for this, namely that the phrase "God said," in the first chapter of Genesis, must be taken in a figurative sense "He willed," and not in its literal meaning, is found in the circumstance that a command can only be given to a being which exists and is capable of receiving the command. Comp. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. xxxiii. 6). "His mouth," and "the breath of his mouth," are undoubtedly figurative expressions, and the same is the case with "His word" and "His speech." The meaning of the verse is therefore that they [the heavens and all their host] exist through His will and desire. All our eminent authorities are cognisant of this; and, I need not explain that in Hebrew *amar* and *dibber* have the same meaning, as is proved by the passage, "For it has heard all the words (*imre*) of the Lord which he spake (*dibber*) unto us" (Josh. xxiv. 27).

CHAPTER LXVI

"AND the tables were the work of God" (Exod. xxxii. 16), that is to say, they were the product of nature, not of art; for all natural things are called "the work of the Lord," e.g., "These see the works of the Lord" (Ps. cvii. 24); and the description of the several things in nature, as plants, animals, winds, rain, etc., is followed by the exclamation, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works!" (Ps. civ. 24). Still more striking is the relation between God and His creatures, as

expressed in the phrase, "The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted" (*ib.* 16); the cedars being the product of nature, and not of art, are described as having been planted by the Lord. Similarly we explain, "And the writing was the writing of God" (Exod. xxxii. 16); the relation in which the writing stood to God has already been defined in the words "written with the finger of God" (*ib.* xxxi. 18), and the meaning of this phrase is the same as that of "the work of thy fingers" (Ps. viii. 4). this being said of the heavens; of the latter it has been stated distinctly that they were made by a word; comp. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (*ib.* xxxiii. 6). Hence you learn that in the Bible, the creation of a thing is figuratively expressed by terms denoting "word" and "speech" The same thing which according to one passage has been made by the word, is represented in another passage as made by the "finger of God." The phrase "written by the finger of God" is therefore identical with "written by the word of God"; and if the latter phrase had been used, it would have been equal to "written by the will and desire of God?" Onkelos adopted in this place a strange explanation, and rendered the words literally "written by the finger of the Lord"; he thought that "the finger" was a certain thing ascribed to God; so that "the finger of the Lord" is to be interpreted in the same way as "the mountain of God" (Exod. iii. 1), "the rod of God" (*ib.* iv. 20), that is, as being an instrument created by Him, which by His will engraved the writing on the tables. I cannot see why Onkelos preferred this explanation. It would have been more reasonable to say "written by the word of the Lord," in imitation of the verse "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made?" Or was the creation of the writing on the tables more difficult than the creation of the stars in the spheres? As the latter were made by the direct will of God, not by means of an instrument, the writing may also have been produced by His direct will, not by means

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of an instrument. You know what the Mishnah says, "Ten things were created on Friday in the twilight of the evening," and "the writing" is one of the ten things. This shows how generally it was assumed by our forefathers that the writing of the tables was produced in the same manner as the rest of the creation, as we have shown in our Commentary on the Mishnah (*Aboth*, v. 6).

CHAPTER LXVII

SINCE the verb "to say" has been figuratively used to express the will of the Creator, and the phrase "And he said" has repeatedly been employed in the account of all the things created in the six days of the beginning, the expression "to rest" has likewise been figuratively applied to God in reference to the Sabbath-day, on which there was no creation; it is therefore said, "And he rested (*va-yishbot*) on the seventh day" (Gen. ii. 2). For "to leave off speaking" is, in Hebrew, likewise expressed by the same verb, as, e.g., "So these three men ceased (*va-yishbetu*) to answer Job" (Job xxxii. 1) also by *nuah*, as, in "They spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased (*va-yanuḥu*)" (1 Sam. xxv. 9). In my opinion, (*va-yanuḥu*) means "they ceased to speak," and waited for the answer; for no allusion to exertion whatever having previously been mentioned, the words, "and they rested," in its primary signification, would have

been entirely out of place in that narrative, even if the young men who spoke had really used some exertion. The author relates that having delivered that whole speech, which, as you find, consisted of gentle expressions, they were silent, that is to say, they did not add any word or act by which the reply of Nabal could be justified: it being the object of the entire passage to represent Nabal's conduct as extremely reprehensible. In that sense [viz., "to cease," or "to leave off"] the verb *nuaḥ* is used in the phrase "And he left off (*va-yanah*) on the seventh day."

Our Sages, and some of the Commentators, took, however, *nuaḥ* in its primary sense "to rest," but as a transitive form (hiphil), explaining the phrase thus: "and he gave rest to the world on the seventh day," i.e., no further act of creation took place on that day.

It is possible that the word *va-yanah* is derived either from *yanah*, a verb of the class *pe-yod*, or *naḥah*, a verb of the class *lamed-he*, and has this meaning: "he established" or "he governed" the Universe in accordance with the properties it possessed on the seventh day"; that is to say, while on each of the six days events took place contrary to the natural laws now in operation throughout the Universe, on the seventh day the Universe was merely upheld and left in the condition in which it continues to exist. Our explanation is not impaired by the fact that the form of the word deviates from the rules of verbs of these two classes: for there are frequent exceptions to the rules of conjugations, and especially of the weak verbs: and any interpretation which removes such a source of error must not be abandoned because of certain grammatical rules. We know that we are ignorant of the sacred language, and that grammatical rules only apply to the majority of cases.--The same root is also found as a verb *‘ayin-vav* in the sense "to place" and

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[paragraph continues] "to set," as e.g., "and it shall be established and she shall be placed (*ve-hunniḥah*) there upon her own base" (Zech. v. 11), and "she suffered neither the birds of the air to settle (*la-nuaḥ*) on them" (2 Sam. xxi. 10). According to my opinion, the verb has the same signification in Hab. in. 16, "that I might remain firm (*anuah*) in the day of trouble."

The word (*va-yinnafash*) is a verb derived from *nefesh*, the homonymity of which we have already explained (chap. xli.), namely, that it has the signification of intention or will: (*va-yinnafash*) accordingly means: "that which he desired was accomplished, and what he wished had come into existence."

CHAPTER LXVIII

You are acquainted with the well-known principle of the philosophers that God is the *intellectus*, the *ens intelligens*, and the *ens intelligibile*. These three things are in God one and the same, and do not in any way constitute a plurality. We have also mentioned it in our larger work, "*Mishneh Torah*," and we have explained there that it is a fundamental principle of our religion, namely, that He is absolutely one, that nothing combines with Him; that is to say, there is no Eternal thing

besides Him. On that account we say *hai adonay*, "the Lord liveth" (Ruth iii. 13), and not *he adonay*, "the life of the Lord," for His life is not a thing distinct from His essence, as we have explained in treating of the inadmissibility of the attributes. There is no doubt that he who has not studied any works on mental philosophy, who has not comprehended the nature of the mind, who has no knowledge of its essence, and considers it in no other way than he would consider the nature of whiteness and of blackness, will find this subject extremely difficult, and to him our principle that the *intellectus*, the *intelligens*, and the *intelligibile*, are in God one and the same thing, will appear as unintelligible as if we said that the whiteness, the whitening substance, and the material which is whitened are one and the same thing. And, indeed, many ignorant people refute at once our principle by using such comparisons. Even amongst those who imagine that they are wise, many find this subject difficult, and are of opinion that it is impossible for the mind to grasp the truth of this proposition, although it is a demonstrated truth, as has been shown by Metaphysicians. I will tell you now what has been proved. Man, before comprehending a thing, comprehends it in potentia (δυνάμει) when, however, he comprehends a thing, e.g., the form of a certain tree which is pointed out to him, when he abstracts its form from its substance, and reproduces the abstract form, an act performed by the intellect, he comprehends in reality (ἐνεργείᾳ), and the intellect which he has acquired in actuality, is the abstract form of the tree in man's mind. For in such a case the intellect is not a thing distinct from the thing comprehended. It is therefore clear to you that the thing comprehended is the abstract form of the tree, and at the same time it is the intellect in action: and that the intellect and the abstract form of the tree are not two different things, for the intellect in action is nothing but the thing comprehended, and that agent by which the form of the tree has been turned into an intellectual and abstract object, namely, that which comprehends, is undoubtedly the intellect in action.

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[paragraph continues] All intellect is identical with its action: the intellect in action is not a thing different from its action, for the true nature and assence of the intellect is comprehension, and you must not think that the intellect in action is a thing existing by itself, separate from comprehension, and that comprehension is a different thing connected with it: for the very essence of the intellect is comprehension. In assuming an intellect in action you assume the comprehension of the thing comprehended. This is quite clear to all who have made themselves familiar with the figurative language common to this discipline. You therefore accept it as proved that the intellect consists in its action, which is its true nature and essence. Consequently the very thing by which the form of that tree has been made abstract and intelligible, viz., the intellect, is at the same time the *intelligens*, for the intellect is itself the *agens* which abstracts the form and comprehends it, and that is the action, on account of which it is called the *intelligens*; but itself and its action are identical: and that which is called intellect in action consists [in the abovementioned instance] of nothing else but of the form of the tree. It must now be obvious to you that whenever the intellect is found in action, the intellect and the thing comprehended are one and the same thing; and also that the function of all intellect, namely, the act of

comprehending, is its essence. The intellect, that which comprehends and that which is comprehended, are therefore the same, whenever a real comprehension takes place. But, when we speak of the power of comprehension, we necessarily distinguish two things: the power itself, and the thing which can be comprehended: e.g., that hylic intellect of Zaid is the power of comprehension, and this tree is, in like manner, a thing which is capable of being comprehended; these, undoubtedly, are two different things. When, however, the potential is replaced by the actual, and when the form of the tree has really been comprehended, the form comprehended is the intellect, and it is by that same intellect, by the intellect in action, that the tree has been converted into an abstract idea, and has been comprehended. For everything in which a real action takes place exists in reality. On the other hand, the power of comprehension, and the object capable of comprehension are two things; but that which is only potential cannot be imagined otherwise than in connexion with an object possessing that capacity, as, e.g., man, and thus we have three things: the man who possesses the power, and is capable of comprehending; that power itself, namely, the power of comprehension, and the object which presents itself as an object of comprehension, and is capable of being comprehended; to use the foregoing example, the man, the hylic intellect, and the abstract form of the tree, are three different things. They become one and the same thing when the intellect is in action, and you will never find the intellect different from the comprehensible object, unless the power of comprehending and the power of being comprehended be referred to. Now, it has been proved, that God is an intellect which always is in action, and that--as has been stated, and as will be proved hereafter--there is in Him at no time a mere potentiality, that He does not comprehend at one time, and is without comprehension at another time, but He comprehends constantly; consequently, He and the things comprehended are one and the same thing, that is to say, His essence: and the act of comprehending because of which it is said that He comprehends,

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is the intellect itself, which is likewise His essence, God is therefore always the *intellectus*, the *intelligens*, and the *intelligibile*.

We have thus shown that the identity of the intellect, the *intelligens* and the *intelligibile*, is not only a fact as regards the Creator, but as regards all intellect, when in action. There is, however, this difference, that from time to time our intellect passes over from mere potentiality to reality, and that the pure intellect, i.e., the active intellect, finds sometimes obstacles, though not in itself, but accidentally in some external cause. It is not our present intention to explain this subject, but we will merely show that God alone, and none besides Him, is an intellect constantly in action, and there is, neither in Himself nor in anything beside Him, any obstacle whereby His comprehension would be hindered. Therefore He always includes the *intelligens*, the *intellectus*, and the *intelligibile*, and His essence is at the same time the *intelligens*, the *intelligibile*, and the *intellectus*, as is necessarily the case with all intellect in action.

We have reiterated this idea in the present chapter because it is exceedingly abstruse, and I do not apprehend that the reader will confound intellectual comprehension with the representative faculty--with the reproduction of the material image in our imagination, since this work is designed only for those who have studied philosophy, and who know what has already been said on the soul and its faculties.

CHAPTER LXIX

THE philosophers, as you know, call God the First Cause (in Hebrew *'illah* and *sibbah*): but those who are known by the name of Mutakallemim are very much opposed to the use of that name, and call Him *Agens*, believing that there is a great difference whether we say that God is the Cause or that He is the *Agens*. They argue thus: If we say that God is the Cause, the coexistence of the Cause with that which was produced by that Cause would necessarily be implied: this again would involve the belief that the Universe was eternal, and that it was inseparable from God. When, however, we say that God is the *Agens*, the co-existence of the *Agens* with its product is not implied: for the *agens* can exist anterior to its product: we cannot even imagine how an *agens* can be in action unless it existed before its own production. This is an argument advanced by persons who do not distinguish between the potential and the actual. You, however, should know that in this case there is no difference whether you employ the term "cause" or "*agens*"; for if you take the term "cause" in the sense of a mere potentiality, it precedes its effect; but if you mean the cause in action, then the effect must necessarily co-exist with the cause in action. The same is the case with the *agens*; take it as an *agens* in reality, the work must necessarily co-exist with its *agens*. For the builder, before he builds the house, is not in reality a builder, but has the faculty for building a house--in the same way as the materials for the house before it is being built are merely *in potentiâ*--but when the house has been built, he is the builder in reality, and his product must likewise be in actual existence. Nothing is therefore gained by choosing the term "*agens*" and rejecting the term "cause." My object here is to show that these two terms are equal, and in the same

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manner as we call God an *Agens*, although the work does not yet exist, only because there is no hindrance or obstacle which might prevent Him from doing it whenever He pleases, we may also call Him the Cause, although the effect may not yet be in existence.

The reason why the philosophers called God the Cause, and did not call Him the *Agens*, is not to be sought in their belief that the universe is eternal, but in other motives, which I will briefly describe to you. It has been shown in the science of Physics that everything, except the Primal Cause, owes its origin to the following four causes:--the substance, the form, the *agens*, the final cause. These are sometimes direct, sometimes indirect causes; but each by itself is called "a cause." They also believe--and I do not differ from their opinion--that God Himself is the *agens*, the form, and the end: therefore they call God "the Cause," in order to express that He unites in

Himself these three causes, viz., that He is the *agens*, the form, and the final cause of the universe. In the present chapter I only wish to show you in what sense it may be said of God that He is the *agens*, the form, and also the final cause of the universe. You need not trouble yourself now with the question whether the universe has been created by God, or whether, as the philosophers have assumed, it is eternal, co-existing with Him. You will find [in the pages of this treatise] full and instructive information on the subject. Here I wish to show that God is the "cause" of every event that takes place in the world, just as He is the Creator of the whole universe as it now exists. It has already been explained in the science of Physics, that a cause must again be sought for each of the four divisions of causes. When we have found for any existing thing those four causes which are in immediate connexion with it, we find for these again causes, and for these again other causes, and so on until we arrive at the first causes. E.g., a certain production has its *agens*, this *agens* again has its *agens*, and so on and on until at last we arrive at a first *agens*, which is the true *agens* throughout all the intervening links. If the letter *aleph* be moved by *bet*, *bet* by *gimel*, *gimel* by *dalet*, and *dalet* by *hé*--and as the series does not extend to infinity, let us stop at *hé*--there is no doubt that the *hé* moves the letters *aleph*, *bet*, *gimel*, and *dalet*, and we say correctly that the *aleph* is moved by *hé*. In that sense everything occurring in the universe, although directly produced by certain nearer causes, is ascribed to the Creator, as we shall explain. He is the *Agens*, and He is therefore the ultimate cause. We shall also find, after careful examination, that every physical and transient form must be preceded by another such form, by which the substance has been fitted to receive the next form: the previous form again has been preceded by another, and we arrive at length at that form which is necessary for the existence of all intermediate forms, which are the causes of the present form. That form to which the forms of all existing things are traced is God. You must not imagine that when we say that God is the first form of all forms existing in the Universe, we refer to that first form which Aristotle, in the Book of Metaphysics, describes as being without beginning and without end, for he treats of a form which is a physical, and not a purely intellectual one. When we call God the ultimate form of the universe, we do not use this term in the sense of form connected with substance, namely, as the form of that substance, as though God were the form of a material being. It is not in this

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sense that we use it, but in the following: Everything existing and endowed with a form, is whatever it is through its form, and when that form is destroyed its whole existence terminates and is obliterated. The same is the case as regards the relation between God and all distant causes of existing beings: it is through the existence of God that all things exist, and it is He who maintains their existence by that process which is called emanation (in Hebrew *shepha'*), as will be explained in one of the chapters of the present work. If God did not exist, suppose this were possible, the universe would not exist, and there would be an end to the existence of the distant causes, the final effects, and the intermediate causes. Consequently God maintains the same relation to the world as the form has to a thing endowed with a form: through the form it is what

it is, and on it the reality and essence of the thing depends. In this sense we may say that God is the ultimate form, that He is the form of all forms: that is to say, the existence and continuance of all forms in the last instance depend on Him, the forms are maintained by Him, in the same way as all things endowed with forms retain their existence through their forms. On that account God is called, in the sacred language, *he ha- 'olamim*, "the life of the Universe," as will be explained (chap. lxxii.). The same argument holds good in reference to all final causes. If you assign to a thing a certain purpose, you can find for that purpose another purpose. We mention, e.g., a (wooden) chair; its substance is wood, the joiner is its *agens*, the square its form, and its purpose is that one should sit upon it. You may then ask, For what purpose does one sit upon it? The answer will be that he who is sitting upon it desires to be high above the ground. If again you ask, For what purpose does he desire to be high above the ground, you will receive the answer that he wishes to appear high in the eyes of those who see him. For what purpose does he wish to appear higher in the eyes of those who see him? That the people may respect and fear him. What is the good of his being feared? His commands will be respected. For what purpose are his commands to be respected? That people shall refrain from injuring each other. What is the object of this precaution? To maintain order amongst the people. In this way one purpose necessitates the pre-existence of another, except the final purpose, which is the execution of the will of God, according to one of the opinions which have been propounded, as will be explained (III. xiii. and xvii.), and the final answer will be, "It is the will of God." According to the view of others, which will likewise be explained, the final purpose is the execution of the decree of His wisdom, and the final answer will be, "It has been decreed by His wisdom." According to either opinion, the series of the successive purposes terminates, as has been shown, in God's will or wisdom, which, in our opinion, are identical with His essence, and are not any thing separate from Himself or different from His essence. Consequently, God is the final purpose of everything. Again, it is the aim of everything to become, according to its faculties, similar to God in perfection: this is meant by the expression, "His will, which is identical with His essence," as will be shown below (*ibid.*). In this sense God is called the End of all ends.

I have thus explained to you in what sense God is said to be the *Agens*, the Form, and the End. This is the reason why the philosophers not only call

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[paragraph continues] Him "the Maker" but also the "Cause." Some of the scholars belonging to the Mutakallemim (Mohammedan theologians), went so far in their folly and in their vainglory as to say that the non-existence of the Creator, if that were possible, would not necessarily imply the non-existence of the things created by Him, i.e., the Universe: for a production need not necessarily cease to exist when the producer, after having produced it, has ceased to exist. They would be right, if God were only the maker of the Universe, and if its permanent existence were not dependent on Him. The storehouse does not cease to exist at the death of the builder; for he does not give permanent existence to the building. God, however, is Himself the form of the Universe, as we have already shown, and it is He who causes its continuance and permanency. It

is therefore wrong to say that a thing can remain durable and permanent, after the being that makes it durable and permanent has ceased to exist, since that thing can possess no more durability and permanency than it has received from that being. Now you understand the greatness of the error into which they have fallen through their assumption that God is only the *Agens*, and not the End or the Form.

CHAPTER LXX

THE term *rakab*, "to ride," is a synonym. In its primary signification it is applied to man's riding on an animal, in the usual way; e.g., "Now he was riding (*rokeb*) upon his ass" (Num. xxii. 22). It has then been figuratively used to denote "dominion over a thing"; because the rider governs and rules the animal he rides upon; e.g., "He made him ride (*yarkibehu*) on the high places of the earth" (Deut. xxxii. 13); "and I will cause thee to ride (*ve-hirkabtika*) upon the high places of the earth" (Isa. lviii. 14), that is, you shall have dominion over the highest (people) on earth; "I will make Ephraim to ride (*arkib*)" (Hos. x. 11), i.e., I shall give him rule and dominion. In this same sense it is said of God, "who rideth (*rokeb*) upon the heaven in thy help" (Deut. xxxiii. 26), that is, who rules the heaven; and "Him that rideth (*la-rokeb*) upon the 'arabot" (Ps. lxviii. 4), i.e., who rules the 'arabot, the uppermost, all-encompassing sphere. It has also been repeatedly stated by our Sages that there are seven *reki'im* (firmaments, heavens), and that the uppermost of them, the all-surrounding, is called 'arabot. Do not object to the number seven given by them, although there are more *reki'im*, for there are spheres which contain several circles (*gilgallim*), and are counted as one; this is clear to those who have studied that subject, and I shall also explain it; here I wish merely to point out that our Sages always assumed that 'arabot is the uppermost sphere. The 'arabot is also referred to in the words, "who rideth upon the heaven in thy help." Thus we read in Talm. B. *Hagigah*, p. 12, "The high and exalted dwelleth on 'arabot, as it is said, 'Extol Him that rideth upon 'arabot'" (Ps. lxviii. 4). How is it proved that "heaven" and "'arabot" are identical? The one passage has "who rideth on 'arabot," the other "who rideth upon the heaven." Hence it is clear that in all these passages reference is made to the same all-surrounding sphere, concerning which you will hereafter (II. xxiv.) receive more information. Consider well that the expression "dwelling over it," is used by them, and not "dwelling in it." The latter

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expression would have implied that God occupies a place or is a power in the sphere, as was in fact believed by the Sabaeans, who held that God was the soul of the sphere. By saying "dwelling over it," they indicated that God was separate from the sphere, and was not a power in it. Know also that the term "riding upon the heavens," has figuratively been applied to God in order to show the following excellent comparison. The rider is better than the animal upon which he rides--the comparative is only used for the sake of convenience, for the rider is not of the same class as the animal upon which he rides--furthermore, the rider moves the animal and leads it as he likes; it is as it were his instrument, which he uses according to his will; he is separate from it,

apart from it, not connected with it. In like manner the uppermost sphere, by the rotation of which everything moveable is set in motion, is moved by God, who is separate from the sphere, and is not a power in it. In *Bereshit Rabba* we read that in commenting on the Divine words, "The eternal God is a refuge" (lit., a dwelling, Deut. xxxiii. 27), our Sages said, "He is the dwelling of His world, the world is not His dwelling." This explanation is then followed by the remark, "The horse is secondary to the rider, the rider is not subservient to the horse; this is meant by 'Thou wilt ride upon thy horses'" (Hab. iii. 8). Consider and learn how they described the relation of God to the sphere, asserting that the latter is His instrument, by means of which He rules the universe. For whenever you find our Sages saying that in a certain heaven are certain things, they do not mean to say that in the heavens there are any extraneous things, but that from a certain heaven the force emanates which is required for the production of certain things, and for their continuing in proper order. The proof for my statement you may find in the following sayings of our Sages--"The '*arabot*, in which there are justice, charity, right, treasures of life and peace, treasures of blessing, of the souls of the righteous, of the souls and the spirits of those to be born, and of the dew by which God will at some future time revive the dead, etc." It is clear that the things enumerated here are not material, and do not occupy a place--for "dew" is not to be taken in its literal sense.--Consider also that here the phrase "in which," meaning "in the '*arabot*," is used, and not "over which," as if to say that all the things existing in the universe derive their existence from powers emanating from the '*arabot*, which God made to be the origin and the place of these powers. They are said to include "the treasures of life"; a perfectly true and correct assertion! For all existing life originates in that treasure of life, as will be mentioned below (chap. lxii., and II. chap. x.). Reflect on the fact that the souls of the righteous as well as the souls and the spirits of those to be born are mentioned here! How sublime is this idea to him who understands it! for the soul that remains after the death of man, is not the soul that lives in a man when he is born; the latter is a mere faculty, while that which has a separate existence after death, is a reality; again, the soul and the spirit of man during his life are two different things: therefore the souls and the spirits are both named as existing in man; but separate from the body only one of them exists. We have already explained the homonymy of *ruah* (spirit) in this work, and also at the end of *Sefer ha madda* (*Mishneh torah Hil. teshubah*, viii. 3-4) we treated of the homonymy of these expressions. Consider how these excellent and true ideas, comprehended only by the

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greatest philosophers, are found scattered in the Midrashim. When a student who disavows truth reads them, he will at first sight deride them, as being contrary to the real state of things. The cause of this is the circumstance, that our Sages spoke of these subjects in metaphors: they are too difficult for the common understanding of the people, as has been noticed by us several times.

I will now return to the subject which I commenced to explain, in order to bring it to a conclusion. Our Sages commenced to adduce proofs from Scripture for their assertion that the

things enumerated above are contained in the '*arabot*. As to justice and right they quote "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne" (Ps. lxxxix. 18). In the same way they prove their assertion concerning all things enumerated by them, by showing that they are described as being related to God, as being near Him. Note this. In the Pirke Rabbi Eliezer it is said: God created seven *reki'im* (heavens), and out of all of them He selected the '*araboth* for His royal throne: comp. "Exalt him who rideth upon the '*arabot*" (Ps. lxxviii. 4). These are his (Rabbi Eliezer's) words. Note them likewise.

You must know that in Hebrew the collective noun denoting animals used for riding is "mercabah." Instances of this noun are not rare. "And Joseph made ready his chariot" (*merkabto*) (Gen. xli. 29); "in the second chariot" (*be-mirkebet*) (*ib.* xli. 43); "Pharaoh's chariots" (*markebot*) (Exod. xv. 4). The following passage especially proves that the Hebrew *merkabah* denotes a collection of animals: "And a *merkabah* came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for an hundred and fifty" (1 Kings X. 21). Hence we may learn that *merkabah* denotes here four horses. Therefore I think that when it was stated, according to the literal sense of the words, that four *Hayyot* (beasts) carry the Throne of Glory, our Sages called this "*mercabah*" on account of its similarity with the *mercabah* consisting of four single animals. So far has the theme of this chapter carried us, and we shall be compelled to make many further remarks on this subject. Here, however, it is our object, and the aim of all we have said, to show that "who rideth upon heaven" (Deut. xxxiii. 26) means "who sets the all-surrounding sphere in motion, and turns it by His power and will." The same sense is contained in the conclusion of that verse: "and in his excellency the spheres," i.e., who in His excellency moves the spheres (*shehakim*). In reference to the first sphere, the '*arabot*, the verb "to ride" is used, in reference to the rest, the noun "excellency," because through the motion of the uppermost sphere in its daily circuit, all the spheres move, participating as parts in the motion of the whole; and this being that great power that sets everything in motion, it is called "excellency." Let this subject constantly remain in your memory when you study what I am going to say; for it--i.e., the motion of the uppermost sphere is the greatest proof for the existence of God, as I shall demonstrate. Note this.

CHAPTER LXXI

KNOW that many branches of science relating to the correct solution of these problems, were once cultivated by our forefathers, but were in the course of

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time neglected, especially in consequence of the tyranny which barbarous nations exercised over us. Besides, speculative studies were not open to all men, as we have already stated (Introd. p. 2, and I. chap. xxxi.), only the subjects taught in the Scriptures were accessible to all. Even the traditional Law, as you are well aware, was not originally committed to writing, in conformity with the rule to which our nation generally adhered, "Things which I have communicated to you

orally, you must not communicate to others in writing." With reference to the Law, this rule was very opportune; for while it remained in force it averted the evils which happened subsequently, viz., great diversity of opinion, doubts as to the meaning of written words, slips of the pen, dissensions among the people, formation of new sects, and confused notions about practical subjects. The traditional teaching was in fact, according to the words of the Law, entrusted to the Great Tribunal, as we have already stated in our works on the Talmud. (Introd. to *Mishneh Torah* and Introd. to *Commen. on the Mishnah*).

Care having been taken, for the sake of obviating injurious influences, that the Oral Law should not be recorded in a form accessible to all, it was but natural that no portion of "the secrets of the Law" (i.e., metaphysical problems) would be permitted to be written down or divulged for the use of all men. These secrets, as has been explained, were orally communicated by a few able men to others who were equally distinguished. Hence the principle applied by our teachers, "The secrets of the Law can only be entrusted to him who is a councillor, a cunning artificer, etc." The natural effect of this practice was that our nation lost the knowledge of those important disciplines. Nothing but a few remarks and allusions are to be found in the Talmud and the Midrashim, like a few kernels enveloped in such a quantity of husk, that the reader is generally occupied with the husk, and forgets that it encloses a kernel.

In addition you will find that in the few works composed by the Geonim and the Karaites on the unity of God and on such matter as is connected with this doctrine, they followed the lead of the Mohammedan Mutakallemim, and what they wrote is insignificant in comparison with the kindred works of the Mohammedans. It also happened, that at the time when the Mohammedans adopted this method of the Kalām, there arose among them a certain sect, called Mu'tazilah, i.e., Separatists. In certain things our scholars followed the theory and the method of these Mu'tazilah. Although another sect, the Asha'ariyah, with their own peculiar views, was subsequently established amongst the Mohammedans, you will not find any of these views in the writings of our authors: not because these authors preferred the opinions of the first-named sect to those of the latter, but because they chanced first to become acquainted with the theory of the Mu'tazilah, which they adopted and treated as demonstrated truth. On the other hand our Andalusian scholars followed the teachings of the philosophers, from whom they accepted those opinions which were not opposed to our own religious principles. You will find that they did not adopt any of the methods of the Mutakallemim; in many respects they approached the view expressed in the present treatise, as may be noticed in the few works which were recently written by authors of that school. You should also know that whatever the Mohammedans, that is, the Mu'tazilah and the Asha'ariyah, said on those subjects,

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consists in nothing but theories founded on propositions which are taken from the works of those Greek and Syrian scholars who attempted to oppose the system of the philosophers, and to refute their arguments. The following was the cause of that opposition: At the time when the Christian

Church brought the Greeks and Syrians into its fold, and promulgated its well-known dogmas, the opinions of the philosophers were current amongst those nations: and whilst philosophy flourished, kings became defenders of the Christian faith. The learned Greek and Syrian Christians of the age, seeing that their dogmas were unquestionably exposed to severe attacks from the existing philosophical systems, laid the foundation for this science of Dogmatics; they commenced by putting forth, such propositions as would support their doctrines, and be useful for the refutation of opinions opposed to the fundamental principles of the Christian religion.

When the Mohammedans caused Arabic translations of the writings of the Philosophers to be made, those criticisms were likewise translated. When the opinions of John the Grammarian, of Ibn Adi, and of kindred authors on those subjects were made accessible to them, they adopted them, and imagined that they had arrived at the solution of important problems. Moreover, they selected from the opinions of the ancient philosophers whatever seemed serviceable to their purposes, although later critics had proved that those theories were false; as, e.g., the theories of atoms and of a vacuum. They believed that the discussions of those authors were of a general character, and contained propositions useful for the defence of positive religion. At a subsequent period the same theories were more fully developed, and presented an aspect unknown to those Theologians of the Greeks and other nations who were the immediate successors of the Philosophers. At a later time, when the Mohammedans adopted certain peculiar theological theories they were naturally obliged to defend them; and when their new theories, again became the subject of controversy among them, each party laid down such propositions as suited their special doctrine.

Their arguments undoubtedly involved certain principles which concerned the three communities--Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, such as the *creatio ex nihilo*, which afforded support to the belief in miracles and to various other doctrines. There are, however, other subjects of belief which the Christians and Mohammedans have undertaken to defend, such as the doctrine of the Trinity in the theological works of the former, and "the Word" in the works of some Mohammedan sects; in order to prove the dogmas which they thus desired to establish, they were compelled to resort to certain hypotheses. It is not our object to criticize things which are peculiar to either creed, or books which were written exclusively in the interest of the one community or the other. We merely maintain that the earlier Theologians, both of the Greek Christians and of the Mohammedans, when they laid down their propositions, did not investigate the real properties of things: first of all they considered what must be the properties of the things which should yield proof for or against a certain creed; and when this was found they asserted that the thing must be endowed with those properties; then they employed the same assertion as a proof for the identical arguments which had led to the assertion, and by which they either supported or refuted a certain opinion. This course was followed by able

men who originated this method, and adopted it in their writings. They professed to be free from preconceived opinions, and to have been led to a stated result by actual research. Therefore when philosophers of a subsequent date studied the same writings they did not perceive the true character of the arguments; on the contrary, they found in the ancient works strong proofs and a valuable support for the acceptance or the rejection of certain opinions, and thus thought that, so far as religious principles were concerned, there was no necessity whatever to prove or refute any of their propositions, and that the first Mutakallemim had discussed those subjects with the sole object of defeating certain views of the philosophers, and demonstrating the insufficiency of their proofs. Persons who hold this opinion, do not suspect how much they are mistaken; for the first Mutakallemim tried to prove a proposition when it was expedient to demonstrate its truth; and to disprove it, when its rejection was desirable, and when it was contrary to the opinion which they wished to uphold, although the contradiction might only become obvious after the application of a hundred successive propositions. In this manner the earlier Mutakallemim effected a radical cure of the malady! I tell you, however, as a general rule, that Themistius was right in saying that the properties of things cannot adapt themselves to our opinions, but our opinions must be adapted to the existing properties.

Having studied the works of these Mutakallemim, as far as I had an opportunity, just as I had studied the writings of the philosophers according to the best of my ability, I found that the method of all Mutakallemim was the same in its general characteristics, namely, they assume that the really existing form of things proves nothing at all, because it is merely one of the various phases of the things, the opposite of which is equally admissible to our minds. In many instances these Theologians were guided by their imagination, and thought that they were following the dictates of the intellect. They set forth the propositions which I shall describe to you, and demonstrated by their peculiar mode of arguing that the Universe had a beginning. The theory of the *creatio ex nihilo* being thus established, they asserted, as a logical consequence, that undoubtedly there must be a Maker who created the Universe. Next they showed that this Maker is One, and from the Unity of the Creator they deduced His Incorporeality. This method was adopted by every Mohammedan Mutakallem in the discussion of this subject, and by those of our co-religionists who imitated them and walked in their footsteps. Although the Mutakallemim disagree in the methods of their proofs, and employ different propositions in demonstrating the act of creation or in rejecting the eternity of the Universe, they invariably begin with proving the *creatio ex nihilo*, and establish on that proof the existence of God. I have examined this method, and find it most objectionable. It must be rejected, because all the proofs for the creation have weak points, and cannot be considered as convincing except by those who do not know the difference between a proof, a dialectical argument, and a sophism. Those who understand the force of the different methods will clearly see that all the proofs for the creation are questionable, because propositions have been employed which have never been proved. I think that the utmost that can be effected by believers in the truth of Revelation is to expose the shortcomings in the proofs of philosophers who hold that the Universe is

eternal, and if forsooth a man has effected this, he has accomplished a great deed! For it is well known to all clear and correct thinkers who do not wish to deceive themselves, that this question, namely, whether the Universe has been created or is eternal, cannot be answered with mathematical certainty; here human intellect must pause. We shall have occasion to speak more fully on this subject, but for the present it may suffice to state that the philosophers have for the last three thousand years been continually divided on that subject, as far as we can learn from their works and the record of their opinions.

Such being the nature of this theory, how can we employ it as an axiom and establish on it the existence of the Creator? In that case the existence of God would be uncertain: if the universe had a beginning, God does exist: if it be eternal, God does not exist; the existence of God would therefore remain either an open question, or we should have to declare that the creation had been proved, and compel others by mere force to accept this doctrine, in order thus to be enabled to declare that we have proved the existence of God. Such a process is utterly inadmissible. The true method, which is based on a logical and indubitable proof, consists, according to my opinion, in demonstrating the existence of God, His unity, and His incorporeality by such philosophical arguments as are founded on the theory of the eternity of the Universe. I do not propose this method as though I believed in the eternity of the Universe, for I do not follow the philosophers on this point, but because by the aid of this method these three principles, viz., the existence of God, His unity and His incorporeality can be fully proved and verified, irrespectively of the question whether the universe has had a beginning or not. After firmly establishing these three principles by an exact proof, we shall treat of the problem of creation and discuss it as fully as possible. You are at liberty to content yourself with the declaration of the Mutakallemim, and to believe that the act of creation has been demonstrated by proof: nor can there be any harm if you consider it unproven that the universe had a beginning, and accept this theory as supported by the authority of the Prophets. Before you learn our opinion on prophecy, which will be given in the present work, do not ask, how could the belief in prophecy be justified, if it were assumed that the universe was eternal, We will not now expatiate on that subject. You should, however, know that some of the propositions, started and proved by the Radicals, i.e., the Mutakallemim, in order to prove the act of creation, imply an order of things contrary to that which really exists, and involve a complete change in the laws of nature: this fact will be pointed out to you, for it will be necessary to mention their propositions and their argumentation. My method, as far as I now can explain it in general terms, is as follows. The universe is either eternal or has had a beginning; if it had a beginning, there must necessarily exist a being which caused the beginning; this is clear to common sense; for a thing that has had a beginning, cannot be the cause of its own beginning, another must have caused it. The universe was, therefore, created by God. If on the other hand the universe were eternal, it could in various ways be proved that apart from the things which constitute the universe, there exists a being which is neither body nor a force in a body, and which is one, eternal, not preceded by any cause,

and immutable. That being is God. You see that the proofs for the Existence, the Unity and the Incorporeality of God

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must vary according to the propositions admitted by us. Only in this way can we succeed in obtaining a perfect proof, whether we assume the eternity or the creation of the universe. For this reason you will find in my works on the Talmud, whenever I have to speak of the fundamental principles of our religion, or to prove the existence of God, that I employ arguments which imply the eternity of the universe. I do not believe in that eternity, but I wish to establish the principle of the existence of God by an indisputable proof, and should not like to see this most important principle founded on a basis which every one could shake or attempt to demolish, and which others might consider as not being established at all; especially when I see that the proofs of the philosophers are based on those visible properties of things, which can only be ignored by persons possessing certain preconceived notions, while the Mutakallemim establish their arguments on propositions which are to such an extent contrary to the actual state of things as to compel these arguers to deny altogether the existence of the laws of nature. When I shall have to treat of the creation, I shall in a special chapter prove my opinion to some extent, and shall attain the same end which every one of the Mutakallemim had in view, yet I shall not contradict the laws of nature, or reject any such part of the Aristotelean theory as has been proved to be correct. Even the most cogent of the Proofs offered by the Mutakallemim respecting the act of creation, has only been obtained by reversing the whole order of things and by rejecting everything fully demonstrated by the philosophers. I, however, shall be able to give a similar proof without ignoring the laws of nature and without being forced to contradict facts which have been clearly perceived. I find it necessary to mention to you the general propositions of the Mutakallemim, by which they prove the act of creation, the Existence of God, His Unity and His Incorporeality. I intend to explain their method, and also to point out the inferences which are to be drawn from each proposition. After this, I shall describe those theories of the philosophers which are closely connected with our subject, and I shall then explain their method.

Do not ask me to prove in this work the propositions of the philosophers, which I shall briefly mention to you: they form the principal part of Physics and Metaphysics. Nor must you expect that I should repeat the arguments of the Mutakallemim in support of their propositions, with which they wasted their time, with which the time of future generations will likewise be wasted, and on which numerous books have been written. Their propositions, with few exceptions, are contradicted by the visible properties of things, and beset with numerous objections. For this reason they were obliged to write many books and controversial works in defence of their theories, for the refutation of objections, and for the reconciliation of all apparent contradictions, although in reality this object cannot be attained by any sophistical contrivance. As to the propositions of the philosophers which I shall briefly explain, and which are indispensable for the demonstration of the three principles--the Existence, the Unity, and the Incorporeality of God, they will for the greater part be admitted by you as soon as you shall hear them and

understand their meaning; whilst in the discussion of other parts reference must be made for their proofs to works on Physics and Metaphysics, and if you direct your attention to such passages

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as will be pointed out to you, you will find everything verified that requires verification.

I have already told you that nothing exists except God and this universe, and that there is no other evidence for His Existence but this universe in its entirety and in its several parts.

Consequently the universe must be examined as it is: the propositions must be derived from those properties of the universe which are clearly perceived, and hence you must know its visible form and its nature. Then only will you find in the universe evidence for the existence of a being not included therein. I have considered it, therefore, necessary to discuss first in a merely colloquial manner, in the next chapter, the totality of existing things, and to confine our remarks to such as have been fully proved and established beyond all doubt. In subsequent chapters I shall treat of the propositions of the Mutakallemim, and describe the method by which they explain the four fundamental principles. In the chapters which will follow, I propose to expound the propositions of the philosophers and the methods applied by them in verifying those principles. In the last place, I shall explain to you the method applied by me in proving those four principles, as I have stated to you.

CHAPTER LXXII

KNOW that this Universe, in its entirety, is nothing else but one individual being: that is to say, the outermost heavenly sphere, together with all included therein, is as regards individuality beyond all question a single being like Said and Omar. The variety of its substances--I mean the substances of that sphere and all its component parts--is like the variety of the substances of a human being: just as, e.g., Said is one individual, consisting of various solid substances, such as flesh, bones, sinews, of various humours, and of various spiritual elements: in like manner this sphere in its totality is composed of the celestial orbs, the four elements and their combinations: there is no vacuum whatever therein, but the whole space is filled up with matter. Its centre is occupied by the earth, earth is surrounded by water, air encompasses the water, fire envelopes the air, and this again is enveloped by the fifth substance (quintessence). These substances form numerous spheres, one being enclosed within another so that no intermediate empty space, no vacuum, is left. One sphere surrounds and closely joins the other. All the spheres revolve with constant uniformity, without acceleration or retardation; that is to say, each sphere retains its individual nature as regards its velocity and the peculiarity of its motion; it does not move at one time quicker, at another slower. Compared with each other, however, some of the spheres move with less, others with greater velocity. The outermost, all-encompassing sphere, revolves with the greatest speed; it completes its revolution in one day, and causes everything to participate in its motion, just as every particle of a thing moves when the entire body is in motion: for existing beings stand in the same relation to that sphere as a part of a thing stands to the whole. These

spheres have not a common centre: the centres of some of them are identical with the centre of the Universe, while those of the rest are different from it. Some of the spheres

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have a motion independent of that of the whole Universe, constantly revolving from East to West, while other spheres move from West to East. The stars contained in those spheres are part of their respective orbits: they are fixed in them, and have no motion of their own, but participating in the motion of the sphere of which they are a part, they appear themselves to move. The entire substance of this revolving fifth element is unlike the substance of those bodies which consist of the other four elements, and are enclosed by the fifth element.

The number of these spheres encompassing the Universe cannot possibly be less than eighteen: it may even be larger; but this is a matter for further investigation. It also remains an open question whether there are spheres which, without moving round the centre of the Universe, have nevertheless a circular motion. Within that sphere which is nearest to us, a substance is contained which is different from the substance of the fifth element: it first received four primary forms, and then became in these four forms, four kinds of matter: earth, water, air, fire. Each of the four elements occupies a certain position of its own assigned to it by nature: it is not found in another place, so long as no other but its own natural force acts upon it; it is a dead body; it has no life, no perception, no spontaneous motion, and remains at rest in its natural place. When moved from its place by some external force, it returns towards its natural place as soon as that force ceases to operate. For the elements have the property of moving back to their place in a straight line, but they have no properties which would cause them to remain where they are, or to move otherwise than in a straight line. The rectilinear motions of these four elements when returning to their original place are of two kinds, either centrifugal, viz., the motion of the air and the fire; or centripetal, viz., the motion of the earth, and the water; and when the elements have reached their original place, they remain at rest.

The spherical bodies, on the other hand, have life, possess a soul by which they move spontaneously; they have no properties by which they could at any time come to a state of rest: in their perpetual rotations they are not subject to any change, except that of position. The question whether they are endowed with an intellect, enabling them to comprehend, cannot be solved without deep research. Through the constant revolution of the fifth element, with all contained therein, the four elements are forced to move and to change their respective positions, so that fire and air are driven into the water, and again these three elements enter the depth of the earth. Thus are the elements mixed together; and when they return to their respective places, parts of the earth, in quitting their places, move together with the water, the air and the fire. In this whole process the elements act and react upon each other. The elements intermixed, are then combined, and form at first various kinds of vapours; afterwards the several kinds of minerals, every species of plants, and many species of living beings, according to the relative proportion of the constituent parts. All transient beings have their origin in the elements, into which again they

resolve when their existence comes to an end. The elements themselves are subject to being transformed from one into another; for although one substance is common to all, substance without form is in reality impossible, just as the physical form of these transient beings cannot exist without substance. The formation

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and the dissolution of the elements, together with the things composed of them, and resolving into them, follow each other in rotation. The changes of the finite substance, in successively receiving one form after the other, may therefore be compared to the revolution of the sphere in space, when each part of the sphere periodically reappears in the same position.

As the human body consists both of principal organs and of other members which depend on them and cannot exist without the control of those organs, so does the universe consist both of principal parts, viz., the quintessence, which encompasses the four elements and of other parts which are subordinated and require a leader, viz., the four elements and the things composed of them.

Again, the principal part in the human body, namely, the heart, is in constant motion, and is the source of every motion noticed in the body: it rules over the other members, and communicates to them through its own pulsations the force required for their functions. The outermost sphere by its motion rules in a similar way over all other parts of the universe, and supplies all things with their special properties. Every motion in the universe has thus its origin in the motion of that sphere: and the soul of every animated being derives its origin from the soul of that same sphere.

The forces which according to this explanation are communicated by the spheres to this sublunary world are four in number, viz., (*a*) the force which effects the mixture and the composition of the elements, and which undoubtedly suffices to form the minerals: (*b*) the force which supplies every growing thing with its vegetative functions: (*c*) the force which gives to each living being its vitality, and (*d*) the force which endows rational beings with intellect. All this is effected through the action of light and darkness, which are regulated by the position and the motion of the spheres round the earth.

When for one instant the beating of the heart is interrupted, man dies, and all his motions and powers come to an end. In a like manner would the whole universe perish, and everything therein cease to exist if the spheres were to come to a standstill.

The living being as such is one through the action of its heart, although some parts of the body are devoid of motion and sensation, as, e.g., the bones, the cartilage, and similar parts. The same is the case with the entire universe; although it includes many beings without motion and without life, it is a single being living through the motion of the sphere, which may be compared to the heart of an animated being. You must therefore consider the entire globe as one individual being which is endowed with life, motion, and a soul. This mode of considering the universe is, as will

be explained, indispensable, that is to say, it is very useful for demonstrating the unity of God; it also helps to elucidate the principle that He who is One has created only *one* being.

Again, it is impossible that any of the members of a human body should exist by themselves, not connected with the body, and at the same time should actually be organic parts of that body, that is to say, that the liver should exist by itself, the heart by itself, or the flesh by itself. In like manner, it is impossible that one part of the Universe should exist independently of the other parts in the existing order of things as here considered,

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viz., that the fire should exist without the co-existence of the earth, or the earth without the heaven, or the heaven without the earth.

In man there is a certain force which unites the members of the body, controls them, and gives to each of them what it requires for the conservation of its condition, and for the repulsion of injury--the physicians distinctly call it the leading force in the body of the living being: sometimes they call it "nature." The Universe likewise possesses a force which unites the several parts with each other, protects the species from destruction, maintains the individuals of each species as long as possible, and endows some individual beings with permanent existence. Whether this force operates through the medium of the sphere or otherwise remains an open question.

Again, in the body of each individual there are parts which are intended for a certain purpose, as the organs of nutrition for the preservation of the individual, the organs of generation for the preservation of the species, the hands and eyes for administering to certain wants, as to food, etc.: there are also parts which, in themselves, are not intended for any purpose, but are mere accessories and adjuncts to the constitution of the other parts. The peculiar constitution of the organs, indispensable for the conservation of their particular forms and for the performance of their primary functions, produces, whilst it serves its special purpose, according to the nature of the substance, other things, such as the hair and the complexion of the body. Being mere accessories, they are not formed according to a fixed rule: some are altogether absent in many individuals; and vary considerably in others. This is not the case with the organs of the body. You never find that the liver of one person is ten times larger than that of another person, but you may find a person without a beard, or without hair on certain parts of his body, or with a beard ten times longer than that of another man. Instances of this phenomenon, viz., great variation as regards hair and colour, are not rare. The same differences occur in the constitution of the Universe. Some species exist as an integral part of the whole system: these are constant and follow a fixed law; though they vary as far as their nature permits, this variation is insignificant in quantity and quality. Other species do not serve any purpose: they are the mere result of the general nature of transient things, as, e.g., the various insects which are generated in dunghills, the animals generated in rotten fruit, or in fetid liquids, and worms generated in the intestines,

etc. In short, everything devoid of the power of generation belongs to this class. You will, therefore, find that these things do not follow a fixed law, although their entire absence is just as impossible as the absence of different complexions and of different kinds of hair amongst human beings.

In man there are substances the individual existence of which is permanent, and there are other substances which are only constant in the species not in the individuals, as, e.g., the four humours. The same is the case in the Universe: there are substances which are constant in individuals, such as the fifth element, which is constant in all its formations, and other substances which are constant in the species, as, e.g., the four elements and all that is composed of them.

The same forces which operate in the birth and the temporal existence of the human being operate also in his destruction and death. This truth

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holds good with regard to this whole transient world. The causes of production are at the same time the causes of destruction. This may be illustrated by the following example. If the four forces which are present in every being sustained by food, viz., attraction, retention, digestion, and secretion, were, like intelligent forces, able to confine themselves to what is necessary, and to act at the proper time and within the proper limits, man would be exempt from those great sufferings and the numerous diseases [to which he is exposed]. Since, however, such is not the case, and since the forces perform their natural functions without thought and intelligence, without any consciousness of their action, they necessarily cause dangerous maladies and great pains, although they are the direct cause of the birth and the temporal existence of the human being. This fact is to be explained as follows: if the attractive force would absorb nothing but that which is absolutely beneficial, and nothing but the quantity which is required, man would be free from many such sufferings and disorders. But such is not the case: the attractive force absorbs any humour that comes within the range of its action, although such humour be ill-adapted in quality or in quantity. It is, therefore, natural that sometimes a humour is absorbed which is too warm, too cold, too thick, or too thin, or that too much humour is absorbed, and thus the veins are choked, obstruction and decay ensue, the quality of the humour is deteriorated, its quantities altered, diseases are originated, such as scurvy, leprosy, abscess, or a dangerous illness, such as cancer, elephantiasis, gangrene, and at last the organ or organs are destroyed. The same is the case with every one of the four forces, and with all existing beings. The same force that originates all things, and causes them to exist for a certain time, namely, the combination of the elements which are moved and penetrated by the forces of the heavenly spheres, that same cause becomes throughout the world a source of calamities, such as devastating rain, showers, snow-storms, hail, hurricanes, thunder, lightning, malaria, or other terrible catastrophes by which a place or many places or an entire country may be laid waste, such as landslips, earthquakes, meteoric showers and floods issuing forth from the seas and from the interior of the earth.

Bear in mind, however, that in all that we have noticed about the similarity between the Universe and the human being, nothing would warrant us to assert that man is a microcosm; for although the comparison in all its parts applies to the Universe and any living being in its normal state, we never heard that any ancient author called the ass or the horse a microcosm. This attribute has been given to man alone on account of his peculiar faculty of thinking, I mean the intellect, viz., the hylic intellect which appertains to no other living being. This may be explained as follows. An animal does not require for its sustenance any plan, thought or scheme; each animal moves and acts by its nature, eats as much as it can find of suitable things, it makes its resting-place wherever it happens to be, cohabits with any mate it meets while in heat in the periods of its sexual excitement. In this manner does each individual conserve itself for a certain time, and perpetuates the existence of its species without requiring for its maintenance the assistance or support of any of its fellow creatures: for all the things to which it has to attend it performs by itself. With man it is different; if an individual had a solitary existence, and were, like an animal, left without guidance, he

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would soon perish, he would not endure even one day, unless it were by mere chance, unless he happened to find something upon which he might feed. For the food which man requires for his subsistence demands much work and preparation, which can only be accomplished by reflection and by plan; many vessels must be used, and many individuals, each in his peculiar work, must be employed. It is therefore necessary that one person should organize the work and direct men in such a manner that they should properly cooperate, and that they should assist each other. The protection from heat in summer and from cold in winter, and shelter from rain, snow, and wind, require in the same manner the preparation of many things, none of which can properly be done without design and thought. For this reason man has been endowed with intellectual faculties, which enable him to think, consider, and act, and by various labours to prepare and procure for himself food, dwelling and clothing, and to control every organ of his body, causing both the principal and the secondary organs to perform their respective functions. Consequently, if a man, being deprived of his intellectual faculties, only possessed vitality, he would in a short time be lost. The intellect is the highest of all faculties of living creatures: it is very difficult to comprehend, and its true character cannot be understood as easily as man's other faculties.

There also exists in the Universe a certain force which controls the whole, which sets in motion the chief and principal parts, and gives them the motive power for governing the rest. Without that force, the existence of this sphere, with its principal and secondary parts, would be impossible. It is the source of the existence of the Universe in all its parts. That force is God: blessed be His name! It is on account of this force that man is called microcosm: for he likewise possesses a certain principle which governs all the forces of the body, and on account of this comparison God is called "the life of the Universe"; comp. "and he swore by the life of the Universe" (Dan. xii. 7).

You must understand that in the parallel which we have drawn between the whole universe, on the one hand, and the individual man, on the other, there is a complete harmony in all the points which we mentioned above only in the following three points a discrepancy may be noticed.

First, the principal organ of any living being which has a heart, derives a benefit from the organs under the control of the heart, and the benefits of the organs thus become the benefits of the heart. This is not the case in the constitution of the universe. That part which bestows authority or distributes power, does not receive in return any benefit from the things under its control: whatever it grants, is granted in the manner of a generous benefactor, not from any selfish motive, but from a natural generosity and kindliness; only for the sake of imitating the ways of the Most High.

Secondly, living creatures endowed with a heart have it within the body and in the midst thereof: there it is surrounded by organs which it governs. Thus it derives a benefit from them, for they guard and protect it, and they do not allow that any injury from without should approach it. The reverse occurs in the case of the Universe. The superior part encompasses the inferior parts, it being certain that it cannot be affected by the action of any other being; and even if it could be affected, there is nobody without it

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that could affect it. While it influences all that is contained within, it is not influenced by any act or force of any material being. There is, however, some similarity [between the universe and man] in this point. In the body of animals, the organs more distant from the principal organ are of less importance than those nearer to it. Also in the universe, the nearer the parts are to the centre, the greater is their turbidness, their solidity, their inertness, their dimness and darkness, because they are further away from the loftiest element, from the source of light and brightness, which moves by itself and the substance of which is the most rarefied and simplest: from the outermost sphere. At the same ratio at which a body is nearer this sphere, it derives properties from it, and rises above the spheres below it.

Thirdly. The faculty of thinking is a force inherent in the body, and is not separated from it, but God is not a force inherent in the body of the universe, but is separate from all its parts. How God rules the universe and provides for it is a complete mystery: man is unable to solve it. For, on the one hand, it can be proved that God is separate from the universe, and in no contact whatever with it; but, on the other hand, His rule and providence can be proved to exist in all parts of the universe, even in the smallest. Praised be He whose perfection is above our comprehension.

It is true, we might have compared the relation between God and the universe, to the relation between the absolute acquired intellect and man; it is not a power inherent in the body, but a power which is absolutely separate from the body, and is from without brought into contact with the body. The rational faculty of man may be further compared to the intelligence of the spheres,

which are, as it were, material bodies. But the intelligence of the spheres, purely spiritual beings, as well as man's absolute and acquired intellect, are subjects of deep study and research: the proof of their existence, though correct, is abstruse, and includes arguments which present doubts, are exposed to criticism, and can be easily attacked by objectors. We have, therefore, preferred to illustrate the relation of God to the universe by a simile which is clear, and which will not be contradicted in any of the points which have been laid down by us without any qualification. The opposition can only emanate either from an ignorant man, who contradicts truths even if they are perfectly obvious, just as a person unacquainted with geometry rejects elementary propositions which have been clearly demonstrated, or from the prejudiced man who deceives himself. Those, however, who wish to study the subject must persevere in their studies until they are convinced that all our observations are true, and until they understand that our account of this universe unquestionably agrees with the existing order of things. If a man is willing to accept this theory from one who understands how to prove things which can be proved, let him accept it, and let him establish on it his arguments and proofs. If, on the other hand, he refuses to accept without proof even the foregoing principles, let him inquire for himself, and ultimately he will find that they are correct. "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good" (Job v. 27).

After these preliminary remarks, we will treat of the subject which we promised to introduce and to explain.

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CHAPTER LXXIII

THERE are twelve propositions common to all Mutakallemim, however different their individual opinions and methods may be; the Mutakallemim require them in order to establish their views on the four principles. I shall first enumerate these propositions, and then discuss each separately, together with the inferences which may be drawn from it.

PROPOSITION I. All things are composed of atoms.

PROPOSITION II. There is a vacuum.

PROPOSITION III. Time is composed of time-atoms.

PROPOSITION IV. Substance cannot exist without numerous accidents.

PROPOSITION V. Each atom is completely furnished with the accidents (which I will describe), and cannot exist without them.

PROPOSITION VI. Accidents do not continue in existence during two time-atoms.

PROPOSITION VII. Both positive and negative properties have a real existence, and are accidents which owe their existence to some *causa efficiens*.

PROPOSITION VIII. All existing things, i.e., all creatures, consist of substance and of accidents, and the physical form of a thing is likewise an accident.

PROPOSITION IX. No accident can form the substratum for another accident.

PROPOSITION X. The test for the possibility of an imagined object does not consist in its conformity with the existing laws of nature.

PROPOSITION XI. The idea of the infinite is equally inadmissible, whether the infinite be actual, potential, or accidental, i.e., there is no difference whether the infinite be formed by a number of co-existing things, or by a series of things, of which one part comes into existence when another has ceased to exist, in which case it is called accidental infinite: in both cases the infinite is rejected by the Mutakallemim as fallacious.

PROPOSITION XII. The senses mislead, and are in many cases inefficient; their perceptions, therefore, cannot form the basis of any law, or yield data for any proof.

FIRST PROPOSITION.

"The Universe, that is, everything contained in it, is composed of very small parts [atoms] which are indivisible on account of their smallness; such an atom has no magnitude; but when several atoms combine, the sum has a magnitude, and thus forms a body." If, therefore, two atoms were joined together, each atom would become a body, and they would thus form two bodies, a theory which in fact has been proposed by some Mutakallemim. All these atoms are perfectly alike; they do not differ from each other in any point. The Mutakallemim further assert, that it is impossible to find a body that is not composed of such equal atoms which are placed side by side. According to this view *genesis* and composition are identical; destruction is the same as decomposition. They do not use the term "destruction," for they hold that "genesis" implies composition and decomposition, motion and rest. These atoms, they believe, are not, as was supposed by Epicurus and other Atomists

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numerically constant: but are created anew whenever it pleases the Creator: their annihilation is therefore not impossible. Now I will explain to you their opinion concerning the vacuum.

SECOND PROPOSITION.

On the vacuum. The original Mutakallemim also believe that there is a vacuum. i.e., one space, or several spaces which contain nothing, which are not occupied by anything whatsoever, and which are devoid of all substance. This proposition is to them an indispensable sequel to the first. For, if the Universe were full of such atoms, how could any of them move? For it is impossible to conceive that one atom should move into another. And yet the composition, as well as the decomposition of things, can only be effected by the motion of atoms! Thus the Mutakallemim

are compelled to assume a vacuum, in order that the atoms may combine, separate, and move in that vacuum which does not contain any thing or any atom.

THIRD PROPOSITION.

"Time is composed of time-atoms," i.e., of many parts, which on account of their short duration cannot be divided. This proposition also is a logical consequence of the first. The Mutakallemim undoubtedly saw how Aristotle proved that time, space, and locomotion are of the same nature, that is to say, they can be divided into parts which stand in the same proportion to each other: if one of them is divided, the other is divided in the same proportion. They, therefore, knew that if time were continuous and divisible *ad infinitum*, their assumed atom of space would of necessity likewise be divisible. Similarly, if it were supposed that space is continuous, it would necessarily follow, that the time-element, which they considered to be indivisible, could also be divided. This has been shown by Aristotle in the treatise called *Acroasis*. Hence they concluded that space was not continuous, but was composed of elements that could not be divided; and that time could likewise be reduced to time-elements, which were indivisible. An hour is, e.g., divided into sixty minutes, the minute into sixty seconds, the second into sixty parts, and so on: at last after ten or more successive divisions by sixty, time-elements are obtained, which are not subjected to division, and in fact are indivisible, just as is the case with space. Time would thus be an object of position and order.

The Mutakallemim did not at all understand the nature of time. This is a matter of course: for if the greatest philosophers became embarrassed when they investigated the nature of time, if some of them were altogether unable to comprehend what time really was, and if even Galenus declared time to be something divine and incomprehensible, what can be expected of those who do not regard the nature of things?

Now, mark what conclusions were drawn from these three propositions and were accepted by the Mutakallemim as true. They held that locomotion consisted in the translation of each atom of a body from one point to the next one; accordingly the velocity of one body in motion cannot be greater than that of another body. When, nevertheless, two bodies are observed to move during the same time through different spaces, the cause of this difference is not attributed by them to the fact that the body which has moved through

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a larger distance had a greater velocity, but to the circumstance that motion which in ordinary language is called slow, has been interrupted by more moments of rest, while the motion which ordinarily is called quick has been interrupted by fewer moments of rest. When it is shown that the motion of an arrow, which is shot from a powerful bow, is in contradiction to their theory, they declare that in this case too the motion is interrupted by moments of rest. They believe that it is the fault of man's senses if he believes that the arrow moves continuously, for there are many things which cannot be perceived by the senses, as they assert in the twelfth proposition. But we

ask them: "Have you observed a complete revolution of a millstone? Each point in the extreme circumference of the stone describes a large circle in the very same time in which a point nearer the centre describes a small circle: the velocity of the outer circle is therefore greater than that of the inner circle. You cannot say that the motion of the latter was interrupted by more moments of rest; for the whole moving body, i.e., the millstone, is one coherent body." They reply, "During the circular motion, the parts of the millstone separate from each other, and the moments of rest interrupting the motion of the portions nearer the centre are more than those which interrupt the motion of the outer portions." We ask again, "How is it that the millstone, which we perceive as one body, and which cannot be easily broken, even with a hammer, resolves into its atoms when it moves, and becomes again one coherent body, returning to its previous state as soon as it comes to rest, while no one is able to notice the breaking up [of the stone]?" Again their reply is based on the twelfth proposition, which is to the effect that the perception of the senses cannot be trusted, and thus only the evidence of the intellect is admissible. Do not imagine that you have seen in the foregoing example the most absurd of the inferences which may be drawn from these three propositions: the proposition relating to the existence of a vacuum leads to more preposterous and extravagant conclusions. Nor must you suppose that the foregoing theory concerning motion is less irrational than the proposition resulting from this theory, that the diagonal of a square is equal to one of its sides, and some of the Mutakallemim go so far as to declare that the square is not a thing of real existence. In short, the adoption of the first proposition would be tantamount to the rejection of all that has been proved in Geometry. The propositions in Geometry would, in this respect, be divided into two classes: some would be absolutely rejected: e.g., those which relate to properties of the incommensurability and the commensurability of lines and planes, to rational and irrational lines, and all other propositions contained in the tenth book of Euclid, and in similar works. Other propositions would appear to be only partially correct: e.g., the solution of the problem to divide a line into two equal parts, if the line consists of an odd number of atoms: according to the theory of the Mutakallemim such a line cannot be bisected. Furthermore, in the well-known book of problems by the sons of Shakir are contained more than a hundred problems, all solved and practically demonstrated: but if there really were a vacuum, not one of these problems could be solved, and many of the waterworks [described in that book] could not have been constructed. The refutation of such propositions is a mere waste of time. I will now proceed to treat of the other propositions mentioned above.

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FOURTH PROPOSITION.

"The accidents of things have real existence; they are elements superadded to the substance itself, and no material thing can be without them." Had this proposition been left by the Mutakallemim in this form it would have been correct, simple, clear, and indisputable. They have, however, gone further, asserting that a substance which has not the attribute of life, must necessarily have that of death; for it must always have one of two contrasting properties. According to their opinion, colour, taste, motion or rest, combination or separation, etc., can be

predicated of all substances, and, if a substance have the attribute of life, it must at the same time possess such other kinds of accidents, as wisdom or folly, freewill or the reverse, power or weakness, perception or any of its opposites, and, in short, the substance must have the one or the other of all correlative accidents appertaining to a living being.

FIFTH PROPOSITION.

"The atom is fully provided with all these foregoing accidents, and cannot exist if any be wanting." The meaning of the proposition is this: The Mutakallemim say that each of the atoms created by God must have accidents, such as colour, smell, motion, or rest, except the accident of quantity: for according to their opinion an atom has no magnitude; and they do not designate quantity as an accident, nor do they apply to it the laws of accidents. In accordance with this proposition, they do not say, when an accident is noticed in a body, that it is peculiar to the body as such, but that it exists in each of the atoms which form the constituent elements of that body. E.g., take a heap of snow; the whiteness does not exist in that heap as a whole, but each atom of the snow is white, and therefore the aggregate of these atoms is likewise white. Similarly they say that when a body moves each atom of it moves, and thus the whole body is in motion. Life likewise exists, according to their view, in each atom of a living body. The same is the case according to their opinion with the senses: in each atom of the aggregate they notice the faculty of perception. Life, sensation, intellect and wisdom are considered by them as accidents, like blackness and whiteness, as will be shown in the further discussion of their theory.

Concerning the soul, they do not agree. The view most predominant among them is the following:--The soul is an accident existing in one of the atoms of which, e.g., man is composed; the aggregate is called a being endowed with a soul, in so far as it includes that atom. Others are of opinion that the soul is composed of ethereal atoms, which have a peculiar faculty by virtue of which they constitute the soul, and that these atoms are mixed with the atoms of the body. Consequently they maintain that the soul is an accident.

As to the intellect, I found that all of them agreed in considering it to be an accident joined to one of the atoms which constitute the whole of the intelligent being. But there is a confusion among them about knowledge: they are uncertain whether it is an accident to each of the atoms which form the knowing aggregate, or whether it belongs only to one atom. Both views can be disproved by a *reductio ad absurdum*, when the following facts are pointed out to them. Generally metals and stones have a peculiar colour,

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which is strongly pronounced, but disappears when they are pulverised. Vitriol, which is intensely green, becomes white dust when pounded; this shows that that accident exists only in the aggregate, not in the atoms. This fact is more striking in the following instance: when parts of a living being are cut off they cease to live, a proof that the accident [of life] belongs to the aggregate of the living being, not to each atom. In order to meet this objection they say that the

accident is of no duration, but is constantly renewed. In discussing the next proposition I shall explain their view on this subject.

SIXTH PROPOSITION.

"The accidents do not exist during two time-atoms."--The sense of the proposition is this: They believe that God creates a substance, and simultaneously its accidents: that the Creator is incapable of creating a substance devoid of an accident, for that is impossible: that the essential characteristic of an accident is its incapability of enduring for two periods, for two time-atoms; that immediately after its creation it is utterly destroyed, and another accident of the same kind is created: this again is destroyed and a third accident of the same kind is created, and so on, so long as God is pleased to preserve [in that substance] this kind of accident; but He can at His will create in the same substance an accident of a different kind, and if He were to discontinue the creation and not produce a new accident, that substance would at once cease to exist. This is one of the opinions held by the Mutakallemim; it has been accepted by most of them, and it is the so-called "theory of the creation of the accidents." Some of them, however, and they belong to the sect of the Mu'tazilah, say that there are accidents which endure for a certain period, and other accidents which do not endure for two atoms of time; they do not follow a fixed principle in deciding what class of accidents has and what class has not a certain duration. The object of this proposition is to oppose the theory that there exists a natural force from which each body derives its peculiar properties. They prefer to assume that God himself creates these properties without the intervention of a natural force or of any other agency: a theory which implies that no accident can have any duration. For suppose that certain accidents could endure for a certain period and then cease to exist, the question would naturally be asked, What is the cause of that non-existence? They would not be satisfied with the reply that God by His will brought about this non-existence, and non-existence does not at all require any *agens* whatever: for as soon as the *agens* leaves off acting, the product of the *agens* ceases likewise to exist. This is true to some extent. Having thus chosen to establish the theory that there does not exist any natural force upon which the existence or non-existence of a thing depends, they were compelled to assume that the properties of things were successively renewed. When God desires to deprive a thing of its existence, He, according to some of the Mutakallemim, discontinues the creation of its accidents, and *eo ipso* the body ceases to exist. Others, however, say that if it pleased the Almighty to destroy the world, He would create the accident of destruction, which would be without any substratum. The destruction of the Universe would be the correlative accident to that of existence.--In accordance with this [sixth] proposition they say, that the

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cloth which according to our belief we dyed red, has not been dyed by us at all, but God created that colour in the cloth when it came into contact with the red pigment; we believe that colour to have penetrated into the cloth, but they assert that this is not the case. They say that God generally acts in such a way, that, e.g., the black colour is not created unless the cloth is brought

into contact with indigo; but this blackness, which God creates in the instant when the cloth touches the black pigment is of no duration, and another creation of blackness then takes place; they further say that after the blackness is gone, He does not create a red or green colour, but again a black colour.

According to this principle, the knowledge which we have of certain things to-day, is not the same which we had of them yesterday; that knowledge is gone, and another like it has been created. They positively believe that this does take place, knowledge being an accident. In like manner it would follow that the soul, according to those who believe that it is an accident, is renewed each moment in every animated being, say a hundred thousand times; for, as you know, time is composed of time-atoms. In accordance with this principle they assert that when man is perceived to move a pen, it is not he who has really moved it; the motion produced in the pen is an accident which God has created in the pen; the apparent motion of the hand which moves the pen is likewise an accident which God has created in the moving hand; but the creative act of God is performed in such a manner that the motion of the hand and the motion of the pen follow each other closely; but the hand does not act, and is not the cause of the pen's motion: for, as they say, an accident cannot pass from one thing to another. Some of the Mutakallemim accordingly contend that this white cloth, which is coloured when put into the vessel filled with indigo, has not been blackened by the indigo: for blackness being an attribute of indigo, does not pass from one object to another. There does not exist any thing to which an action could be ascribed: the real *agens* is God, and He has [in the foregoing instance] created the blackness in the substance of the cloth when it came into contact with the indigo, for this is the method adopted by Him. In short, most of the Mutakallemim believe that it must never be said that one thing is the cause of another; some of them who assumed causality were blamed for doing so. As regards, however, the acts of man their opinions are divided. Most of them, especially the sect of the Asha'ariyah, assume that when the pen is set in motion God has created four accidents, none of which is the cause of any of the rest, they are only related to each other as regards the time of their co-existence, and have no other relation to each other. The first accident is man's will to move the pen, the second is man's power to do so, the third is the bodily motion itself, i.e., the motion of the hand, and the fourth is the motion of the pen. They believe that when a man has the will to do a thing and, as he believes, does it, the will has been created for him, then the power to conform to the will, and lastly the act itself. The act is not accomplished by the power created in man: for, in reality, no act can be ascribed to that power. The Mu'tazilah contend that man acts by virtue of the power which has been created in him. Some of the Asha'ariyah assert that the power created in man participates in the act, and is connected with it, an opinion which has been rejected by the majority of them. The will and the

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power created in man, according to the concurrent belief of the Mutakallemim, together with the act created in him, according to some of them, are accidents without duration. In the instance of the pen, God continually creates one motion after the other so long as the pen is in motion; it

only then ceases to move when God has created in it the accident of rest; and so long as the pen is at rest, God continually renews in it that accident. Consequently in every one of these moments, i.e., of the time-atoms, God creates some accident in every existing individual, e.g., in the angels, in the spheres and in other things: this creation takes place continually and without interruption. Such is, according to their opinion, the right interpretation of the creed that God is the *causa efficiens*. But I, together with all rational persons, apply to those theories the words, "Will you mock at Him, as you mock at man?" for their words are indeed nothing but mockery.

SEVENTH PROPOSITION.

"The absence of a property is itself a property that exists in the body, a something superadded to its substance, an actual accident, which is constantly renewed; as soon as it is destroyed it is reproduced." The reason why they hold this opinion is this: they do not understand that rest is the absence of motion; death the absence of life; that blindness is the absence of sight, and that all similar negative properties are the absence of the positive correlatives. The relation between motion and rest is, according to their theory, the same as the relation between heat and cold, namely, as heat and cold are two accidents found in two objects which have the properties of heat and cold, so motion is an accident created in the thing which moves, and rest an accident created in the thing which rests; it does not remain in existence during two consecutive time-atoms, as we have stated in treating of the previous proposition. Accordingly, when a body is at rest, God has created the rest in each atom of that body, and so long as the body remains at rest God continually renews that property. The same, they believe, is the case with a man's wisdom and ignorance: the latter is considered by them as an actual accident, which is subject to the constant changes of destruction and creation, so long as there remains a thing of which such a man is ignorant. Death and life are likewise accidents, and as the Mutakallemim distinctly state, life is constantly destroyed and renewed during the whole existence of a living being; when God decrees its death, He creates in it the accident of death after the accident of life, which does not continue during two time-atoms, has ceased to exist. All this they state clearly.

The logical consequence of this proposition is that the accident of death created by God instantly ceases to exist, and is replaced by another death which again is created by God; otherwise death could not continue. Death is thus continually created in the same manner as life is renewed every moment. But I should wish to know how long God continues to create death in a dead body. Does He do so whilst the form remains, or whilst one of the atoms exists? For in each of the atoms of the body the accident of death which God creates is produced, and there are to be found teeth of persons who died thousands of years ago; we see that those teeth have not been deprived of existence, and therefore the accident of death has during all these thousands of years been renewed, and according to the opinion

prevailing amongst those theorists, death was continually replaced by death. Some of the Mu'tazilah hold that there are cases in which the absence of a physical property is not a real property, that weariness is the absence of strength, and ignorance the absence of knowledge; but this cannot be said in every case of negative properties: it cannot be said that darkness is the mere absence of light, or that rest is the absence of motion. Some negative properties are thus considered by them as having a real existence, while other negative properties are considered as non-existing, just as suits their belief. Here they proceed in the same manner as they proceed respecting the duration of accidents, and they contend that some accidents exist a long time, and other accidents do not last two time-atoms. Their sole object is to fashion the Universe according to their peculiar opinions and beliefs.

EIGHTH PROPOSITION.

"There exists nothing but substance and accident, and the physical form of things belong to the class of accidents." It is the object of this proposition to show that all bodies are composed of similar atoms, as we have pointed out in explaining the first proposition. The difference of bodies from each other is caused by the accidents, and by nothing else. Animality, humanity, sensibility, and speech, are denoted as accidents like blackness, whiteness, bitterness, and sweetness, and the difference between two individuals of two classes is the same as the difference of two individuals of the same class. Also the body of the heaven, the body of the angels, the body of the Divine Throne--such as it is assumed to be--the body of anything creeping on the earth, and the body of any plant, have one and the same substance; they only differ in the peculiarity of the accidents, and in nothing else; the substance of all things is made up of equal atoms.

NINTH PROPOSITION.

"None of the accidents form the substratum of another accident: it cannot be said, This is an accident to a thing which is itself an accident to a substance. All accidents are directly connected with the substance." The Mutakallemim deny the indirect relation of the accident to the substance, because if such a relation were assumed it would follow that the second accident could only exist in the substance after another accident had preceded it, a conclusion to which they would object even with regard to some special accidents; they prefer to show that these accidents can exist in every possible substance, although such substance is not determined by any other accident; for they hold that all the accidents collectively determine the thing. They advance also another proof [in support of this proposition], namely: The substratum which is the bearer of certain attributes must continue to exist for a certain time: how, then, could the accident; which--according to their opinion--does not remain in existence for two moments, become the substratum of something else?

TENTH PROPOSITION.

This proposition concerns the theory of "admissibility," which is mentioned by the Mutakallemim, and forms the principal support of their doctrine. Mark its purport: they observe that everything conceived by the

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imagination is admitted by the intellect as possible; e.g., that the terrestrial globe should become the all-encompassing sphere, or that this sphere should become the terrestrial globe; reason does not find here an impossibility; or that the sphere of fire should move towards the centre, and the sphere of earth towards the circumference. Human intellect does not perceive any reason why a body should be in a certain place instead of being in another. In the same manner they say that reason admits the possibility that an existing being should be larger or smaller than it really is, or that it should be different in form and position from what it really is; e.g., a man might have the height of a mountain, might have several heads, and fly in the air; or an elephant might be as small as an insect, or an insect as huge as an elephant. This method of admitting possibilities is applied to the whole Universe. Whenever they affirm that a thing belongs to this class of admitted possibilities, they say that it can have this form, and that it is also possible that it be found differently, and that the one form is not more possible than the other; but they do not ask whether the reality confirms their assumption. They say that the thing which exists with certain constant and permanent forms, dimensions, and properties, only follows the direction of habit, just as the king generally rides on horseback through the streets of the city, and is never found departing from this habit; but reason does not find it impossible that he should walk on foot through the place: there is no doubt that he may do so, and this possibility is fully admitted by the intellect. Similarly, earth moves towards the centre, fire turns away from the centre; fire causes heat, water causes cold, in accordance with a certain habit; but it is logically not impossible that a deviation from this habit should occur, namely, that fire should cause cold, move downward, and still be fire; that the water should cause heat, move upward, and still be water. On this foundation their whole fabric is constructed. They admit, however, the impossibility of two opposite properties coexisting at the same time in one substance. This is impossible; reason would not admit this possibility. Again, reason does not admit the possibility of a substance existing without an accident, or an accident existing without a substance. a possibility admitted by some of the Mutakallemim. It is also impossible that a substance should become an accident, that an accident should become a substance, or that one substance should penetrate another. They admit that reason rejects all these things as impossible. It is perfectly true that no notion whatever can be formed of those things which they describe as impossible; whilst a notion can be formed of those things which they consider as possible. The philosophers object to this method. and say, You call a thing impossible because it cannot be imagined, or possible because it can be imagined: and thus you consider as possible that which is found possible by imagination, not by the intellect, consequently you determine that a thing is necessary, possible, or impossible in some instances, by the aid of the imagination--not by the intellect--and in other instances by the ordinary common sense. as Abu Nasr says in speaking of

that which the Mutakallemim call intellect. It is clear that they describe as possible that which can be imagined, whether the reality correspond to it or not, and as impossible that which cannot be imagined. This proposition can only be established by the nine aforementioned propositions, and no doubt these were exclusively required for the support of

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this proposition. This you will see clearly when I shall show and explain to you some important parts of this theory, which I shall now introduce in the form of a discussion supposed to have taken place between a Mutakallem and a philosopher.

The Mutakallem said to the philosopher: What is the reason that we find the substance of iron extremely hard and strong, with a dark colour; the substance of cream, on the other hand, extremely soft and white? The philosopher replied as follows: All physical bodies have two kinds of accidents: those which concern their substance, as, e.g., the health and the illness of a man; and those which concern their form, as, e.g., the astonishment and laughter of a man. The substances of compound bodies differ very much in their ultimate form, according to the difference of the forms peculiar to each component substance. Hence the substance of iron has become in its properties the opposite of the substance of cream, and this difference is attended by the difference of accidents. You notice, therefore, hardness in the one, and softness in the other: two accidents, whose difference results from the difference which exists in the forms of the substances: while the darkness and the whiteness are accidents whose divergence corresponds to that of the two substances in their ultimate condition. The Mutakallem refuted this reply by means of his propositions, as I am now going to state:--There does not exist a form which, as you believe, modifies the substance, and thus causes substances to be different from each other: this difference is exclusively effected by the accidents--according to the theory of the Kalâm, which we mentioned in explaining the eighth proposition. He then continued thus: There is no difference between the substance of iron and that of cream; all things are composed of the same kind of atoms.--We explained the view of the Mutakallemim on this point in treating of the first proposition, the logical consequences of which are, as we have shown, the second and the third propositions: they further require the twelfth proposition, in order to establish the theory of atoms. Nor do they admit that any accidents determine the nature of a substance, or predispose it to receive certain other accidents: for, according to their opinion, an accident cannot be the substratum of another accident, as we have shown in explaining the ninth proposition; nor can it have any duration, according to the sixth proposition. When the Mutakallemim have established all that they wish to infer from these propositions, they arrive at the conclusion that the component atoms of cream and of iron are alike.--The relation of each atom to each of the accidents is the same; one atom is not more adapted than another to receive a certain accident: and as a certain atom is not more fitted to move than to rest, so one atom is not more apt than another to receive the accident of life, of reason, of sensation. It is here of no moment whether a thing contains a larger or smaller quantity of atoms, for, according to the view of the Mutakallemim, which we explained in treating of the fifth proposition, every accident [of a

thing] exists in each of its atoms. All these propositions lead to the conclusion that a human being is not better constituted to become wise than the bat, and establish the theory of admissibility expressed in this [tenth] proposition. Every effort was made to demonstrate this proposition, because it is the best means for proving anything they like, as will be explained.

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NOTE.--Mark, O reader, that if you know the nature of the soul and its properties, and if you have a correct notion of everything which concerns the soul, you will observe that most animals possess imagination. As to the higher class of animals, that is, those which have a heart, it is obvious that they have imagination. Man's distinction does not consist in the possession of imagination, and the action of imagination is not the same as the action of the intellect, but the reverse of it. For the intellect analyses and divides the component parts of things, it forms abstract ideas of them, represents them in their true form as well as in their causal relations, derives from one object a great many facts, which--for the intellect--totally differ from each other, just as two human individuals appear different to the imagination: it distinguishes that which is the property of the *genus* from that which is peculiar to the individual,--and no proof is correct, unless founded on the former; the intellect further determines whether certain qualities of a thing are essential or non-essential. Imagination has none of these functions. It only perceives the individual, the compound in that aggregate condition in which it presents itself to the senses; or it combines things which exist separately, joins some of them together, and represents them all as one body or as a force of the body. Hence it is that some imagine a man with a horse's head, with wings, etc. This is called a fiction, a phantasm; it is a thing to which nothing in the actual world corresponds. Nor can imagination in any way obtain a purely immaterial image of an object, however abstract the form of the image may be. Imagination yields therefore no test for the reality of a thing.

Hear what profit we derive from the preliminary disciplines, and how excellent the propositions are which we learn through them. Know that there are certain things, which would appear impossible, if tested by man's imagination, being as inconceivable as the co-existence of two opposite properties in one object: yet the existence of those same things, which cannot be represented by imagination, is nevertheless established by proof, and attested by their reality. E.g., Imagine a large globe, of any magnitude you like, even as large as the all-encompassing sphere: further an axis passing through the centre, and two persons standing on the two extremities of the axis in such a manner that their feet are in the same straight line with the axis, which may be either in the plane of the horizon or not: in the first case both persons would fall, in the second case one, namely the one who stands on the lower extremity would fall, the other would remain standing, as far as our imagination can perceive. It has however, already been proved that the earth has the form of a globe, that it is inhabited on both extremities of a certain diameter, that both the inhabitants have their heads towards the heaven, and their legs towards each other, and yet neither can possibly fall, nor can it be imagined; for it is incorrect to say that the one extremity is above, the other below; but the term "above" and "below" apply to both of

them as regards their relative position to each other. Similarly it has been proved in the second chapter of the book on Conic Sections, that two lines, which at first are at a certain distance from each other, may approach each other in the same proportion as they are produced further, and yet would never meet, even if they were produced to infinity, although they are observed to be constantly converging. This is a fact

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which cannot easily be conceived, and which does not come within the scope of imagination. Of these two lines the one is straight, the other curved, as stated in the aforementioned book. It has consequently been proved that things which cannot be perceived or imagined, and which would be found impossible if tested solely by imagination, are nevertheless in real existence. The non-existence of things which are represented by imagination as possible has likewise been established by proof, e.g., the corporeality of God, and His existence as a force residing in a body. Imagination perceives nothing except bodies, or properties inherent in bodies.

It has thus been clearly shown that in man exists a certain faculty which is entirely distinct from imagination, and by which the necessary, the possible, and the impossible can be distinguished from each other. This inquiry is most useful. It is of the greatest profit to him who desires to guard himself against the errors of men guided by imagination. I do not think that the Mutakallemim ignore this altogether: to some extent they do take it into consideration; they know it, and call that which can be imagined without having reality--as, e.g., the corporeality of God--a phantom and a fancy; they state frequently that such phantoms are not real. It is for this reason that they advance the first nine propositions and establish on them the proof of the tenth, according to which all those imaginable things which they wish to admit as possible are really possible, because of the similarity of atoms and the equality of all accidents as regards their accidentality, as we have explained.

Consider, O reader, and bear in mind that this requires deep research. For there are certain notions which some believe to be founded on reason, while others regard them as mere fictions. In such cases it would be necessary to find something that could show the difference between conceptions of the intellect and mere imaginary fancies. When the philosopher, in his way of expressing himself, contends, "Reality is my evidence; by its guidance I examine whether a thing is necessary, possible, or impossible," the religionist replies, "This is exactly the difference between us; that which actually exists, has, according to my view, been produced by the will of the Creator, not by necessity; just as it has been created with that special property, it might have been created with any other property, unless the impossibility which you postulate be proved by a logical demonstration."

About this admissibility (of imaginable things) I shall have to say more, and I shall return to it in various parts of this treatise; for it is not a subject which should be rejected in haste and on the spur of the moment.

ELEVENTH PROPOSITION.

"The existence of the infinite is in every respect impossible." The following is an explanation of this proposition. The impossibility of the existence of an infinite body has been clearly demonstrated; the same can be said of an infinite number of bodies, though each of them be finite, if these beings, infinite in number, exist at the same time; equally impossible is the existence of an infinite series of causes, namely, that a certain thing should be the cause of another thing, but itself the effect of another cause, which again is the result of another cause, and so on to infinity, or that things in an infinite series, either bodies or ideals, should be in actual existence, and

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in causal relation to each other. This causal relation is the essential order of nature, in which, as has been fully proved, the infinite is impossible. As regards the virtual and the accidental existence of the infinite, it has been established in some cases; it has been proved, e.g., that a body can virtually be divided *ad infinitum*, also that time can be divided *ad infinitum*; in other cases it is still an open question, as, e.g., the existence of the infinite in succession, which is called the accidental infinite, i.e., a series of things in which one thing comes forth when the other is gone, and this again in its turn succeeded a thing which had ceased to exist, and so on *ad infinitum*. This subject requires deep research.

Those who boast that they have proved the eternity of the Universe say that time is infinite; an assertion which is not necessarily erroneous; for only when one atom has ceased to exist, the other follows. Nor is it absolutely wrong, when they assert, that the accidents of the substance succeed each other in an infinite series, for these accidents do not co-exist, but come in succession one after the other, and the impossibility of the infinite in that case has not been proved. The Mutakallemim, however, make no difference between the existence of an infinite body and the divisibility of a body or of time *ad infinitum*, between the co-existence of an infinite number of things, as e.g., the individual human beings who exist at present, and the infinite number of beings successively existing, as, e.g., Reuben the son of Jacob, and Jacob the son of Isaac, and Isaac the son of Abraham, and so on to infinity. This is according to their opinion as inadmissible as the first case; they believe these four forms of the infinite to be quite equal. Some of the Mutakallemim endeavour to establish their proposition concerning the last named form of the infinite, and to demonstrate its impossibility by a method which I shall explain in this treatise; others say that this impossibility is a self-evident axiom and requires no further proof. But if it were undoubtedly wrong to assume that an infinite number of things can exist in succession, although that link of the series which exists at present is finite, the inadmissibility of the eternity of the Universe would be equally self-evident, and would not require for its proof any other proposition. This, however, is not the place for investigating the subject.

TWELFTH PROPOSITION.

"The senses are not always to be trusted." For two reasons the Mutakallemim find fault with the perception of the senses. First, the senses are precluded from perceiving many objects, either on account of the smallness of the objects--this is the case with the atoms, as we have already stated--or on account of the remoteness of the objects from the person who desires to perceive them; e.g., we cannot see, hear, or smell at a distance of many miles; nor do we perceive the motion of the heavens. Secondly, the senses misapprehend the objects of their perception: a large object appears small from a distance; a small object immersed in water appears larger; a crooked thing appears straight when partly placed in water, and partly out of it; things appear yellow to a person suffering from jaundice; sweet things are bitter to him whose tongue has imbibed red gall; and they mention many other things of this kind. Therefore they say, we cannot trust our senses so far as to establish any proof on their perceptions. You must not believe

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that the Mutakallemim had no purpose in agreeing upon this proposition, or as most of the later adherents of that school affirm, that the first Mutakallemim had no ulterior object in endeavouring to prove the existence of atoms. On the contrary, every proposition here mentioned is indispensable; if one of these be rejected, the whole theory falls to the ground. The last-mentioned proposition is of particular importance; for when our senses perceive things by which any of the foregoing propositions are confuted, the Mutakallemim say that no notice should be taken of the perception of the senses so long as the proposition is supported by the testimony of the intellect, and established (as they believe) by proof. Thus they say that the continuous motion is interrupted by moments of rest; that the millstone in its motion is broken into atoms; that the white colour of a garment ceases to exist, and another whiteness comes in its stead. All these theories are contrary to what the eye perceives, and many inferences are drawn from the assumed existence of a vacuum, all of which are contradicted by the senses. The Mutakallemim, however, meet these objections by saying, whenever they can do so, that the perception of these things is withheld from the senses: in other instances they maintain that the contradiction has its source in the deceptive character of the senses. You know that this theory is very ancient, and was the pride of the sophists, who asserted that they themselves were its authors; this is stated by Galenus in his treatise on natural forces; and you know well what he says of those who will not admit the evidence of the senses.

Having discussed these propositions, I now proceed to explain the theory of the Mutakallemim concerning the above-mentioned four problems.

CHAPTER LXXIV

IN this chapter will be given an outline of the proofs by which the Mutakallemim attempt to demonstrate that the universe is not eternal. You must of course not expect that I shall quote their lengthy arguments verbatim: I only intend to give an abstract of each proof, to show in what way

it helps to establish the theory of the *creatio ex nihilo* or to confute the eternity of the universe, and briefly to notice the propositions they employed in support of their theory. If you were to read their well-known and voluminous writings, you would not discover any arguments with which they support their view left unnoticed in the present outline, but you might find there greater copiousness of words combined with more grace and elegance of style; frequently they employ rhyme, rhythm, and poetical diction, and sometimes mysterious phrases which perhaps are intended to startle persons listening to their discourses, and to deter those who might otherwise criticize them. You would also find many repetitions; questions propounded and, as they believe, answered, and frequent attacks on those who differ from their opinions.

The First Argument.

Some of the Mutakallemim thought that by proving the creation of one thing, they demonstrated the *creatio ex nihilo* in reference to the entire universe. E.g., Zaid, who from a small molecule had gradually been brought

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to a state of perfection, has undoubtedly not effected this change and development by his own efforts, but owes it to an external agency. It is therefore clear that an agent is required for such organization and successive transmutation. A palm-tree or any other object might equally be selected to illustrate this idea. The whole universe, they argue, is analogous to these instances. Thus you see how they believe that a law discovered in one thing may equally be applied to everything.

The Second Argument.

This argument is likewise based on the belief that the proof by which the creation of one thing is demonstrated, holds good for the *creatio ex nihilo* in reference to the whole universe. E.g., a certain individual, called Zaid, who one time was not yet in existence, subsequently came into existence; and if it be assumed that Amr, his father, was the cause of his existence, Amr himself must likewise have passed from non-existence into existence: suppose then that Zaid's father unquestionably owed his origin to Khaled, Zaid's grandfather, it would be found that Khaled himself did not exist from eternity, and the series of causes could thus be carried back to infinity. But such an infinite series of beings is inadmissible according to the theory of the Mutakallemim, as we have shown in our discussion of the eleventh proposition. In continuing this species of reasoning, you come to a first man, who had no parent, viz. Adam. Then you will of course ask, whence came this first man? If, e.g., the reply be given that he was made out of earth, you will again inquire, "Whence came that earth?" "Out of water." "Whence came the water?" The inquiry would be carried on, either *ad infinitum*, which is absurd, or until you meet with a something that came into existence from absolute non-existence: in this latter case you would arrive at the real truth: here the series of inquiries ends. This result of the question proves,

according to the opinion of the Mutakallemim, that the whole universe came into existence from absolute non-existence.

The Third Argument.

The atoms of things are necessarily either joined together or separate, and even the same atoms may at one time be united at another disunited. It is therefore evident that the nature of the atoms does not necessitate either their combination or their separation: for if they were separate by virtue of their nature they would never join, and if they were joined by virtue of their nature, they could never again be separated. Thus there is no reason why atoms should rather be combined than separate, or *vice versâ*, why rather in a state of separation than of combination. Seeing that some atoms are joined, others separate, and again others subject to change, they being combined at one time and separated at another, the fact may therefore be taken as a proof that the atoms cannot combine or separate without an agent. This argument, according to the opinion of the Mutakallemim, establishes the theory that the universe has been created from nothing. You have already been told, that those who employ this argument rely on the first proposition of the Mutakallemim with its corollaries.

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The Fourth Argument.

The whole Universe is composed of substance and accidents; every substance must possess one accident or more, and since the accidents are not eternal, the substance, the substratum of the accidents, cannot be eternal; for that which is joined to transient things and cannot exist without them is itself transient. Therefore the whole Universe has had a beginning. To the objection, that the substance may possibly be eternal while the accidents, though in themselves transient, succeed each other in an infinite series, they reply that, in this case, an infinite number of transient things would be in existence, an eventuality which, according to their theory, is impossible. This argument is considered by them the best and safest, and has been accepted by many of them as a strict proof. Its acceptance implies the admission of the following three propositions, the object of which is well understood by philosophers. (1) An infinite series of things, of which the one succeeds when the other has ceased to exist, is impossible. (2) All accidents have a beginning.--Our opponent, who defends the theory of the eternity of the universe, can refute this proposition by pointing to one particular accident, namely to the circular motion of the sphere; for it is held by Aristotle that this circular motion is eternal, and, therefore, the spheres which perform this motion are, according to his opinion, likewise eternal. It is of no use to prove that all other accidents have a beginning; for our opponent does not deny this: he says that accidents may supervene an object which has existed from eternity, and may follow each other in rotation. He contents himself with maintaining that this particular accident, viz., circular motion, the motion of the heavenly sphere, is eternal, and does not belong to the class of transient accidents. It is therefore necessary to examine this accident by itself, and to prove that it

is not eternal. (3) The next proposition which the author of this argument accepts is as follows: Every material object consists of substance and accidents, that is to say, of atoms and accidents in the sense in which the Mutakallemim use the term. But if a material object were held to be a combination of matter and form, as has been proved by our opponent, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the primal matter and the primal form are transient, and only then the proof of the *creatio ex nihilo* would be complete.

The Fifth Argument.

This argument is based on the theory of Determination, and is made much of by the Mutakallemim. It is the same as the theory which I explained in discussing the tenth proposition. Namely, when they treat either of the Universe in general, or of any of its parts, they assume that it can have such properties and such dimensions as it actually has; that it may receive such accidents as in reality are noticed in it, and that it may exist in such a place and at such a time as in fact is the case; but it may be larger or smaller, may receive other properties and accidents, and come to existence at an earlier or a later period, or in a different place. Consequently, the fact that a thing has been determined in its composition, size, place, accident and time--a variation in all these points being possible--is a proof that a being exists which freely chooses and determines these divers relations; and the circumstance

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that the Universe or a part of it requires a being able to make this selection, proves that the Universe has been created *ex nihilo*. For there is no difference which of the following expressions is used: to determine, to make, to create, to produce, to originate, or to intend: these verbs have all one and the same meaning. The Mutakallemim give a great many examples, both of a general and a special character. They say it is not more natural for earth to be under water than to be above water; who then determined its actual position? Or, is it more natural that the sun is round than that it should be square or triangular: for all qualities have the same relation to a body capable of possessing them. Who then determined one particular quality? In a similar way they treat of every individual being: when, e.g., they notice flowers of different colours, they are unable to explain the phenomenon, and they take it as a strong proof in favour of their theory; they say, "Behold, the earth is everywhere alike, the water is alike; why then is this flower red and that one yellow?" Some being must have determined the colour of each, and that being is God. A being must therefore exist which determines everything, both as regards the Universe generally, and each of its parts individually. All this is the logical consequence of the tenth proposition. The theory of determination is moreover adopted by some of those who assume the eternity of the Universe, as will be explained below. In conclusion, I consider this to be the best argument: and in another part I shall more fully acquaint you with the opinion I have formed concerning the theory of Determination.

The Sixth Argument.

One of the modern Mutakallemim thought that he had found a very good argument, much better than any advanced hitherto, namely, the argument based on the triumph of existence over non-existence. He says that, according to the common belief, the existence of the Universe is merely possible . for if it were necessary, the Universe would be God--but he seems to forget that we are at issue with those who, whilst they believe in the existence of God, admit at the same time the eternity of the Universe.--The expression "A thing is possible" denotes that the thing may either be in existence or not in existence, and that there is not more reason why it should exist than why it should not exist. The fact that a thing, the existence of which is possible, actually does exist--although it bears the same relation to the state of existence as to that of non-existence--proves that there is a Being which gave the preference to existence over non-existence. This argument is very forcible; it is a modified form of the foregoing argument which is based on the theory of determination. He only chose the term "preference" instead of "determination," and instead of applying it to the properties of the existing being he applies it to "the existence of the being itself." He either had the intention to mislead, or he misunderstood the proposition, that the existence of the Universe is possible. Our opponent who assumes the eternity of the Universe, employs the term "possible," and says, "the existence of the Universe is possible" in a sense different from that in which the Mutakallem applies it, as will be explained below. Moreover it may be doubted whether the conclusion, that the Universe owes its origin to a being which is able to give preference to existence over non-existence, is correct. For

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we may apply the terms "preference" and "determination" to anything capable of receiving either of two properties which are contrary or opposed to each other: and when we find that the thing actually possesses one property and not the other, we are convinced that there exists a determining agent. E.g., you say that a piece of copper could just as well be formed into a kettle as into a lamp: when we find that it is a lamp or a kettle, we have no doubt that a deciding and determining agent had advisedly chosen one of the two possible forms: for it is clear that the substance of copper existed, and that before the determination took place it had neither of the two possible forms which have just been mentioned. When, however, it is the question whether a certain existing object is eternal, or whether it has passed from non-existence into existence, this argument is inadmissible: for it cannot be asked who decided in favour of the existence of a thing, and rejected its nonexistence, except when it has been admitted that it has passed from nonexistence into existence; in the present case this is just the point under discussion. If we were to take the existence and the non-existence of a thing as mere objects of imagination, we should have to apply the tenth proposition which gives prominence to imagination and fiction, and ignores the things which exist in reality, or are conceived by the intellect. Our opponent, however, who believes in the eternity of the Universe, will show that we can imagine the non-existence of the universe as well as we can imagine any other impossibility. It is not my intention to refute their doctrine of the *creatio ex nihilo*: I only wish to show the incorrectness of their

belief that this argument differs from the one which precedes: since in fact the two arguments are identical, and are founded on the well-known principle of determination.

The Seventh Argument.

One of the modern Mutakallemim says that he is able to prove the creation of the Universe from the theory put forth by the philosophers concerning the immortality of the soul. He argues thus: If the world were eternal the number of the dead would necessarily be infinite, and consequently an infinite number of souls would coexist, but it has long since been shown that the coexistence of an infinite number of things is positively impossible. This is indeed a strange argument! One difficulty is explained by another which is still greater! Here the saying, well known among the Arameans, may be applied: "Your guarantee wants himself a guarantee." He rests his argument on the immortality of the soul, as though he understood this immortality, in what respect the soul is immortal, or what the thing is which is immortal! If, however, he only meant to controvert the opinion of his opponent, who believed in the eternity of the Universe, and also in the immortality of the soul, he accomplished his task, provided the opponent admitted the correctness of the idea which that Mutakallem formed of the philosopher's view on the immortality of the soul. Some of the later philosophers explained this difficulty as follows: the immortal souls are not substances which occupy a locality or a space, and their existence in an infinite number is therefore not impossible. You must bear in mind that those abstract beings which are neither bodies nor forces dwelling in bodies, and which in fact are ideals--are altogether incapable of being represented as a

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plurality unless some ideals be the cause of the existence of others, and can be distinguished from each other by the specific difference that some are the efficient cause and others the effect: but that which remains of Zaid [after his death] is neither the cause nor the effect of that which is left of Amr, and therefore the souls of all the departed form only one being as has been explained by Ibn Bekr Ibn Al-zaig, and others who ventured to speak on these profound subjects. In short, such intricate disciplines, which our mind can scarcely comprehend, cannot furnish any principles for the explanation of other subjects.--It should be noted that whoever endeavours to prove or to disprove the eternity of the Universe by these arguments of the Mutakallemim, must necessarily rely on one of the two following propositions, or on both of them; namely on the tenth proposition, according to which the actual form of a thing is merely one of many equally possible forms, and which implies that there must be a being capable of making the special selection: or on the eleventh proposition which rejects the existence of an infinite series of things coming successively into existence. The last-named proposition is demonstrated in various ways, e.g., they advert to a class of transient individuals, and to a certain particular date. From the theory which asserts the eternity of the Universe, it would follow that the individuals of that class up to that particular date are infinite in number; a thousand years later the individuals of that class are likewise infinite in number; the last number must exceed the previous one by the

number of the individuals born in those thousand years, and consequently one infinite number would be larger than another. The same argument is applied to the revolutions of the heavenly sphere, and in like manner it is shown that one infinite number of revolutions would be larger than another; the same result is obtained when revolutions of one sphere are compared with those of another moving more slowly; the revolutions of both spheres [though unequal] would be infinite in number. Similarly they proceed with all those accidents which are subject to destruction and production; the individual accidents that have passed into non-existence are counted and represented as though they were still in existence, and as though they were things with a definite beginning; this imaginary number is then either increased or reduced. Yet all these things have no reality and are mere fictions. Abunazar Alfarabi in criticizing this proposition, has exposed all its weak points, as you will clearly perceive, when you study his book on the changeable beings earnestly and dispassionately. These are the principal arguments of the Mutakallemim in seeking to establish the *creatio ex nihilo*. Having thus proved that the Universe is not eternal, they necessarily infer that there is an *Agens* who created it in accordance with His intention, desire and will. They then proceed to prove the unity of that *Agens* as I am going to point out in the next chapter.

CHAPTER LXXV

IN this chapter I shall explain to you how the Mutakallemim prove the Unity of God. They contend that the Maker and Creator of the Universe, the existence of whom is testified by all nature, is One. Two propositions are employed by them in demonstrating the Unity of God, viz., two deities or

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more would neutralize each other, and if several deities existed they would be distinguished from each other by a specific difference.

First Argument.

The first argument is that of mutual neutralization, and is employed by the majority of the Mutakallemim. It is to the following effect:--If the Universe had two Gods, it would necessarily occur that the atom--subject to a combination with one or two opposite qualities--either remained without either of them, and that is impossible, or, though being only one atom, included both qualities at the same time, and that is likewise impossible. E.g., whilst one of the two deities determined that one atom or more should be warm, the other deity might determine that the same should be cold: the consequence of the mutual neutralization of the two divine beings would thus be that the atoms would be neither warm nor cold--a contingency which is impossible, because all bodies must combine with one of two opposites; or they would be at the same time both warm and cold. Similarly, it might occur that whilst one of the deities desired that a body be in motion, the other might desire that it be at rest; the body would then be either without motion and rest, or would both move and rest at the same time. Proofs of this kind are founded on the atomic theory

contained in the first proposition of the Mutakallemim, on the proposition which refers to the creation of the accidents, and on the proposition that negatives are properties of actual existence and require for their production an *agens*. For if it were assumed that the substance of this world which, according to the philosophers is subject to successive production and destruction, is different from the substance of the world above, viz., from the substance of the spheres--a fact established by proof--and that as the Dualists assert, there are two divine beings, one of whom rules this world without influencing the spheres, whilst the other governs the world above without interfering with this world--such theory would not involve the mutual neutralization of the two deities. If it were then objected, that the existence of two deities would necessitate an imperfection in both of them, in so far as one deity would be unable to influence the province of the other, the objection would be met by the reply that this inability need not be considered a defect in either of them: for that which is not included within the sphere of action of a being can of course not be performed by that being, and an *agens* is not deficient in power, if it is unable to perform what is intrinsically impossible. Thus we, Monotheists, do not consider it a defect in God, that He does not combine two opposites in one object, nor do we test His omnipotence by the accomplishment of any similar impossibility. When the Mutakallemim noticed the weakness of their argument, for which they had some apparent support, they had recourse to another argument.

Second Argument.

If there were two Gods, there would necessarily be some element common to both, whilst some element present in the one would be absent in the other, and constitute the specific difference between them. This is a philosophic and sound argument for those who are able to examine it, and to obtain a clear insight into its premises, which will be further explained, in our exposition

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of the view of the philosophers on this point. But it cannot be accepted by those who admit the existence of divine attributes. For according to their opinion, the Primal Cause includes many different elements. They represent its wisdom and its omnipotence as two different things, and again the omnipotence as different from the will. Consequently it would not be impossible that either of the two divine beings possessed several properties, some of which would be common to both, and some peculiar to only one of them.

Third Argument.

This argument is likewise based on one of the Propositions of the Kalâm. For some of the Mutakallemim belonging to the old school assume, that when the Creator *wills* a thing, the will is not an element superadded to the essence of God: it is a will without a substratum. In accordance with the propositions which we have mentioned, and of which, as you will see, it is difficult to form a true conception, they say that *one* will, which is independent of any substratum, cannot be ascribed to *two* beings: for, as they assert, *one* cause cannot be the source of two laws for two

essences. This is, as I told you, the method of explaining one difficulty by means of another and still greater difficulty. For as they define the Will, it is inconceivable, and some have, therefore, considered it to be a mere non-entity: others who admit its existence, meet with many insuperable difficulties. The Mutakallemim, nevertheless, establish on its existence one of the proofs for the unity of God.

Fourth Argument.

The existence of an action is necessarily positive evidence of the existence of an *agens*, but does not prove the existence of more than one *agens*. There is no difference whether the existence of one God be assumed or the existence of two, or three, or twenty, or any number. This is plain and clear. But the argument does not seem to prove the non-existence of a multitude of deities; it only shows that their number is unknown; the deity may be one sole being, but may also include several divine beings. The following supplemental argument has therefore been advanced: possibility is inapplicable to the existence of God, which is absolute: the possibility of the existence of more than one God must therefore be denied. This is the whole essence of the proof, and its fallacy is self-evident; for although the notion of possibility cannot be applied to the existence of God, it can be applied to our knowledge of God: for an alternative in our knowledge of a thing does not involve an alternative in the actual existence of the thing, and perhaps there is neither a tripartite deity as the Christians believe, nor an undivided Unity as we believe. This is clear to those who have been taught to notice the conclusions implied in given premises.

Fifth Argument.

One of the modern Mutakallemim thought that he found a proof of the Unity of God in the idea of requisiteness. Suppose there were two divine beings; if one of them were able to create the universe, the second God would be superfluous, and there would be no need for his existence. If, on the other hand, the entire universe could not be created or governed except

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by both of them, each of them. would be imperfect in to far as he would require the co-operation of another being, and would thus be limited in power. This argument is, in fact, only a variation of "the mutual neutralization of two deities." There is this difficulty in such proofs, that a certain degree of imperfection is ascribed to a Being which does not accomplish tasks beyond its sphere. We do not call a person weak because he cannot move a thousand hundredweights, and we do not say that God is imperfect because He cannot transform Himself into a body, or cannot create another being like Himself, or make a square whose diagonal should be equal to one of its sides. In the same manner we should not consider it an imperfection in God, if He were not the only Creator, and if it were absolutely necessary that there should be two Creators; not because the one God required the assistance of the other, but because the existence of both of them was equally necessary, and because it was impossible that it should be otherwise. Further we do not say that the Almighty is imperfect, because He does not, according to the opinion of the

Mutakallemim, produce a body otherwise than by the creation of atoms, and by their combination with accidents created in them. That inability is not called want or imperfection, since another process is impossible. In like manner the Dualist might say, that it is impossible for one Being to act alone, and that this circumstance constitutes no imperfection in either of the Deities, because the absolute existence of one Deity necessitates the coexistence of the other. Some of the Mutakallemim, weary of these arguments, declared that the Unity of God is a doctrine which must be received as a matter of faith, but most of them rejected this theory, and reviled its authors. I, however, hold, that those who accept this theory are right-minded, and shrink from admitting an erroneous opinion; when they do not perceive any cogency in the arguments, and find that the proofs advanced in favour of the doctrine are inconclusive, they prefer to assume that it could only be received as a matter of faith. For the Mutakallemim do not hold that the Universe has any defined properties on which a true proof could be founded, or that man's intellect is endowed with any such faculty as would enable him to form correct conclusions. It is, however, not without a motive that they defend this theory: they wish to assume such a form of the Universe, as could be employed to support a doctrine for which otherwise no proof could be found, and would lead us to neglect the investigation of that which in fact can be proved. We can only appeal to the Almighty and to those intelligent persons who confess their error when they discover it.

CHAPTER LXXVI

THE reasonings and arguments of the Mutakallemim to demonstrate the Incorporeality of God are very weak., and indeed inferior to their arguments for the Unity of God. They treat the doctrine of the Incorporeality of God as if it were the logical sequence of the theory of His Unity, and they say that the attribute "one" cannot be applied to a corporeal object. Those who maintain that God is incorporeal because a corporeal object consists of substance and form--a combination known to be impossible in the Divine Being, are not in my opinion Mutakallemim, and such an argument is not founded on the propositions of the Kalâm; on the contrary, it is a logical

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proof based on the theory of substance and form, and on a right conception of their properties. It has the character of a philosophical argument, and I shall fully explain it when treating of the arguments of the philosophers. Here we only propose to discuss the arguments by which the Mutakallemim desire to prove the Incorporeality of God in accordance with their propositions and the method of their reasoning.

First Argument.

If God were corporeal, His true essence would necessarily either exist entirely in every part of the body, that is to say, in each of its atoms, or would be confined to one of the atoms. In the latter alternative the other atoms would be superfluous, and the existence of the corporeal being [with the exception of the one atom] would be of no purpose. If, on the other hand, each atom

fully represented the Divine Being, the whole body would not be one deity, but a complex of deities, and this would be contrary to the doctrine adopted by the *kalâm* that God is one. An examination of this argument shows that it is based on the first and fifth propositions. But there is room for the following objection: "God does not consist of atoms, that is to say, He is not, as you assert, composed of a number of elements created by Himself, but is one continuous body, and indivisible except in man's imagination, which affords no test; for in man's imagination the substance of the heavens may be torn or rent asunder. The philosopher holds that such a possibility results from assuming a similarity and an analogy between the visible, i.e., the bodies which exist among us, and the invisible."

Second Argument.

This argument, they believe, is of great importance. Its main support is the impossibility of comparison, i.e., the belief that God cannot be compared to any of His creatures; and that He would be comparable to other corporeal objects if He were corporeal. They put great stress on this argument, and say as follows: "If it were asserted that God is corporeal, but that His substance is not like that of other corporeal beings, it would be self-contradictory: for all bodies are alike as regards their substance, and are distinguished from each other by other things, viz., the accidents." They also argue that if God were corporeal it would follow that He has created another being like Himself. This argument is refuted in two ways. First, the objector does not admit the impossibility of comparison; he asks how it could be proved that God cannot be compared to any of His creatures. No doubt that, in support of their view, that a comparison between the Almighty and any other being is inadmissible, they would have to cite the words of the Prophets, and thus accept this doctrine by the authority of tradition, not by the authority of reason. The argument that God, if comparable to any of His creatures, would be found to have created beings like Himself, is refuted by the objector in the following way: "The created things are not like Him in every respect; for I do not deny that God has many properties and peculiarities." For he who admits the corporeality of God does not deny the existence of properties in the divine Being. Another and more forcible argument is this: All who have studied philosophy, and have made themselves thoroughly acquainted with philosophical theories, assume as demonstrated

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facts, first that the term substance, when applied to the spheres above and to the corporeal objects here on earth is a perfect homonym, for the substance of the one is not the substance of the other: and secondly that the forms of the things on this earth are different from the forms of the spheres; the terms substance and form when applied both to things below and to the spheres above are homonyms; although there is no doubt that the spheres have [like the things below, three] dimensions, they are corporeal because they consist of substance and form, not because they have dimensions. If this explanation is admitted with reference to the spheres, how much more is he who believes that God is corporeal justified in saying that God is a corporeal being which has

dimensions, but which in its substance, its true nature and properties is very different from all created bodies, and that the term "substance" is applied to Him and to His creatures homonymously, in the same manner as the true believers, who have a correct conception of the divine idea, apply the term "existence" homonymously to Him and to His creatures. The Corporealists do not admit that all bodies consist of similar atoms: they believe that God created all things, and that these differ from each other both in their substances and in their constituent properties: and just as the substance of dung differs from the substance of the sun, so does, according to this theory, the substance of the spheres and the stars differ from the substance of the created light, i.e., the Divine Glory (*Shechinah*), and again the substance of the Divine Glory, or the pillar of cloud created [for the purpose], differ from the substance of the Most High; for the substance of the latter is sublime, perfect, simple, constant and immutable. His absolute existence remains always the same, and He creates all things according to His will and desire. How could this argument, though it be weak, be refuted by these strange methods of the Mutakallemim, which I pointed out to you?

Third Argument.

If God were corporeal, He would be finite, and so far this argument is correct; if He were finite, He would have certain dimensions and a certain form; this is also a correct conclusion. But they continue thus: Attribute to God any magnitude or form whatever: He might be either larger or smaller, and might also have a different form. The fact that He has one special magnitude and one special form presupposes the existence of a determining *agens*. I have heard that they attach great importance to this argument, but in truth it is the weakest of all the arguments mentioned above. It is founded on the tenth proposition, the feebleness of which in ignoring the actual properties of things, we have clearly shown in regard to ordinary beings and must be much more evident in regard to the Creator. There is no difference between this argument and their assertion that the fact of the existence of the Universe having been preferred to its non-existence proves the existence of an *agens* that preferred the existence of the Universe to its non-existence at a time when both were equally possible. If it were asked why this argument should not be applied to God-viz., that His mere existence proved the existence of an *agens* which determined His existence and rejected His non-existence--they would undoubtedly answer that this admission would only lead to a repetition of the same argument until at

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length a being be found whose existence is not merely potential but necessary, and which does not require a *causa efficiens*. But this same answer can also be applied to dimensions and to form. It can only be said in reference to all other forms and magnitudes, the existence of which is possible, that is to say which came into existence after a state of non-existence, that they might have been larger or smaller than they actually are, or that they might have had a form different from that which they actually possess, and require for this reason some determining *agens*. But the forms and dimensions of God (who is above all imperfection and similitude)! did not come

into existence according to the opinion of the Corporealist after a state of non-existence, and therefore no determining *agens* was necessary: His substance with its dimensions and forms has a necessary existence; no *agens* was required to decide upon His existence, and to reject His non-existence, since nonexistence is altogether inadmissible in God. In like manner there was no force required to determine His magnitude and form, they were absolutely inseparable from His existence.

If you wish to go in search of truth, to cast aside your passions, your tradition, and your fondness of things you have been accustomed to cherish, if you wish to guard yourself against error: then consider the fate of these speculators and the result of their labours: observe how they rushed, as it were, from the ashes into the fire. They denied the nature of the existing things, misrepresented the properties of heaven and earth, and thought that they were able, by their propositions, to prove the creation of the world, but in fact they were far from proving the *creatio ex nihilo*, and have weakened the arguments for the existence, the unity, and the incorporeality of God. The proofs of all these doctrines must be based on the well-known nature of the existing things, as perceived by the senses and the intellect.

Having thus discussed the arguments of the Mutakallemim, we shall now proceed to consider the propositions of the philosophers and their arguments for the existence of God, His Unity and His Incorporeality, and we shall for the present assume the Eternity of the Universe without finally accepting it. Next to this we shall develop our own method, which is the result of deep study, in demonstrating these three principles, and we shall then examine the theory of the Eternity of the Universe as assumed by the philosophers.