

MAIMONIDES' DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

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TO MY SISTER

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FOREWORD

Any treatment of a subject touching on a question which cannot be proved by demonstration, but which depends upon speculation, requires of necessity some kind of apologetic address.

We are able to present such a confession of natural limitation on the part of Maimonides, who says concerning the subject of immortality: "Consider how these excellent and true ideas comprehended only by the 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^{1.} several times."

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More, Part I, Chapter 70, Pages 106, 107.

INTRODUCTION

(a) Theory of Knowledge

In the beginning an understanding must be reached regarding the problem of knowledge. Our purpose is not to investigate the extent or the character of the knowledge of God. When we treat of the theory of knowledge, the extent, the character, the purpose and the influence of the knowledge of man will be discussed. Though we confine the treatment of this problem to the exclusive knowledge of man, we do not stop there. The theme of immortality of the soul is something that may reveal the delicate inter-relationships that exist between man and God. Logically, therefore, we conclude that the object of man's knowledge is to know God. This view is held by Maimonides and it will be brought out in a later discussion.

Reason is the distinguishing characteristic of man. Reason is synonymous with the intellect and the intellect is synonymous with the soul. Maimonides says that man approaches God through the intellect, and in more picturesque terms declares that the intellectual perception is the connecting link between God and

1. man. "For God is the author of the intellect and all rational beings."
2.

The human intellect is limited and the intelligence of man is at first insufficient. Mental perception because connected with matter is subject to conditions similar to those to which the physical perception is subject. He "possesses perfection
3. only in potentia". The human intellect must not exceed its

1. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 385.
2. More, Part III, Chapter 43, Page 352.
3. More, Part I, Chapter 34, Page 45.

powers, else in doing so it will become weak and imperfect.

The intellect should not reject as impossible things which have never been proved to be impossible, nor should it reject things which, in fact, are possible, although their possibility may be very remote.^{1.}

Through the study of metaphysics the intellect may obtain perfection.^{2.} The intellect is incorporeal and living.

"Intellect is neither a corporeal object nor a force residing in a body. It acts intermittently and yet whatever the cause may be why it does not act, we do not say that the Active Intellect has passed from a state of potentiality to that of actuality; or that it implies a possibility of (change), or that an agent must exist that causes the transition from potentiality to actuality."^{3.} Active Intellect "is the lowest of purely spiritual beings".^{4.} Man has the attribute of hylic intellect which appertains to no other living being.

"It must be obvious to you that when 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."^{5.}

According to Maimonides, man's task and purpose are the formation of ideas. "The best and the sublimest among them is the idea which man forms of God, angels, and the rest of creation, according to his capacity. Such men are always with God, and of

1. More, Part I, Chapter 32, Page 42.

2. More, Part I, Chapter 34, Page 49.

3. More, Part II, Chapter 18, Page 182.

4. More, Part III, Chapter 11, Page 168.

5. More, Part I, Chapter 68, Page 101.

them it is said: 'Ye are princes and all of you are children^{1.} of the Most High'."

It is of particular interest to know what Maimonides thought concerning the disciplines of knowledge. He says: "So it is with all sciences and knowledge man may learn. Concerning those which lead directly to this goal,^{*} there is naturally no question, but such subjects as mathematics, the study of conic sections, mechanics, the various problems of geometry, hydraulics, and many others of a similar nature, which do not tend directly towards that goal, should be studied for the purpose of sharpening the mind, and training the mental faculties by scientific investigations, so that man may acquire intellectual ability to distinguish demonstrative proofs from others, whereby he will be enabled to^{2.} comprehend the essence of God."

As far as possible an attempt has been made to indicate Maimonides' theory of the intellect, the vital faculty peculiar to man, called Reason. It is essential that a clear understanding be attained of this faculty since through it, in our opinion of the views of Maimonides, man achieves immortality. There are various stages of development of this process. We could dwell^{3.} at length upon the significant parts that imagination; prophecy;^{4.} law; angels;^{5.} and virtue^{6.} play towards the accomplishment of the^{7.}

1. More, Part III, Chapter 8, Page 262.

2. Shemonah, Chapter 5, Page 71. *goal = perfection of the instruments of the soul.

3. More, Part II, Chapter 36, Page 225.

Ibid, Part II, Chapter 38, Page 230.

Ibid, Part III, Chapter 22, Page 298.

Shemonah, Chapter I, Page 41, Note 1.

4. More, Part II, Chapter 32, Page 220.

Ibid, Part II, Chapter 36, Page 225.

Ibid, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 385.

5. More, Part III, Chapter 27, Page 312.

Ibid, Part III, Chapter 33, Page 328.

Shemonah, Chapter 4, Page 65.

6. and 7. (see next page).

goal of intellectual love of God, which is the quintessence of life. However, we are only permitted to suggest these features.

In fine, it is appropriate that we include Maimonides' belief that would summarize for us his conception of the function of knowledge. His words might be compared with the popular Spinozistic phrase: "Amor Dei Intellectualis". "When you are alone by yourself, when you are awake on your couch, be careful to meditate in such precious moments on nothing but the intellectual worship of God, viz., to approach Him and to minister before Him in the true manner which I have described to you - not in hollow emotions. This I consider as the highest perfection wise men can attain by the above training."^{1.} Maimonides interpreted love for God as the intellectual worship of God.^{2.}

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6. More, Part I, Chapter 49, Page 65.
 Ibid, Part II, Chapter 4, Page 158. Attention is invited to the similarity of opinions in the doctrines of Aristotle and Maimonides regarding that force which acts as a mediator between God and man. There is actually only a difference in terms; there seems to be little difference in character. Aristotle calls his force Intelligences, Maimonides, Angels. Ibid, Part II, Chapter 6, Page 160.
7. More, Part I, Chapter 2, Page 15.
 Ibid, Part I, Chapter 34, Page 47.

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1. More, Part II, Chapter 51, Page 387.
 Cf. Shemonah, Chapter 8, Page 102.
2. More, Part III, Chapter 28, Page 314.
 Ibid, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 386 ("Man's love of God is identical with his knowledge of Him.")
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(b) God Conception

A study of metaphysical struggles to discover that Force or Power or Spirit which may be called the First Cause or Determiner of Destiny, or God, customarily occupies itself with a project to prove the existence of God. It is significant for us to realize that Maimonides does not concern himself with the task of proving the existence of God. For Maimonides - God is.

For this reason our work will not be with the common proofs for the existence of God, viz., the cosmological, the ontological and the teleological, since we have now decided that there is no doubt concerning the truth of His being. However, Maimonides is tremendously interested in the nature of God. He is eager to understand that God is so awful and so majestic that He cannot be described or comprehended. He confirms this with a proof of the limitation of man's intellect, which we have already discussed in the previous section. Man may only apprehend the existence of God and all positive attributes of Him are inadmissible.^{1.} From this we are given to believe that Maimonides plans to rid his God of any human form, - that is, he will combat all conceptions of anthropomorphism. This is his first task. His second task is to prove that God is a process of thinking, intellect in action. We shall treat of these two tasks independently and not exhaustively. We shall just touch the subject.

The question of an anthropomorphic God is definitely settled for Maimonides.^{2.} We intimated in our section on knowledge that man might attain immortality through the intellectual development

1. More, Part I, Chapter 58, Page 82.

2. More, Part I, Chapter 60, Pages 87, 88.

of the soul. Since the pure intellect has been described as a matter of reason, devoid of imagination and any material form, God, who is the Creator, the Author of intellect, must also be devoid of imagination and of any material form. God is Pure Reason or Pure Intellect. The perfection in which man can truly glory is attained by him through imitation of God.^{1.} Consequently, it is of exceeding importance that Maimonides firmly establish the fact that God is not a body but that He is Intellect. All perceptions of God related in the Bible are of a spiritual not of a material character. Furthermore, each additional proof that a certain thing must be negatived of God brings one a step nearer to the knowledge of God. "In this sense some men come very near to God and others remain exceedingly remote from Him."^{2.}

Drawing from a well chosen parable, we are able to produce a clean connection between God, the intellect, and man. In our treatment of man in the previous section we outlined the fact that man, the intellect, and the thing comprehended are one and the same thing. (See above). The intellect is the link that connects us with God.^{3.} Proceeding we ascertain that God and the intellect are synonymous.^{4.} This fact would strengthen our theory that immortality is achieved through intellectual love for God. However, at this time we are involved in the proposition of the nature of God.

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1. More, Part III, Chapter 54, Page 397.
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 60, Page 87.
 3. More, Part III, Chapter 52, Page 391.
Ibid, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 385.
 4. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 119.

On the topic of the soul and its faculties, in Chapter 68 of More there is found a fine argument leading to the belief that God is the Intellect. God is the intellect which is always in action. God is the intellectus, the ens intelligens and the ens intelligibil.¹ Also "God is identical with His attributes and His attributes with Him, so that it may be said that He is the knowledge, the knower, and the known, and that He is the life, the living, and the source of His own life, the same being true of His other attributes."²

It is noteworthy that Aristotle treats of a form that is physical, not a purely intellectual one.³ This is such an imperceptible leap from God to man that we are prone to accept the pure intellectual concept and definitively declare that God and intellect are one and eternal.

Our next problem will concern itself with the relationship which God, as Pure Intellect, has with man who has the capacity to understand God through that emanation from God which is likewise called intellect. Any explanation of free will is subject to violent contradictions. Nevertheless we shall submit the ideas which we have found.

1. More, Part I, Chapter 68, Page 101.
2. Shemonah, Chapter 8, Page 100.
3. More, Part I, Chapter 69, Page 103.
Cf. Ibid, Part III, Chapter 13, Page 272.

(c) Free Will

If God is God, He must be omnipotent. If God is omnipotent, He must likewise be omniscient. Nothing can occur in the universe which is His creation unless He has willed that it should occur. Consequently, in any systematic attempt to understand freedom of the will, one must grasp the relationship that exists between God, the all-powerful, and man. If man is totally deprived of free will, is he responsible for his actions? If he is not responsible for his actions, we must conclude that there are no criteria for judging those who may become immortal. We would be compelled to state that all men are immortal or that man as a genus is immortal. It is of prime importance that we note the exact conditions under which man lives. "It is wrong to suppose that when a certain part of the earth is thrown upward God wills at that very moment that it should fall. . . . We. . . believe that the Divine Will ordained everything at creation, and that all things, at all times, are regulated by the laws of nature, and run their natural course, in accordance with what Solomon said: 'As it was, so it will ever be'.¹"

A careful review of this statement would lead us to the belief that since man is composed of the same elements as nature, he likewise is subject to the inexorable laws of nature. However, we hasten to present our theory of the intellect, calling to mind the fact that the intellect or the soul of man is not a natural product but like its fountain-head, God, is spiritual and endowed with freedom to comprehend. It was the

1. Shemonah, Chapter 8, Page 90.

will of God that man should be different from the rest of creation and that he be privileged to enjoy the benefits of Divine Providence.^{1.}

A study of the spheres and their powers has produced an illuminating contribution to the subject of free will.

Man's actions are controlled by the spheres.^{2.} From this we might be led to infer that man is under the sway of the spheres.

Yet there is still another doctrine that relieves us of the difficulty. The spheres move by their own motion, and only animate beings like the soul have motion. The human body is moved and that which is the cause of the motion, though it does not move itself, is the soul. There is, therefore, free will exercised by the soul.^{3.}

In another place we find this statement: "But do not imagine that the Intelligences and other spheres are like other forces which reside in bodies and act by the laws of nature without being conscious of what they do. The spheres and the Intelligences are conscious of their actions, and select by their own free will the objects of their influence. . . ."^{4.}

A bold declaration of the freedom of man is made.^{5.} Maimonides is confident that man possesses freedom of choice. Man has the privilege of fearing God.^{6.} He is not compelled to do so. "Everything is in the power of heaven, except the fear of heaven", forms a central doctrine with Maimonides as it does with the Rabbis of previous generations. The great-

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1. More, Part III, Chapter 17, Page 288.
 2. More, Part II, Chapter 10, Page 164.
 3. More, Part II, Chapter 1, Page 150.
 4. More, Part II, Chapter 7, Page 162.
 5. Shemonah, Chapter 8, Page 86.
 6. Shemonah, Chapter 8, Page 89.

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est punishment that can come to man is to be deprived of
free will.^{1.}

This is a stimulating idea. We derive from it the feeling that there is an immortality for those who have not been deprived of their freedom to worship God through the intellect. We might state that while man has free will, it is within the power of God to revoke this privilege, if man proves by his own choice that he is unfit to use it. This is closely associated with the matter of Divine Providence and also with the subject of the intellect.^{2.} When one has exercised his choice in such a way as to enable him to spend his time for the most part in the contemplation of the works and the glory of God, that one has fulfilled the purpose of life.^{3.}

Out of this confident exposition of the belief that man has free will, there comes the still more interesting fact. The soul which is the seat of the intellect and the intellect, which in turn has the power to choose, must be as eternal and, therefore, as immortal as the Pure Intellect of which it is an emanation. Else how is it possible for any thing to be free unless it partook of the nature of that which of necessity is free - God or Pure Intellect?

1. Shemonah, Chapter 8, Page 96.

2. More, Part III, Chapter 17, Page 288.

3. Shemonah, Chapter 5, Page 69.

CHAPTER I

Substantiation of the Soul

Up to this point, in our introduction to the theme of immortality, we have taken the existence of the soul, the seat of the divine intellect, for granted. In this section we shall offer those ideas from the writings of Maimonides that seem to us to be arguments proving or substantiating the existence of the soul. In addition it shall be our purpose to demonstrate whether the soul, which Maimonides reveals, is a substance, or if not, what its nature is.

Frankly and simply, we have no concrete evidence of the existence of the soul as a substance that may be measured, tasted, or something which has color or produces sound. Reason alone, - that rational faculty of man - must be relied upon to establish for us the existence of the soul designated as intellect. Here we have an attractive paradox. Human reason, which is itself sadly limited, will attempt to prove its own existence. In a word, it is the same unhappy problem of knowledge that perplexed the philosophers and found its great champion in Emanuel Kant. Notwithstanding these difficulties we shall proceed to explain as rationally as possible the words of Maimonides, who presents his problem as follows: ". . . 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. . ."^{1.} Also, "in which respect the soul

1. More, Part I, Chapter 34, Page 45.

is immortal or what the thing is which is immortal."^{1.}

What the thing is which is immortal? So we shall plunge into the subject and describe as sensibly as possible the structure of the soul. "So I say that the soul has five faculties; the nutritive (also known as the 'growing' faculty), the sensitive, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the rational."^{2.}

It is claimed that the faculties of the soul of man are altogether different from the same faculties in the soul of an animal. Animals have no rational faculty. This is the distinguishing and also the all-important faculty of man. Now that we have this definitive exposition of the structure of the soul and find that the fifth faculty of the soul of man is the rational faculty, we arrive at the first outstanding theory - the soul is intellect.

Consider that we have emphasized the belief that God, intellect and soul are fairly well synonymous. If we announce that intellect is closely akin to soul and to God, we would be confronted with a dilemma were we to come upon a statement that would compel us to reconsider this view. Such a statement is found wherein Maimonides declares: "We must not suppose that in speaking God employed voice or sound, or that He has a soul in which thoughts reside, and that these thoughts are things super-added to His essence; but we ascribe and attribute to Him thoughts in the same manner that we ascribe to Him any other attributes."^{3.}

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1. More, Part I, Chapter 74, Page 137.
Cf. Ibid, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 119.
 2. Shemonah, Chapter I, Pages 38, 39.
Cf. More, Part II, Chapter 4, Page 156.
 3. More, Part I, Chapter 65, Page 97.

This does not frighten us away. For later we come upon something that explains.^{1.} Then we come to the question of the nature of the soul. Is it substance that is like matter, which is subject to change through decay or destruction? If we believe that the soul is intellect and if we affirm that intellect in man is limited and subject to changes and, therefore, is not perfect,^{2.} and also if we believe that angels^{3.} because they are dependent upon God and, therefore, inferior to Him have had beginning, consequently, being subject to destruction, inevitably we come to the conclusion that the soul is a form principle, subject to change, not because it is by nature helpless, but because the body or matter upon which it, as form, impresses itself is ever seeking to take on another form. There is flux.^{4.}

An adequate explanation of our signification of form principle is given. This interpretation gives the clue for which we hoped. The form principle is the intellect. The form principle is that which is impressed upon matter and makes man. But as we have already decided, the peculiar and distinctive quality of man is his rational faculty or intellect. The form principle is intellect. The soul, the specific form of man, is his intellectual perception.^{5.}

Let us reflect upon the presumption that God is the form principle. If we could then believe that the form

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1. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 115.
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 39, Page 42.
 3. More, Part III, Chapter 14, Page 276.
 4. More, Part III, Chapter 8, Page 261.
 5. More, Part I, Chapter 1, Page 14.

principle of man, which is intellect, is capable of destruction, certainly God would be subject to the same law of destruction. We are confident that what is meant by the destruction of form at any time is change.^{1.} That is, if a person fails to develop his rational or intellectual faculty, his form will not be destroyed (since this would be impossible), but its existence will not be a good one.^{2.}

We shall hold on to this view rather tenaciously. In doing so we shall be able to concentrate attention upon the intellect. Then we may be able to demonstrate that the soul is intellect, and as intellect it is perceptible and demonstrable. That part of the intellect which has attained a degree of perfection, compatible to the degree qualifying a man to become a saint or a prophet, is prepared for the influence, guidance and the protection of Divine Providence, culminating in immortality.^{3.}

Referring to the statement of the relationship between good and evil, we perceive an excellent thought. "If man frees his thoughts from worldly matters, obtains a knowledge of God in the right way, and rejoices in that knowledge, it is impossible that any kind of evil should befall him while he is with God, and God with him. When he does not meditate on God, when he is separated from God, then God is also separated from him; then he is exposed to any evil that might befall him; for it is only that intellectual link with God that secures the presence of Providence and pro-

1. More, Part I, Chapter 69, Page 106.

2. Shemonah, Chapter I, Pages 44, 45.

3. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 389.

Cf. Ibid, Part III, Page 298.

tection from evil accidents."^{1.}

In the treatment of the word Hai חַי , we see something pertinent to the same thought. From the second meaning of the word which Maimonides attaches to Hai חַי , viz., the term is also employed in reference to the acquisition of wisdom, we realize that wisdom is determined upon as an important part of the soul.^{2.}

The gathering of these threads will produce for us a whole idea, which is that the intellectual development of the soul, through the attainment of wisdom, is a tremendous factor in the life of any living organism.

Good and evil are associated with life and death in Deuteronomy (30:15). Regarding death, Maimonides reluctantly agrees with the Mutakallemim that life and death are accidents.^{3.} In another place "the causes of production are the causes of destruction". If the four forces which are present in every being sustained by food were intelligent forces, man would be exempt from those great forces of destruction. The forces perform their natural functions without thought and intelligence, without any consciousness of their action, although they are the direct cause of the birth and the temporal existence of the human being.^{4.}

Moreover, intellect is also an accident.^{5.} With these bewildering statements, regarding the actual existence of the intellect, there must be noticed that those things which are temporal are without thought or intelligence.

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1. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 389.
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 42, Page 57.
 3. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 126.
 4. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 117.
 5. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 123.

It would be logical to presume that the destruction of these unintelligent forces is to be expected. There is nothing to wonder about in this respect. But there is something extraordinary in the deliberate differentiation that is made. Apparently, those forces which are intelligent are not subject to destruction.

Quite frequently we have used the refrain that the intellect, which is an emanation from God, is the link that joins us to God.¹ This is not acceptable since it is poetic, although we have stated previously that it was possible to perceive and to demonstrate the existence of the intellect. Yet we must not fail to include our confession regarding the inferior quality of the human intellect.

Finally we submit the view from Maimonides which in itself expresses his feeling of insecurity on the argument regarding the existence and the indestructibility of the intellect, which we have called soul. "We are of the opinion that the souls of the pious have been created, and at the same time we believe that they are immortal. Some hold, in accordance with the literal meaning of the Midrashim, that the bodies of the pious will also enjoy everlasting happiness. Their notion is like the well-known belief of certain people, that there are bodily enjoyments in Paradise. In short, reasoning leads to the conclusion that the destruction of the universe is not a certain fact. There remains only the question as to what the prophets and our sages say on this point; whether they

1. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 386.

affirm that the world will certainly come to an end, or
not."^{1.}

✓ We conclude our presentation of the subject of the substantiation of the soul with the suggestion that Maimonides is compelled to resort to the authority of the Scriptures for his ultimate solution.

1. More, Part II, Chapter 27, Page 202.

CHAPTER II

Individuality of the Soul

We are now approaching the most delicate feature of our investigations. Granted that there is a state of immortality for the intellect, which we have announced to be the link that joins us with God, we are unable to decide whether intellect is something of a totality or whether it may be split up into myriads of integral units. To be specific, is there individual immortality of soul?

When Aristotle and Maimonides discuss the matter of Divine Providence they speculate as to whether Divine Providence extends over the species alone, or over individuals. Out of this discussion we derive ^{1.} many conflicting ideas. Evidently the exceedingly significant statement is this one of Maimonides: "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 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 ^{2.} all the departed form only one being."

This statement leads us directly to another which is

1. More, Part III, Chapter 17, Page 282.
 Cf. Ibid, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 116.
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 42, Page 137.

of rare moment. Let us observe that Maimonides states without reserve that for the individual there is immortality of the soul, but that this immortality is limited. Observe also that the intellect is the fourth principal force directly derived from the spheres (which relationship to man should be carefully noted).^{1.} "The following are the four principal forces directly derived from the spheres: the nature of minerals, the properties peculiar to plants, the animal faculties, and the intellect. An examination of these forces shows that they have two functions, namely, to produce things and to perpetuate them; that is to say, to preserve the species perpetually, and the individuals in each species for a certain time."^{2.} Our only present solution is to accept this temporary form of immortality and then to proceed on that faint hope.

Yet withal we may point to other statements which could serve as testimonials respecting the hope of immortality beyond end. Singular aid comes to us from the fourth principal force, intellect. Inasmuch as we have established the affinity of intellect with God, we may feel secure in stating that at least this portion of man, viz., intellect, is immortal beyond computation in the point of time.

Still on the subject of divine Providence, we come upon the important matter of grace. Maimonides believes that grace is extended to individuals. He enumerates Moses, Aaron and Miriam. These have received divine grace with-

1. More, Part I, Chapter 71, Page 114.

2. More, Part II, Chapter 10, Pages 165, 166.

1. out doubt. It is to be expected that there is definite qualification that prepares man to receive this grace. Consequently, we learn that "He who knows God,
2. finds grace in His eyes".

We have indicated upon many occasions in this paper that knowledge of God comes through comprehension of His ways, and comprehension is exercised through the faculty of the intellect. Furthermore, ". . . there is no difference whether a person stand at the center 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."
3.

A consideration of these sentiments arouses a feeling that there have been very, very few individuals who have been able to achieve perpetual immortality. Doubtless this is because very few individuals have attained the necessary high degree of human perfection. We are now able to reconcile our early conflicting ideas. We say, - in the degree to which man attains moral or intellectual perfection, he achieves commensurate immortality. From this it must follow that life is a constant endeavor on the part of members of the genus - man - to develop the maximum powers of the intellect towards perfection. This

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1. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Pages 390, 391.
Cf. Ibid, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 388 (also Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 54, Page 75.
 3. More, Part I, Chapter 18, Page 28.

is a process that is slow, perhaps requiring generations to complete. How many saints and prophets, like Moses, Miriam, and Aaron, have been thus "immortalized by the kiss of God" is difficult to compute.

Nevertheless, we derive an effective working idea that enables us to believe that there is an individual immortality which is achieved through high moral perfection. So we read: "The fourth kind of perfection is the true perfection of man; the possession of the highest intellectual faculties; the possession of such notions which lead to true metaphysical opinions as regards God. With this perfection man has obtained his final object; it gives him true human perfection; it remains to him alone; it gives him immortality, and on its account he is called man."^{1.}

Two striking ideas present themselves at this moment. The first is that man is not altogether normal without the use of the intellect. It is the intellect that sets him above the animal. With the intellect man is able to provide for all the necessities of life in a most satisfactory manner. "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."^{2.}

In this regard man is superior to the other animals;

1. More, Part III, Chapter 54, Page 395.

2. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 118.

Cf. More, Part II, Chapter 4, Page 156. ("They wrongly assume that when we ascribe a soul to the heavenly sphere we mean something like the soul of man, or that of an ass, or ox.")

since Divine Providence does not extend to any species^{1.} of animals, excepting man^A, for the reason that these species have no intellect, we conclude that man as an individual possessing intellect is capable of enjoying immortality, - which is our second idea. We offer these ideas for the purpose of demonstrating the belief that the soul of the individual has the potentiality for immortality. We have conducted our research on this problem in an indirect fashion, inasmuch as it is our desire to arrive finally at the discussion of the individual man as man, and in order to ascertain what is the peculiar quality or characteristic of man. We have already touched upon this in our outline on the matter of the substantiation of the existence of the soul. We shall now devote our interest to the study of man as man.

Our sense of justice would dictate to us the feeling that every man is responsible for his actions; moreover, that every man should be compensated according to his actions. The fundamental conception of the peculiar specific character of each individual is proclaimed in Maimonides' remarkable interpretation of the phrase: "In the image of God, made He man". We quote here at length, for we consider this statement of immense value: "The term *zelem* ^{why}, on the other hand, signifies the specific form, namely, that which constitutes the essence of a thing, whereby the thing is what it is; the reality of

1. More, Part III, Chapter 18, Page 289.

a thing insofar 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'. (Genesis I, verse 27). It is, therefore, rightly said, 'Thou despisest their *zelem*'. (Psalm 63, verse 20); the 'contempt' can only concern the soul - the specific form of man, not the properties and shape of his body."¹.

More definite advices concerning the struggle which man must make in order to attain perfection are to be found in the paragraph describing the vital relation which the soul bears to the body. According to the habits of the individual, so the soul develops. "The sufferings. . . of the soul are two-fold: - First, such evils of the soul as are the necessary consequence of changes in the body, insofar as the soul is a force residing in the body; it has therefore been said that properties of the soul depend on the condition of the body. Secondly, the soul, when accustomed to superfluous things, acquires a strong habit of desiring things which are neither necessary for the preservation of the individual nor for that of the species."².

These sentiments evoke the concept that individual effort is necessary in order to attain individual immortality. It is difficult to propose the possibility for a group or a nation to enjoy grace, because one lone individual has been able to attain a high degree of perfection.

1. More, Part I, Chapter 1, Page 13.

2. More, Part III, Chapter 12, Page 270.

We are aware that the doctrine "that the Merits of the Fathers" ^{היבט היבט} will sustain a stubborn people is a powerful one in many faiths.^{1.}

On the other hand, we are more willing to accept Maimonides' rational assertion that individual effort is necessary to comprehend God, and we are furthermore glad to believe with him that: "If a man will always carefully discriminate as regards his actions, directing them to the medium course, he will reach the highest degree of perfection possible to a human being, thereby approaching God, and sharing in His happiness."^{2.} Thus far we have concentrated on the problem of individual immortality. We have given little attention to the contention that many souls exist in the individual. This has been widely discussed by many philosophers and Maimonides gives it proper attention. He says: "Know that the human soul is one, that it has many diversified activities. Some of these activities have, indeed, been called souls, which has given rise to the opinion that man has many souls, as was the belief of the physicians, with the result that the most distinguished of them states in the introduction of his book that there are three souls, the physical, the vital, and the psychical. These activities are called faculties and parts, so that the phrase 'parts of the soul', frequently employed by philosophers, is commonly used. By the word 'parts', however, they do not intend to imply that the soul is divided into parts as our body, but they merely enumerate the different activities of the soul

1. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 388.

2. Shemonah, Chapter IV, Page 68.

as being parts of a whole, the union of which makes up
the soul."^{1.}

As a logical climax to all these ideas comes this comprehensive statement: "If there be found a man who has accomplished this - that is one who exerts all the faculties of his soul, and directs them towards the sole ideal of comprehending God, using all his powers of mind and body, be they great or small, for the attainment of that which leads directly or indirectly to virtue - I would place him in a rank not lower than that of the prophets".^{2.}

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1. Shemonah, Chapter I, Pages 37, 38.
 2. Shemonah, Chapter V, Page 73.
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CHAPTER III

Immortality of the Soul

(a) RESURRECTION

"'Every Israelite has a share in the world to come', runs a Mishnah in Tractate Sanhedrim. But who is an 'Israelite' and what is the 'life to come'? These questions suggested to Maimonides the desirability of examining current conceptions of immortality, and forced upon him the duty of formulating the ultimate doctrines, belief in which made the Israelite."^{1.} This is the accepted explanation why Maimonides composed the Thirteen Articles, particularly why he included Resurrection of the dead as one of the dogmatic tenets of his faith.

Much space could be devoted to an interpretation of Maimonides' views in this matter, since we are for a moment confounded by the strange attitude on the part of one who so unreservedly worshipped the intellect. This desired elaboration may be summarized in the words of the master, who says: "Now it may be that Paradise will give to the righteous all that men dream of delight, and more; and Gehenna may be a fiery torture for the wicked. The days of the Messiah will fulfill all that the prophets have prophesied, and Israel will regain the sovereignty and return to their land. But our hope in the Messiah is not made up of dreams of wealth or hopes of Eden - a dream of bliss to

1. "Maimonides", by Yellin and Abrahams, Chapter 5, Page 83.
 Cf. More, Introduction, Page XX.

spur us to righteousness. Eternal bliss consists in perfect spiritual communion with God. 'He who desires to serve God from love must not serve to win the future world, but he does the right and eschews the wrong because he is man, and owes it to his manhood to perfect himself; and this effort brings him to the type of perfect man, whose soul shall live in that state which befits it, namely, in the world to come'.^{1.}"

After such a marvelously lofty and sublime declaration, it is beyond us to conceive that Maimonides was in accord with the views of those who held that there was a future life of bodily bliss for the particularly favored among men.^{2.} The revivification of the body, which is material substance, seems to be an incongruous belief here, insofar as we have continually advocated the imperishable nature of the intellect. On this account also we would not be inclined to presume that Maimonides would be willing to assent to any doctrine that would guarantee eternal bliss of physical and sensual pleasures to those who in this world had devoted their life to the attainment of intellectual perfection.

Before we rest content with the majestic aspiration - "eternal bliss consists of perfect spiritual communion with God" - (see above), which expression will serve as an appro-

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1. "Maimonides", by Yellin and Abrahams, Chapter 5, Pages 89, 90.
 2. Cf. Yad Hachazaka, Hilchoth Teshubah, VIII, 1 & 2.
 2. More, Part II, Chapter 26, Page 202.

priate nexus to our section on spiritual immortality, we must include a belief that is wondrously strange, because it is so fantastic and mystical. "'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', . . . 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."^{1.}

Though Maimonides uses this only as proof, we feel certain that he attached credence to it. Just what Maimonides had in mind concerning the process of resurrection through the agency of the dew, used figuratively or literally, we cannot say. From his zealous attacks upon those who insist upon ascribing corporeality to God, the inference is drawn that it was impossible for Maimonides to have thought that men would be revived bodily to appear before a God who^{2.} was corporeal like themselves.

We have it from various sources that Maimonides believed in some kind of future life which we might call Messiah. This fact is eloquently voiced in the Thirteen Articles. (Article 12). As part of his belief in the in-

1. More, Part I, Chapter 69, Page 106.

2. More, Part I, Chapter 59, Page 84. ("For example, 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.")
Cf. More, Part III, Chapter 10, Page 266.

destructibility and eternity of the universe is included the belief that ". . . the souls of the pious have been created, and at the same time we believe that they are immortal."^{1.} Immediately following this frank utterance of faith and belief is the statement that bewilders, as it intimates the disbelief in a Paradise offering bodily pleasures.

1. More, Part II, Chapter 27, Page 202.

(b) SPIRITUAL IMMORTALITY

Disdainfully Maimonides repudiates physical resurrection. Then calmly and serenely, like a strong man about to run a race, he proceeds to describe in glowing, rapturous language the state of immortality.^{1.} The audacity is terrific and the confidence is heroic, the conception is awe-inspiring, gripping and fearful. So grand is it that we are in our turn bold enough to assert that the master composed the More under divine guidance, while under the spell of that all-absorbing thought - immortality, which seems to be the theme of this miracle of intellect, - though the theme is delicately concealed throughout.

Let us understand that Maimonides has no doubts about immortality.^{2.} For him it is an assured condition, as we have pointed out in his conception of God. It will be well for us to appreciate this invincibleness of belief. Upon it we shall construct our interpretation of his conception of immortality. The ardent anticipation manifests to us the presence of a will, irresistible, a self-conscious personality, an ego that yearned, strove and finally seems to have become one with the Nirvana of its aspiration, a dew-drop of mortality that slipped into the shining sea of spirituality.

While in search for an adequate exposition of the idea which we desire to formulate in this thesis, we came upon

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1. More, Part III, Chapter 51 (entire chapter)
Cf. St. Augustine's "Confessions", Book IX, Chapter X.
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 40, Page 55.
Ibid, Part I, Chapter 40, Page 56,
Ibid, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 384.

this statement, which we believe is the nearest approach to the central theme. "It is true," Schopenhauer says: "if I were merely an intellectual being, an outward-looking subject, I should perceive nothing but phenomena arranged in space and time, and in causal relation. In my own innermost consciousness, however, I come face to face with my true, real, basal self; in the consciousness of activity I become aware of the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself is will; it is the primary, timeless, spaceless, uncaused activity that expresses itself in me as impulse, instinct, striving, craving, yearning. I also become aware of myself as a phenomenon, as a part of nature; I imagine myself as an extended organic body. I know myself in two ways: as will and as body; but it is the one will which, in self-consciousness, appears as the consciousness of activity and, in perception, as my material body. The will is my real self, the body the expression of the will."^{1.}

In another place we read: "Life feels itself and wills itself to be endless".^{2.} We recall Professor James' famous essay, "The Will to Believe" and recommend the title for our purpose. In a similar vein Maimonides says: ". . . it is only when a desire arises for the thing imagined, that we move in order to obtain it. We have thus shown that both the soul, the principle of motion, and the intellect, the source of the ideas, would not produce motion without the existence of

1. "History of Philosophy", Thilly, Page 486.

2. "Religious Consciousness", Pratt, Chapter 11, Page 235.

a desire for the object of which an idea has been formed." ^{1.}

Our attention is to be wrapped up in the desire of man to achieve immortality. Desire gives birth to will; will pursues its own course relentlessly and passionately until it has grasped that which its master desired. Life is a precious boon. All the joys experienced in life tend to intensify the longing for the eternity of life and for the perpetuation of the rich experiences. Occasionally man revels in bliss that is as fleeting as it is ineffable. Occasionally a strong or good man reflects upon the nature of his actions and this reflective process provokes an ardent wish for the preservation and also for the continuance of these eternal values, which he considers to be eternal. Many other intimations might be indicated as manifestations of the hope for immortality. But the mighty one, the supreme tendency, is the will of the individual to become one with his ideal, which in most instances is God.

We continue the argument with reference to the definition of God as Pure Intellect. To this we add another definition.

"The Active Intellect is the lowest of the purely spiritual beings." ^{2.}

Furthermore, our conception of a perfect, godly man is one who has acquired to some degree this Active Intellect. "Some persons constantly strive to choose that which is noble, and to seek perpetuation in accordance with the direction of their nobler part, - their form; their thoughts are engaged in the formation of ideas, the acquisition of true

1. More, Part II, Chapter 4, Page 157.

2. More, Part II, Chapter 11, Page 168.

knowledge about everything, and the union with the divine intellect which flows down upon them, and which is the source of man's form."^{1.}

We have amply dwelt upon the subject of knowledge, intellect, Divine Providence, and God, and now we shall seek to extract that which we hold to be the last vestige of human existence upon this earth - the spirit. When Maimonides states that the Active Intellect is the lowest of the purely spiritual beings, the inference is drawn that since man possesses this Active Intellect, he is a spiritual being. The nature of this spirit is the will of man, the soul, or the intellect. This is suggested by the combination of homonyms, which Maimonides derives from the word nefesh^{2.} Will is soul or intellect. It is that which resides in man as the faculty of reason, or the intellect.

It would be well to avail ourselves of the statement that "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."^{3.} Before entering upon the denouement which throws back the veil of supernatural mystery in a

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1. More, Part III, Chapter 8, Page 261.
 Ibid, Part III, Chapter 27, Page 313.
 Ibid, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 388.
 Ibid, Part III, Chapter 54, Page 395.
 Ibid, Part I, Chapter 3, Page 17.
 Ibid, Part II, Chapter 37, Page 228.
 Ibid, Part III, Chapter 18, Page 289.
 2. More, Part I, Chapter 41, Page 56.
 3. More, Part I, Chapter 72, Page 119.

dramatic fashion, we submit another theory. ". . . 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 a 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."^{1.}

This clears up the contradiction found in the previous statement referring to the intellect as that faculty which resided in the body, not separate from it. In connection with this Maimonides defines the word spirit: "Ruah

רוח is a homonym, signifying 'air', that is, one of the four elements. . . It signifies also that which remains of man after his death, and is not subject to destruction."^{2.}

Through a long series of arguments we might be able to arrive at this important point which we believe to be the substantial theory of Maimonides: air is analogous to breath, breath is the expression of the will of God through the application of which God creates.^{3.} The will or the spirit of man is but a part of the will of God. Accordingly, our decision is that it is the will of man to surrender his will to the will of God. This can only result after man has attained knowledge of God through an understanding of the works of God. This surrender is voluntary.

1. More, Part I, Chapter 70, Page 106.

2. More, Part I, Chapter 40, Page 55.

3. More, Part I, Chapter 23, Page 33.

It is demonstrated by man's constant observance of the will of God. Wholehearted rational obedience to His laws is the highest form of human comprehension, or worship. We read: "For those who observe the nature of the Universe and the commandments of the Law, and know their purpose, see clearly God's mercy and truth in everything; they seek, therefore, that which the Creator intended to be the aim of man, namely, comprehension."^{1.}

Here we have decided to review the personality of the chief among prophets, Moses. In his life and death we find the answer to the yearning for an endless continuation of spiritual opportunities. Moreover, because Maimonides enumerates Moses as one of the immortals, It is of immense significance that Moses was given the law. The paramount distinction of Moses over that of all other prophets was that he was given the law." . . . the prophecy of Moses our Teacher was distinguished from that of other prophets; we will now explain that this distinction alone qualified him for the office of proclaiming the Law, a mission without a parallel in the history from Adam to Moses, or among the prophets who came after him; it is a principle in our faith that there never will be revealed another Law."^{2.}

The full understanding of the entire argument which we have advanced may be derived from this epitome of the

1. More, Part III, Chapter 12, Page 270.
 Ibid, Part II, Chapter 39, Page 232.
 2. More, Part II, Chapter 39, Page 231.

character of Moses. "Thus, there remained between Moses and his comprehension of the true essence of God only one transparent obstruction, which was his human intellect still resident in matter. God, however, was gracious in imparting to him, after his request, more knowledge of the divine than he had previously possessed, informing him that the goal (he sought) was impossible of attainment, because he was yet a human being."^{1.}

Enlightenment is immediately discovered. "The corporeal element in man is a large screen and partition that prevents him from perfectly perceiving abstract ideals; this would be the case even if the corporeal element were as pure and superior as the substance of the spheres; how much more must this be the case with our darkened opaque body. However great the exertion of our mind may be to comprehend the Divine Being or any of the ideals, we find a screen and a partition between Him and ourselves. Thus the prophets frequently hint at the existence of a partition between God and us. They say He is concealed from us in vapors, in darkness, in mist, or in a thick cloud; or use similar figures to express that on account of our bodies we are unable to comprehend His essence."^{2.}

The vivid presentation and ecstatic narration run their courses, and the goal is perceived. We read: "The philosophers have already explained how the bodily forces

1. Shemonah, Chapter 7, Page 82.

2. More, Part III, Chapter 9, Pages 264, 265.

of man in his youth prevent the development of moral principles. In a greater measure this is the case as regards the purity of thought which man attains through the perfection of those ideas that lead him to an intense love of God. Man can by no means attain this so long as his bodily humors are hot. The more the forces of his body are weakened, and the fire of passion quenched, in the same measure does man's intellect increase in strength and light; his knowledge becomes purer and he is happy with his knowledge. When this perfect man is stricken in age and is near death, his knowledge mightily increases, his joy in that knowledge grows greater, and his love for the object of his knowledge more intense, and it is this^{1.} great delight that the soul separates from the body."

Such is a human portrait of an eternal will!

Finis.

1. More, Part III, Chapter 51, Page 390.