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— A Comparative Study of —

THE ETHICS OF ARISTOTLE & MAIMONIDES —

— With a Translation of the שמנה פרקים להקדמה —

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Dedicated to my  
Revered Teacher,  
Dr. I. M. Wise

## Introduction

No originality is claimed in the compilation of this thesis. I have kept as closely as possible to my authors, as my aim is to discover their ethical systems and compare them. I have first discussed the soul and the will as they furnish the necessary ground-work to a discussion of ethics proper, then virtue and vice, the mean, good; pleasure and happiness, the latter representing pure ethics. This method has compelled me to depart <sup>from</sup> the Aristotelean and Maimonidean method of development but I feel that a clearer idea of their ethics is thus obtained.

The chapter on Maimonides is drawn chiefly from the שמונה פרקים להרשב"ם with occasional reference to הלכות דעות and כורא ובוכים.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge the kind assistance extended me by my dear teacher, Professor Feldman who examined parts of the translation of



the *שמונה פרקים* and suggested valuable corrections.

# Books of Reference Used for Essay on Aristotle

## I. The works of Aristotle in original.

a. Nicomachean Ethics

b. Eudemean Ethics

c. Magna Moralia.

## II Aristotle's Politics & Economics - translation of E. Walford.

## III. Aristotle's Metaphysics - translation of J. A. McMahon.

## IV Translations of the Nicomachean Ethics by.

a. W. R. Brown

b. A. M. Hatch.

## V Aristotle - Grote.

## VI Aristotle's Politics Vol. I Newman

## VII Aristotle's Psychology Vol. I. E. Wallace.

## VIII. Aristotle's Moral Philosophy A. M. Hatch

## IX Aristotle - Sir Alexander Grant.

## X. The outlines of the Philosophy of Aristotle - E. Wallace

## XI. The Greek Philosophers Vol. I. A. W. Benn

## XII History of the Literature of Ancient Greece Vol II. Müller and Donaldson.

## XIII History of Philosophy - Vol. I Erdmann

## XIV History of Philosophy Zeller

## XV History of Philosophy - Vol I Vahlenweg.

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- XVI. Ancient Philosophy Vol. III. Ritter.
- XVII. History of Greece Vol. VIII. Grote.
- XVIII. Encyclopaedia Britannica on Aristotle.
- XIX. Metropolitana Encyclopaedia on Aristotle.
- XX. Vocabulary of the Phil. Sciences-Krauth "Thesaurus".  
 B). Translation of שמנה פרקים להרמ"ב (H. Bittler)
- XXI. Lexicons:
- a. Dr Grossman (Mss.)
  - b. Jastrow
  - c. Levi
  - d. Gesenius
- (German edition of Wolff.)

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## Chapter I

### Resume of Ethics of Aristotle

#### Practical Nature of the Ethics

The Ethics of Aristotle rest on a lower plane than those of Plato. The latter is general, the former, particular; the latter attempts to ascertain what is good, the former tries to discover what is good for man. Plato is, therefore, theoretical, contemplative. He ascends to the loftiest realms of ideals, is desirous of knowing the "perfect good." He cares not for the "man" or how much of good, he can accomplish. Aristotle cares for the "man". He realized that the idea of the good of Plato and the practice of the good as it is, were two different things. Practice revealed the impossible element in the ideal, so Aristotle was content to accept only so much of the idea of good as could ~~be~~ ~~could~~ be applied to practical life. Man is but an insignificant part of the universe. He can gratify his desires only by outward activity. He must, therefore be content with a practical life, nay more, man best serves the purpose of his creation by being practical. This fact is best seen in the following extracts.

a). W. R. Broune - Note to Bk. I Chap. I. Par. 2.

The aim of all moral action is admittedly both the vulgar and profane to be happiness, and this results from the performance of the peculiar work which belongs to man.<sup>(b)</sup> Intellect of itself is not the motive principle of any action, but only that intellect which is for the "something" and is practical.<sup>(c)</sup> This governs the intellect which produces also, for every person that makes anything, makes it for the sake of something, and the thing made is not an end absolutely, but it has reference to something and belongs to someone.<sup>(d)</sup> Practical intellect, not pure intellect, is the motive principle of moral action.<sup>(d)</sup> The good which is performed for its own sake is the practical good. The practical realization of the good and the beautiful ought to be the first and the last object of all man's endeavor and this practicality is a means to scientific development. The best life for the state and

b. Nic. Ethics Bk I Chap. IV Par. 2.

c. Nic. Ethics Bk. VI Chap. II Par. 5 & 6.

d. W. R. Brroune - Analysis of Aristotle p. 444.



the individual is the practical life.<sup>(1)</sup> Aristotle views all morals from this point. <sup>(2)</sup> The practical application of morals to life. <sup>(3)</sup> This is a means to scientific development. If we bear this fact in mind, we shall understand Aristotle's hatred of exaggeration, the exactness with which he comprehended the conduct of the Greeks, and the reason why at times, he gives us merely general rules in outline of the topic discussed.<sup>(4)</sup>

### Psychology

Defined: Psychology, according to Aristotle is a history of the soul, *ιστορία ψυχῆς*. The soul is the realization of the body<sup>(a)</sup>; The end and termination of the body.<sup>(b)</sup> When the body has advanced so far that it can possess a soul, it has reached, as it were, its last stage of development. The soul is therefore, not only the realization of the body, it is its perfect realization - its

<sup>(a)</sup> Politics of Aristotle - Newman also Ueberweg Hist. of Philosophy

<sup>(b)</sup> Nic. Ethics Book II Chap. II.

<sup>(a)</sup> Metaphysics 1043<sup>a</sup> 35

<sup>(b)</sup> Eth. Nic. Bk. IX Chap. IX, 1170<sup>a</sup> 17.

full development. A common definition of the soul is the earlier perfect realization of a natural organized body.<sup>(c)</sup> We have another definition of the soul: the soul is the expression of being of the body. Only through the soul can we explain and comprehend the body. Ethics is deeply rooted in Psychology. The whole fabric is built upon the nature of the soul. But our author treats of the soul in his metaphysical works<sup>and</sup> discusses only the Psychic problem in so far as it touches ethics, taking it for granted that the metaphysics have been studied before the Ethics. The soul is divided for ethical purposes into two parts: Rational & Irrational.<sup>(d)</sup> The rational part of the soul possesses the intellectual virtues and is<sup>is</sup> divided into two parts (1)  $\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu\omicron\nu\iota\kappa\acute{o}\nu$  (2)  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\varsigma\iota\kappa\acute{o}\nu$  i.e. vs. scientific part of the soul & reasoning part of the soul.<sup>(e)</sup> The irrational soul is subdivided into the nutritive and appetitive. The nutritive part is common to men and animals alike; it is never subordinate to reason and is most active in sleep.\*

(c) De Anima II - 1412<sup>04</sup>

(d) Nic. Ethics - Bk. I. Chap. III and Bk. VI Chap. I.

(e) Nic. Ethics - Bk. VI Chap. IV

The appetitive part - appetites, desires, passions - this resists or obeys reason, its virtue consists in its obedience to reason. Ethical virtues belong to this part of the soul: where it obeys reason we have virtue; when it resists reason to do wrong, we have vice.<sup>(1)</sup> This part of the soul is developed by practical training. The phenomena of the irrational soul are three in number viz:

1. Passions: Everything accompanied by pleasure & pain
2. Capacities: The capacity of being moved by affection
3. States: The habit which makes us prone to this or that particular affection. Virtue belongs to this class

### The Will

Morality presupposes freedom. This exists whenever the will of the agent meets no obstacle and he is able to deliberate with intelligence. Without freedom of the will, there can be no responsibility for acts committed, no morality and no ethics. Thus Aristotle states that man possesses a principle of free-

<sup>(1)</sup> Nic. Ethics Bk I, Chap. III Par. 10-14

<sup>(2)</sup> Virtue & Vice are neither affections nor faculties but habits good or bad.



intelligence and is a free and voluntary agent in the good or evil that he does<sup>(a)</sup>. Every act is voluntary when the beginning of the organic motion is the will of the agent.<sup>(b)</sup> Involuntary actions are those done with constraint and through ignorance and that are done by compulsion, of which the principle is external and is of such a character that the agent does not at all contribute toward it.<sup>(c)</sup> Actions performed in passion and desire are voluntary actions.<sup>(d)</sup> We note a peculiar statement that would lead us to suppose that a penitent sinner if he sins in ignorance, should be excused on the plea of involuntary sin.<sup>(e)</sup> It would seem by this that Aristotle is at variance with the general law that "ignorance of a law does not free one from the

(a) Nic. Ethics Book II Chap VIII

(b) Nic. Ethics Book III Chap I

(c) Nic. Ethics Bk III Chap. I Par. 2.

(d) Nic. Ethics Bk II Chap I.

(e) Nic. Ethics Bk III Chap. I Par. 13.

[Note] Socrates insists that man can only err involuntarily.



penalty of violation of the law". We find, however, that he advocates that punishment should be inflicted for wrong doing in case of ignorance whenever the ignorance is the fault of the agent himself<sup>(5)</sup>. Certain actions of a mixed character e.g. the act of the captain of a ship who throws the cargo overboard in a storm, to save the people, for while one would not willingly destroy his property, yet he will do so to save himself "and companions" but can do good from deliberate preference. There is an apparent inconsistency here which can be explained only by the fact that Socrates seems to think that no man will deliberately choose the evil, that when a man does choose a course of action, he does so because he thinks it will lead to a good result. Aristotle, however, objects to the conclusion of Socrates. Error is voluntary as well as excellence. A man should learn to distinguish between a pleasure whose end is evil and pleasure whose end is good. He should learn to withstand pain if the end is for his good, in fact he should learn to feel pleasure in a righteous performance and in deeds whose end is good, and pain in the performance of deeds whose end is evil. We can see how remarkably close Aristotle is to the Jewish conception of the will<sup>and</sup> of pleasure<sup>and</sup> pain.

(5) Nic. Ethics. Book III Chap. V.

There is more of the voluntary than involuntary in these acts, for at the time of their performance, they are eligible <sup>as</sup> the end of an action depends upon the time of its performance. Virtue and vice are voluntary since we arrive at them by deliberate choice. We can not possibly refer virtuous <sup>as</sup> vicious conduct to another beginning - actions like children are a man's offspring. <sup>(1)</sup> If this were so, how could we hold a man responsible and how could ethics be a subject of science or study. Yet if bad acts are persevered in, a bad habit is formed <sup>as</sup> then acts while still punished as voluntary are really beyond the power of the will. To all intent, they are involuntary, yet law does not so recognize them. A drunkard cannot plead, "I could not help it" before a court in extenuation of a murder committed while under the influence of liquor. The Judge <sup>as</sup> Jury know that the path which leads to drunkenness, loss of self-control <sup>as</sup> master of passion, were in the power of the guilty man <sup>as</sup> he is punished as if he were a voluntary agent. Man has free will to do or not to do.

<sup>(1)</sup> Nic. Ethics Book III Ch. 4-5. <sup>(2)</sup> Nic. Ethics Book III Ch. V. <sup>(3)</sup> Nic. Eth. Book III Chap. VI.

## Virtue and Vices

Defined - ἀρετή in Greek from ἄρισ - mass.

Virtue from vir, a man, in Latin; the primary meaning is manly strength implying opposition or struggle. In man, the struggle is between reason and passion, between right and wrong. To hold by the former is virtue, to yield to the latter is vice.<sup>(a)</sup> Virtue and vice are the only objects of moral appreciation.<sup>(b)</sup> Virtue are neither passions, or capacities but habits. The genus of virtue is habit.<sup>(c)</sup> It is that habit from the possession of which a man is called good, and by which he performs well his appropriate task.<sup>(d)</sup> Virtue is stable, an abiding principle of the soul, more stable than science.<sup>(e)</sup> We do not possess virtue by nature, yet it impels to uniformity; it is not a capacity of soul, rather a disposition acquired by practice, a property.

(a) Krauth and Fleming Philosophic Dict.

(b) Nic. Eth. Bk. VII - 1

(c) Nic. Eth. Bk. II Ch. 5

(d) Nic. Eth. Bk. II Chap 2.

(e) Nic. Eth. Bk. I - Ch. 2.



taken possession of <sup>and</sup> improved, a habit of the soul<sup>(g)</sup>, not an act but a tendency to good action a dynamic force<sup>(h)</sup>, that which impels a thing to accomplish its proper work, is its virtue. The virtue of a man is that habit by which he executes well his work. But a man can overdo or underdo work, as well as just enough to make the object perfect, hence the virtue here, would be the attainment of the middle point in respect to our affections <sup>and</sup> actions to exhibit each in the proper occasion in the proper degree, towards the proper persons determined by reason <sup>and</sup> judgment of the prudent man. <sup>(d)</sup> Excess <sup>and</sup> defect destroy everything. The "mean" enlarges <sup>and</sup> preserves. The virtues are divided into two grand divisions (1) Intellectual (2) Ethical. Aristotle is true to the Hellenic spirit of uniting reason with excellence to form virtue. There can be no ethical excellence without reason<sup>(e)</sup>. The necessary

<sup>(g)</sup> *Eudemian Ethics* Bk. II Chap. I

<sup>(h)</sup> *Rhetoric* Bk. I. Ch. IX

<sup>(d)</sup> *Nic. Eth.* Book II Ch. 6

<sup>(e)</sup> *Nic. Eth.* Bk. II Ch. 6.



elements of virtue are ethical excellence<sup>and</sup>  
rational intelligence, nay more, "Ethical virtue is the desire of the soul to be guided by right reason." "Youth has no meritorious virtue since reason is not fully matured at that age." Ethics with the Greeks is limited only to that age where reason has power over man's actions. Virtue admits of relations similar to that which prudence bears to cleverness i.e. the two kinds of virtue are not identically the same but similar; such is the relation between natural virtue and virtue proper. We possess certain virtues from birth - temperance, valor natural virtues. The desire, however, is that these virtues exist in us in a different manner. The child and the brute possess natural habits but these without intellect are clearly hurtful for instance, a strong body moving without sight will meet with some accidents, so with natural virtues without reason.

Just as the opinionating faculty has two forms, cleverness<sup>and</sup> prudence, so there are two forms of virtue, material virtue

and virtue proper. The latter is not produced without prudence. A man may possess some of the natural virtues at different times, but he must possess all the 'proper virtues' at one and the same time, since prudence is one, and prudence is a mark of proper virtue. If he possess one proper virtue, he possesses all.<sup>(P)</sup> There is still another virtue called heroic or divine virtue, antipodal to brutality. Now brutality is not vice nor is that which the gods perform, virtue. The gods have something more than virtue the brutes something less than vice. The gods have heroic or divine virtues so we say of a man who possesses this virtue, he is god-like.<sup>(K)</sup>

Virtue and vice are voluntary. Virtue is in our power and likewise vice, since the end of an action is an object of volition and the means to the end, object of deliberation and deliberate judgment. We have the power to do an act, also the power to abstain from an act, hence being

(P) Nic. Ethics Book VI Chap. 13.

(K) Nic. Eth. Book VII Chap. I.

good or bad is in our power. A resumption is necessary here; actions are under our control from beginning to end. We are masters of habits only at the beginning. Virtues are habits, hence virtues are, in formation, under our control; when matured they are beyond our control.

Reasons why vice is voluntary. (Bk III Ch. V)

1. If not voluntary, then man is not the origin and parent of his actions.
2. The principles would be under our control but the result would not.
3. For the faults of the body, those which are in our power are blamed. And those which are not in our power are not blamed e. g. being born blind, deaf or dumb. Man finds fault with bodily imperfections caused by the victim himself but not with natural defects, and if we blame vice, we must consider it voluntary.
4. It matters not whether the end is due to nature, a man's self, or a fixed law, the means are in the actors power.
5. If virtues are voluntary, then vice is also.



voluntary.

Objections answered (Bk. III. Ch. v)

1. Legislators punish people for ignorance if it is self-created, not otherwise.
2. The plea of inability to attend sufficiently to understand the law in case this inability has been caused by perseverance in vice as the drunkard.
3. All men aim at apparent good but lacking the control of their imagination, will choose the end according to his character. A person is the cause of his own habits and so is he the cause of his imagination.
4. If we state that owing to the ignorance of the end, vice is involuntary and a man cannot be blamed for his vice or praised for his virtue. Therefore virtue and vice - all in our power are voluntary, and under the direction of right reason.

Virtues are means.

A man of intelligence and prudence



shuns excess <sup>and</sup> defect, his aim is to seek the  
between excess <sup>and</sup> defect, not an absolute mean  
but a relative mean. Virtue, being like na-  
ture, more accurate <sup>and</sup> excellent than any  
art, must be apt to hit the mean. Moral  
virtue is here referred to; it is conversant  
with passion and action, since in these  
there is excess <sup>and</sup> defect. Virtue is a kind  
of "mean" state. It is a habit accompanied  
with deliberate preference, <sup>the relative mean</sup>  
defined by reason, <sup>as a prudent man would</sup>  
define it. It is a "mean" state between two  
vices, one an excess, the other, a defect. Some  
actions <sup>and</sup> passions admit of no "mean" state  
as, envy, malevolence, shamelessness, adultery,  
cheat, homicide. These are called bad-per se.  
It is impossible to be right in them, so  
we have no mean state in injustice, intem-  
perance or cowardice.

Some "mean" states enumerated (Bk II - CVI)

- (a) Courage is the mean between fear <sup>and</sup> cowardice  
and confidence or rashness (III - 6)
- (b) Temperance, between intemperance <sup>and</sup> excess (II - 10)
- (c) Liberality, between prodigality <sup>and</sup> illiberality (II - 1)

- d) Magnificence, between "vulgar profusion" and shabbiness
- e) Magnanimity, between empty vanity and meanness of spirit (IV-III)
- f) Meekness, between passion and insensibility to anger (III)
- g) Three social virtues as "mean" states (Bk III)
- (1) Truth, between arrogance and false modesty (VII)
- (2) Graceful wit, between ribaldry and clownishness (VII)
- (3) Friendliness; between flattering and moroseness (III)

The sense of shame is a kind of fear of disgrace. It is not a virtue though we may call it so in youth.

Our virtues are, then, generally speaking:

1. Mediocrities
2. Habits formed by repeated action.
3. A specific influence of their own in facilitating the performance of action of the same class.
4. Originally voluntary.
5. Under the direction of right reason  
(Goal's Aristotle 529)

## The "Mean".

We find the doctrine of the "mean" used frequently in the *Ethics*. First Definition The mean is that which neither exceeds or falls short of the rule of propriety. (note) It is a variable, differing in (Note) The definition of the mean, "that which neither exceeds or falls short of the rule of propriety" is very unsatisfactory. In fact this does not solve the problem of what the mean is. To explain the "mean" by the "rule of propriety" is merely a change of language: a distinction without a difference. Again "man ought to pursue a just medium; this is indicated by the conduct of the sage." How the sage finds this medium is not explained. Aristotle sees this difficulty and tries to remove it by the "rule of prudence" which tells us to note carefully our proneness to certain things and to avoid them; but how to follow this rule of prudence when we do not know the right mean? — The practical intelligence of which we are everywhere referred back to, notes thus the neat circle of reasoning. Prudence will lead us to the right medium, a practical intelligence of the right medium will lead to prudence. Then worse than all else, no further cause is given by which prudence is to act. (May Mon. II 10). We find in *Nic. Ethics II* the following statement which would seem to justify this vagueness.

different persons, not constant for all relations. The proper moral standard is a variable mean. When an act is to be performed, then it suffices to determine the mean, relative to the conditions, <sup>and</sup> methods of accomplishment, to the individual whom it may affect. And <sup>as to</sup> the reasons for its being undertaken (Eth. Nic. II<sup>2-3</sup>), for instance, people differ as regards aptitude, nature, etc., the "enough" for one is the "insufficient" for another. (Sol. I-13) The virtue of a slave is one <sup>thing</sup>; that of an ordinary man, woman or child something different. The right way has only one way; the wrong has many ways which seems to substantiate the theory of the mean.

The idea of wisdom is limited to prudent acts and the knowledge of one's greatest good, which is the object of wisdom. It is impossible, without taking into consideration the interests of the family <sup>and</sup> the country, <sup>and</sup> thus true wisdom becomes true Economy <sup>and</sup> true statesmanship. In other words, the vagueness here is due to the fact that Aristotle has separated the comprehensive science of politics into three branches of Ethics—individual good, Economics—family good, — Politics, the good of the state. And in attempting to deal with the ethics as a separate subject, he must necessarily be vague where the subject shades off into Economics <sup>and</sup> Politics.



And virtue appears as the mean between two vices, only one transgresses the other, falls short of the right measure (Nic. Eth. II<sup>o</sup>). The "mean" is the proper course to choose but it is hedged in by extremes. A myriad of ways present themselves, but there is but one right way and this like hitting the mark in archery, is a difficult matter. We have then rules to assist us in this task. (1) Keep away from the extreme which is more contrary, for of the extremes, one is more, another is less erroneous. (2) Choose the least of these evils. Consider toward which vice we are most inclined ~~to~~ drag ourselves to the opposite extreme, then we shall arrive at the mean, as people do with crooked sticks, to make them straight. (3) Be on our guard against what is pleasant and what gives pleasure, for we are frequently biased judges, prone to arrive at pleasant things that lead us eventually to extremes. (Nic. Eth. BK III (Ch. II).

<sup>These</sup> the acquirement of rational intelligence depends upon the broad and comprehensive science of politics and the development of moral virtue depends upon

## The Good - Ethics.

With Aristotle, Ethics investigates the moral good of the individual. It is basic since the family and the state are built up of individuals. Now the morals of the individual are denominated as ethics, the morals of the family, economics, the morals of the state, politics. Politics is the comprehensive science and Ethics is a subdivision of it. Three books of ethics are ascribed to Aristotle (1) The

a political life: moral virtue is the result of intellectual virtue and intellectual, the result of moral virtues and the circle. Aristotle's expedient is Education and instruction received from the state. Legislation habituates man to good morals, careful teaching awakens the reason and the intelligence (Nic. Eth. II. 1). This presupposes a rational state antecedent to the morality of the individual, but nations cannot exist without rational individuals which justifies the criticism of Aristotle's ethics, that "with all its worth" it ultimately leaves everything in doubt.

Ritter Hist. Phil. Vol. III Page. 306 Also vid.  
Eth. Nic. VI - I.

Nicomachean ethics in ten books, which work is undoubtedly his own and contains his best thought. (2) Eudemean Ethics (4) Magna Moralia - these last mentioned were doubtless the work of his disciples who had the notes of their teacher with which to construct the books.<sup>(a)</sup>

Ethics is the science of individual good. Every art and science seeks to attain some good as an end. The good things may be many but good is sought. At one time the action itself is a mediate end, at another time, there is a mediate end which is the good.<sup>(b)</sup> Some good is relative, other, absolute. The relative is subordinate to the absolute and however many relative "goods", there may be, all finally verge into one absolute good or end, of which the other "goods" or "ends" are parts. This end is the Good, the "Summum Bonum"<sup>(c)</sup> Political science has<sup>an</sup> object

(a) Hence we have drawn <sup>almost</sup> entirely from the Nic. Ethics in our analysis of Ethics  
(b) Nic. Ethics Bk I Chap I  
(c) " " " " II

the comprehending of this "Good." All other sciences are subordinate to this "Supreme Good" and to be applied only in so far as they conform to the establishment of this good in the state.<sup>(d)</sup> The object of ethical science, then, is the supreme good of the individual<sup>(e)</sup>. We can only approximately attain it. Ethical science points out this end; ethical perceptions suggest the closest practical approach to it, and it is a considerable matter to know the mark even if we cannot hit it.<sup>(f)</sup>

Happiness.

What is this highest good? The consensus of opinion is that this good is called "happiness" but what a divergence of opinion on the definition of this word, happiness! Happiness is pleasure or honor, or wealth or health or even something that passes understanding.

(d.) Nic. Ethics Bk 1 Ch. 2.

(e.) " " " " 1

(f.) " " " " 2



None of the sordid masses conceive health<sup>er</sup> pleasure as happiness, but the masses are slavish <sup>and</sup> deliberately prefer the life of brute. Their opinion is hardly acceptable. The active educated man calls honor, happiness. Honor is ~~rather~~ superficial, seeming to reside rather in those who confer than those who receive it, and our "idea" of the "good" is that it is our own. Nor is happiness in virtue since a virtuous man may be inactive, may suffer calamities and misfortunes.<sup>(a)</sup> The Platonic conception that "the good" is an idea, is false. You can predicate priority <sup>and</sup> posteriority of good. Plato and his disciples did not <sup>conceive</sup> as possessing an <sup>idea</sup> those things to which priority <sup>and</sup> posteriority could be predicated. Again good is different in each category. It is predicated in essence, as God and intellect; in quality, as virtue; in quantity, as the means; in relation, as utility; time as opportunity; in place, as habitation. Hence it is not common, universal, or one

<sup>(a)</sup> Nic. Ethics. Bk. I Chap 5

for if so, it would have to be predicated in only one category. Good is different under the same category, e.g. in the mean; in diet, there is the science of medicine; in labors, that of gymnastics.<sup>(a)</sup> Good may be divided into two kinds, (1) Good on its own account (2) Good which is useful.

An end:- The good is an end; it is that for the sake of which the other things are done; in medicine, it is health, in generalship, it is victory, in architecture, a house etc. Each art has an end, so if there is any end of all human action, this must be the practical good and if there are more ends than one, these must be it. Now some ends are chosen for the sake of others, but these are not perfect ends; the chief end is perfect. We call that completely perfect (if the term can be used) which is always eligible for its own sake, and never on account of anything else. We choose virtues partly on their own

account, partly because happiness is attained through them. Happiness is self-sufficient as is the perfect good, and as a man is a social animal, self-sufficiency does not imply a life of a hermit. Man must live for his parents, wife<sup>and</sup> children his friends<sup>and</sup> fellow-citizens. Now self-sufficiency is that which when separated from anything else, makes life eligible and in want of nothing, and this we suppose to be the nature of happiness. To be more definite, happiness is an energy of the soul according to virtue, and if the virtues are plural, that happiness is an energy of the soul according to the best<sup>and</sup> most perfect virtue in a perfect life, for as one swallow does not make a spring, one day does not make a man blessed or happy<sup>(a)</sup>. Let us divert for a moment to note some other definitions of happiness which Aristotle gives in the Politics.

(1). Happiness is a compound of pleasure<sup>(b)</sup>

(a) Nic. Eth. Bk. I Ch. 7

(b) Politics; Bk. VIII Ch. 3

and honor. (2) Happiness is an active exercise of virtue.<sup>(a)</sup> (3) Living happy consists either in joy or in virtue or in both.<sup>(b)</sup> These definitions are clearly in opposition to the conception of happiness found in the Nicomachean ethics, where Aristotle states that happiness is not found in pleasure, honor, virtue and joy. This perplexity leads us to the conclusion that the conception of happiness is vague<sup>(c)</sup> and only partly satisfactory.

The highest happiness is contemplation. happiness. Contemplation is the noblest, most continuous and pleasantest, and is self-sufficient. It energizes upon itself, is loved for its own sake and is consistent with leisure.<sup>(c)</sup> While man cannot attain to this contemplation plane of life, he should constantly strive to attain it. The Contemplative happiness is higher than moral happiness since all moral

<sup>(a)</sup> Politics Bk. VII ch. XIII

<sup>(b)</sup> Politics Bk. VIII ch. V

<sup>(c)</sup> Nic. Ethics Bk. X Ch. VII.



happiness is related to the human side of man's nature, it requires many external elements which contemplative happiness does not require. Again that which the gods possess, we called happiness, and the gods lead a contemplative, not a moral life. Besides animals are not happy, because they partake of contemplation in no way, therefore as far as contemplation extends, so far does happiness extend. The more contemplative, the happier a man is, so that happiness is a kind of contemplation.<sup>(a)</sup>

<sup>(a)</sup> Nic. Ethics Bk X. Ch. VIII

[Note] It follows that the more contemplation, the more happiness, and perfect happiness is attained when man spends his whole life in contemplation, or a contemplative life. We noted at first, however, that man by his very nature should lead a practical life, nay practice is demanded of him. It is for this reason that men study ethics to learn what is right or good and then to apply the knowledge to everyday work. But man should strive to attain true happiness which is found in contemplation and this takes man from practice. He should be practical but this takes him from contemplation. When

The good can be divided into three classes.

(1) External (2) Body (3) Soul.

The good of the soul is the highest good, and while happiness is not virtue, prudence, wisdom, pleasure, external goods, yet happiness must possess these, but the latter two, to a moderate degree.

<sup>(a)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk I Chap 8.

[note continued from p. 22] ever this inconsistency may amount to, we must admit that Aristotle attempted to set man on the right track, to show him the illusions that beset the idea of happiness and to make him think out the problem for himself. Everyman has a different theory of happiness, yet when the ways are cleared, it will be seen that all the theories converge to a common centre. But Aristotle is clear on this point. Wealth, station, all external things are not happiness, however necessary they may be to happiness. We can also see how broad is the Aristotelean conception of happiness. If only wealth and station were happiness, only a few could possess this boon and even of these, only the highest, since those beneath could never consider themselves happy until they were the most wealthy, the most honored. Again that the happiness of the individual includes the happiness of the family, countrymen, and of those with whom he has common sympathies, shows at once the largeness & benevolence of Aristotle's conception of happiness. (Grote 302)

The question has doubtless arisen, how do we acquire happiness by learning? Since happiness is such a great boon, it is natural to suppose that it is a divine gift, for it is godlike <sup>and</sup> blessed. It is not a special dispensation to a few men but common to as many as are able to learn and are not incapacitated for virtue. It is not a subject to chance. Productions of art and of the best causes, are not left to chance. It is inconsistent to conceive the greatest and noblest of things as subject to chance. Brutes and children cannot be called happy since they cannot participate in the energy of reasoning. A man may live happily and yet die miserably and unfortunately as did Priam of Troy; Solon, therefore, insists that only at a man's death, can that man be called happy. In other words, we must look to the end. If we accept this conception, we must not stop here but say that even in death, he is not happy unless his descendants are happy. In them

(a)

Nic. Ethics Bk. I Chap. x.



dishonor must redound to his discredit. again it is absurd to think a man unhappy when he is actually enjoying happiness, and therefore to say he has had no happiness, because he died unhappy, is false because we have said a man is happy who energizes according to perfect virtue.<sup>(a)</sup> But how to attain to goodness?—Since the practice not the theory is of most importance. The masses obey through fear; they have no sense of shame. They fear punishment and abstain from vice on this account. Pleasures allure them and they fly from pain. Even reason and teaching will hardly avail. The mind must be cultivated to feel pleasure <sup>and</sup> aversion properly, just as soil must be properly prepared for the seed; for the passion as man will not listen to reason. Passion submits alone to force so that there must be a character connected with <sup>virtue</sup> loving the honorable and hating the disgraceful. This presupposes proper training in virtue from childhood.





teach the good besides it should have  
power to enforce its laws of Education.

### Pleasure and Pain.

It is necessary to examine Aristotle's conception of pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are not a notion or generation else they would require time & space to act in. They are tests of our habits. Man does not do evil because of the evil; frequently the evil is mediate and he thinks merely of the pleasures the actions bring, for vice is so often covered by such a veneer of gold and silver. Likewise man refrains from an honorable course in life because of pain. Now this refers to pleasures arising from bad ends and pains arising from means that lead to good ends. We see here how important, Early Education is, such Education as will lead us to feel pleasure and pain at proper objects. Now three things lead us to choose and three to refuse the objects. (1) honorable, expedient, pleasant. (2) disgraceful, inexpedient, painful. The good man will choose rightly, the bad man, wrongly in

most cases especially in the case of pleasure  
since the element of pleasure & pain accompany  
all things of choice, and the habit of choosing  
one or the other is ingrained in youth. We  
even make pleasure and pain, the rule of  
our actions, Of Course one in a greater, a  
nother in a lesser degree. In fact, the  
whole business of virtue and philosophy  
must be with pleasures and pains. He  
who makes a proper use of them will  
be good, the opposite will make him bad.  
Thus a proper knowledge of pleasure  
and pain is necessary.<sup>(a)</sup> The generality  
of mankind is deceived by pleasure.  
The pleasant is chosen with the idea that  
it is good, the painful is avoided because of the  
idea that it is evil.<sup>(b)</sup> If pleasure were the  
chief good as Eudoxus claims, the masses  
would be correct in choosing the pleasant.  
But it is not the chief good nor is that  
class of thinkers correct who claim  
that pleasure is wholly bad.<sup>(c)</sup>

(a.) Nic. Ech. Bk II Ch. XIV  
(b) " " " III Ch. IV  
(c) " " " III Ch. IV

Pleasure is a good but not the greatest good. If we add prudence to pleasure in a man, that man is better for it, or add wisdom to his goodness, the man is better for it. If we find prudence, wisdom, courage and pleasure in a man, he is better because of all these. Therefore pleasure is not the chief good, nor is every pleasure eligible.<sup>(a)</sup> Every perceptive and intellectual act has a special pleasure attached to it which perfects the energy. This pleasure is perfect when the perceptive faculty is the best and energizes on the best object. It perfects the energy, as the bloom of youth is to those in prime of life. Pleasures do not last any great length of time since the human faculties become fatigued shortly after energizing and pleasure follows energy, and perfects the energy making life perfect.<sup>(b)</sup> Pleasures are divided into two classes, pleasures of the soul and pleasures of the body or material.

(a) Nic. Ethics Bk. X Ch. 1

(b) " " " " 4.



and Corporal pleasures. Mental pleasures  
comprise such as love of honor and learning.  
Corporal pleasures are those arising from  
light, color, sound, temperance, though  
not all phases of temperance.<sup>(a)</sup> Pleasures  
are necessary, such as corporal pleasure, e.g.,  
those which relate to the gratification of  
the appetite; or are the object of temper-  
ance and intemperance; others, chosen for  
their own sake are unnecessary, e.g., wealth,  
honor, victory.<sup>(b)</sup> Pleasures differ in species  
as are made perfect by things which differ  
in species. Intellectual energies differ from  
sensual energies; hence the perfecting plea-  
sures differ. This is affirmed by the in-  
timate relation between the pleasure and  
the energy it perfects, and because plea-  
sures from other sources destroy energy.  
e.g., a musician in conversation ceases  
conversation when he hears music. The  
pleasure attendant upon music destroys  
the energy employed in conversation.

<sup>(a)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk. III Chap. 2

<sup>(b)</sup> " " " III " IV

Since the pleasanter energy always destroys  
 the less pleasant, and opposite pleasures  
 act like pains. Pleasures differ further  
 in goodness or badness or impurity, that  
 is, in quality. They differ in quantity  
 and differ in man when compared with  
 animals, since these energize differently.  
 Now the good man is the measure of  
 everything and that pleasure which he  
 feels must be the proper pleasure and  
 the pleasures which are disgraceful, can  
 only be pleasure to the depraved. The  
 pleasures of the good man, we must  
 call the pleasures for man, and the  
 pleasures which perfect the energies  
 of the perfectly happy man, may with  
 propriety be called the pleasures of  
 mankind.

(1)  
 Nic. Ethics. Bk. X. Chap. II.

## Happiness and Justice.

Justice and friendship are essentially economic and political subjects according to Aristotle. They are mediate ethical questions in the modern system of ethics but Aristotle considered ethics, a subdivision of politics and happiness and justice are the connecting links between ethics and the other branches of politics. He treats of the individual side of these topics, branching out at times to the larger side of the subject to make the ethics clearer. In fact, no ethical standard was complete to the Greeks which failed to treat of friendship. Happiness is impossible without friendship. Friendship is vital to happiness and to the state. A friend is one who wishes and does to another, the good or apparent good for that other's sake, who wishes the same to his friend as he wishes to himself.<sup>(a)</sup> A friend is a second self. Friendship is necessary for life. Without friends, a man would not choose

(a)

Nic. Ethics Bk. IX Ch. 4. Cf. Lev. 19: 18 (another instance of the resemblance)

life Friendship lends strength to young  
 "and old, weak <sup>and</sup> strong" <sup>(b)</sup> As Homer states  
 "By mutual Confidence <sup>and</sup> mutual aid great  
 deeds are done and great discoveries made.  
 The wise, new prudence from the wise acquire,  
 And one braver hero, fans another's fire."

(Homer Bk II - x 265 Pope's translation)

We find it in man <sup>and</sup> animals alike  
 therefore, it is natural. It cements  
 the diverse elements in the state  
 and as legislators give it more at-  
 tention than justice, it seems to  
 supersede justice in importance for  
 when men are friends, they need no  
 justice but when just, they still need  
 friends<sup>(c)</sup>. There are two kinds of friend-  
 ship (1) The accidental - where friendship  
 has an ulterior motive as pleasure  
 or usefulness. This is not lasting.

(2). The perfect and permanent - this is possessed  
 only by the good <sup>and</sup> virtuous. It is disin-  
 teresting, desiring no return, as a mother

<sup>(b)</sup> Bk. VIII Chap. II p. 56. of Nic. Eth.

" " " I " " "



love for her children; hence it is good relatively as well as absolutely. It seldom exists and is the product of long acquaintance.<sup>(d)</sup> Only the good can be friends in the latter sense. Such friendship is safe from calumny for here a confidence exists which cannot be broken by scandal. The old and ill-tempered are unsuited for such friendship. Perfect friendship forbids friendship with many. The young seek young for pleasure, the merchant seeks like for usefulness. The happy seek pleasant friends. All these states of friendship are based on equality. There is the friendship based on equality of persons e.g. between father and son, older and younger, the Governor and governed. Love of honor impels many men to be loved rather than to love. It matters not whether back of it is the desire of honor from the powerful or good. The former love is mercenary, the

<sup>(d)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk VIII. Chap. III.

the latter is apparently laudable since it is a "delight in being loved, for its own sake." But friendship consists in loving rather than in being loved e.g. a mother's delight in loving, and loving seems to be the essential for friendship. Equality and similarity constitute a requirement of friends, especially of those who have the same excellence morally. They possess stability in themselves and stability toward others. The bad have neither stability toward themselves nor stability toward others, hence they cannot be friends.<sup>(5)</sup> Good will resembles friendship; it is felt toward those we do not know, but friendship is not so felt. Good will is not an affection; since it has no intensity or desire it can arise of a sudden, while affection is formed only with intimacy. It is rather the beginning of friendship. Good will is, metaphorically, friendship in a state of inactivity, which if it continues until familiarity is

<sup>(5)</sup> Nic. Ethics BK VIII. Chap. XII.

reached, becomes friendship. It arises on account of virtue.<sup>(9)</sup> Unanimity is political friendship.<sup>(10)</sup> The number of friends should not be too many or too few, if useful friends only so many as will supply our wants; if pleasant friends, only as many as satisfy our desire; if good friends, only as many as are sufficient for society.<sup>(11)</sup> These are needed in prosperity and adversity, but are more necessary in adversity and more honorable in prosperity (IX-XI); While intimacy is the most desirable of things for friends to possess.<sup>(12)</sup>

(9) Nic. Eth. Bk VIII Chap 5

(10) Nic. Eth. Bk VIII Chap 6

(11) Nic. Eth. Bk IX Chap 10

(12) Nic. Eth Bk IX Chap. 12



## Justice and Injustice.

Defined Justice is that habit by which men are prone to perform just actions and by which they act justly, a habit of obedience to law and a habit of Equality; conversely, injustice is that habit by which a man acts unjustly or wishes for unjust things. Justice and injustice have many senses. The transgressor of law, the selfish man, the unequal man, are unjust. Likewise just actions have many senses. Yet all are called just which are adapted to produce and preserve happiness and its parts for the social community. Justice is therefore a relatively perfect virtue. With this possession a person can exercise his virtue toward another person, hence, the Proverb "in justice all virtue is comprehended" and "neither the evening nor the morning star is more admirable". Justice alone of all the virtues seems to be a good to another person. Now justice is a virtue when it is considered as a habit; when it is considered in the sense of a relation to another



person, it is justice<sup>(1)</sup>

Nature's quality of Justice:—Justice is particular as well as general. The ethics treat of particular justice—which is a part of virtue. This justice is divided into two classes, (1) the corrective justice, between man and man<sup>(2)</sup> distributive justice which is concerned with allotment of favors by the state at large. This is according to geometrical proportion when the whole has the same ratio to the whole which each part has to the others. Corrective justice is again subdivided into (1) voluntary e.g. selling, buying, lending, borrowing etc. (2) involuntary e.g. theft, adultery, poisoning, false testimony etc. This according to arithmetical proportion; for instance, a judge when deciding a case—where one man has offended, the other man has suffered;—looks to the offense alone—not whether the offender is good or bad. The judge tries to make the unjust—which is unequal—equal; by

punishment, the judge takes from the gain to make up for the loss, so that the "Equal" is the mean between the "more" and the "less" <sup>(b.)</sup>

There is still another phase of injustice commonly called relative or commutative justice. The Pythagoreans & Rhadamanthean rule, favor this law - *lex talionis*, but the law does not take into consideration voluntary or involuntary acts, besides equal retaliation would disintegrate society, proportionate retaliation will hold society together (note) since men seek to retaliate as well as retaliate good. Take the case of two mechanics, one a shoe-maker, the other a carpenter. It is clear that one work is considered more valuable than the other, a proportion must be observed and that relative to the difference

(b) Nic. Ethics Bk V Ch. II - IV

[Note] The Pythagorean & the Rhadamanthean rule; If a man suffers for what he has done, straight forward justice would take place. This rule holds the same idea as the *lex talionis* of the Bible while Aristotle is in accord with the rabbinical interpretation

in value of the work. Now as the Carpenter is to the shoe-maker, so is the number of shoes to the house; both work <sup>and work</sup> are compared geometrically. Now the builder builds the shoe-maker a house and the equation is unequal, but restored to equilibrium by arithmetical proportion, taking shoes from the shoe-maker to give them to the Carpenter. Thus retaliatory justice is a combination of distributive <sup>and</sup> collective justice<sup>(c)</sup>. Here arises the economic problem not connected with ethics yet treated incidentally. A Carpenter does not desire a hundred pairs of shoes, the shoe-maker wants the house. There is "demand" on both sides but only a small demand on one side and a large one on the other. How can we solve the problem? We must have a common measure; "demand" is a measure since without it, there could be no commerce, but demand is in need of a substantial

<sup>(c)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk. I Chap. I



representation which is money; a substitute for demand thus called *ἐπίσχυρα*, because it is not so by nature. The Carpenter may not need shoes now but when he does need them, the money he has, is a pledge that he may make the exchange when he wants to.<sup>(d)</sup>

Political & Economic justice; <sup>(e)</sup> Political justice is divided into natural & legal justice. The former is the same everywhere, the latter is conventional & differs in different countries.<sup>(f)</sup> It seems strange to us that Aristotle considered natural justice apart of political justice, but when we remember that to him, man is a social animal, who can only thrive by community and who would be helpless, nay could develop no higher faculty without social environments, hence his natural sense of justice arises from community or political life. Aristotle now proceeds to

<sup>(d)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk I Ch. V

<sup>(e)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk V Ch. VI

<sup>(f)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk V Ch. VII



discuss whether a man can injure himself, and concludes that this can only when the man is ignorant of the result, in other words, he can do so, only involuntarily<sup>(9)</sup> Equity differs from justice. Law is universal, it makes general rules, at times, however, a general rule cannot be applied to a special case. If it could, we would have justice, not equity. When the general rule cannot apply, the law is modified to suit the case. This is equity or the correction of the legally just i.e. justice. This does not imply that the law is wrong. The fault is in the nature of the thing. Equity corrects the law. The equitable man will never push a law too far literally, but will rather make allowances, then is he called an equitable man.<sup>(10)</sup>

<sup>(9)</sup> Nic. Eth. Bk. I. Ch. IX & X

<sup>(10)</sup> Nic. Eth., Bk. I. Ch. X

## Chapter II.

### The Ethics of Maimonides

as

developed in the שמונה פרקים להרם" בב

## Introduction

I. The Ethics of Maimonides: we may almost say, the psychology of Maimonides - for his ethics is almost identical with psychology so much so that it is difficult to separate them and treat of his "science of the good" or science of right action. He tells us that "the ennobling of the virtues is the cure of the soul." (Chap I. <sup>לפי</sup> להג' <sup>בס'</sup>) "The soul is sick, hence vicious"; "cure the soul and then vice will disappear" (Chap I). It is not the philosopher, who possesses a vast knowledge of the science of the good, that can prescribe a cure for vice; the soul physician is alone capable of intelligently prescribing a remedy (Chap II) and these soul physicians are the wise (Chap III). We find no mention made of the good - we may say that <sup>the</sup> Maimonidean good is the contemplation of God, <sup>and</sup> the acquisition of a knowledge of God as far as that is possible for man. True striving for God through a higher

soul life, precluded a discussion of the good, pleasure, or happiness. Maimonides confines himself to an exposition of the soul and how to develop it so that man may draw near to God. In the exposition, he takes occasion to present his views on the body, the soul, free will, virtue and vice, and the end and aim of all physical and mental activity. We shall discuss his ethics in the order of topics just mentioned.

While there are ethical chapters in הלכות דעות and מורה נבוכים, such chapters contain nothing that would throw further light upon my subject; I have therefore confined my efforts entirely to the one book, סמוך פרקים להרמבם



## II. The Body

The body is the vehicle of the soul. It must be as well as possible so that the soul have a perfect implement by which to acquire wisdom, and moral <sup>and</sup> intellectual perfection. Bodily health is therefore not an end but a means to something higher and if health is sought as an end, it is not a virtue but a pleasure derived from the state of being healthy just as pleasure is derived from eating <sup>and</sup> drinking. Since health is a means, the useful rather than the enjoyable, if conducive to health, should be chosen that life may be lengthened <sup>and</sup> the soul acquire moral <sup>and</sup> intellectual virtues. (Chap. 5. § 5 v)

To approach nearer to God, the health and care of the body is absolutely necessary; the healthier the body, the better is the soul able to acquire wisdom <sup>and</sup> intelligence. Hence God is not an enemy of the body to demand bodily castigation such as starving, asceticism etc. These in themselves never

make a man purer or more godly, unless they are employed to remove sin actual and apparent. Such action far from purifying the soul, clogs it with impurity and hinders it from obtaining a true knowledge of God (Chap. 11). So bodily health is <sup>prereq</sup> requisite for ethical development. First the body needs our care, then the soul, a healthy body, then a perfect soul—"mens sana in corpore sano." "The body demands our care previous to the soul. The body for the sake of the soul" (Aristotle Pol. & Econ. ~~Book~~ Chap. 10 last par.) Judea, Greece and Rome are united on this point. Bodily affliction finds no place in any ethical system, nor can it be justified in any manner. The Church that built up its whole hierarchy on asceticism seeks in vain for a basis to its system in the true life of Judea, Greece or Rome. Although Rome may have demanded a perfect body for the sake of a perfect soldiery, Greece for the sake of perhaps excellency in the national games or to satisfy the

aesthetic taste, Judaism's purpose was to give the soul a better implement to comprehend God. Herein each people followed its national genius, but the body was to be cared for and kept well in all cases. And it is no derogation to Greece and Rome when we say that Maimonides' conception - which is the Jewish conception - is more ethical, since the ethical instinct was most powerful among the Jews, while the Greeks were aesthetic rather than ethical.

### The Soul

We have seen that perfect bodily health is required so that the soul have the best possible implement at its command. Is the soul singular or plural? Is it a unit or a number of units? According to Maimonides, it is one. The confusion is caused by calling the functional parts of the soul, souls, rather than soul activities; souls, rather than parts of a soul. All these activities taken together equal a soul. We divide the body into parts to better under-



stand it, yet none will call the arm, a body or the stomach, a body. These are organs of the body which taken together equal the body, so we do not call the nutritive function, a soul, or the perceptive function a soul, or the rational function a soul, but functional activities of a soul which combined equal one soul. (Chap. I 5<sup>th</sup>)

Here we have a formless soul; when intellect is acquired, the soul acquires form, but as formless, it is useless, (as Solomon says, "it is not good that the soul be without knowledge" Prov. 19) The source of virtue and vice is in the soul, in the functions called sensation and desire - sensation is really the servant of desire and hence the desiring function alone possesses virtue, or vice. The nutritive and perceptive part lack free will, and the rational part has no power to perform the ideal<sup>to</sup> which it clings. (Chap II) This unit soul is good when it acts in moderation, when it performs the "mean" in all its acts. It is ill when it departs from this mean and approaches the extremes of evil. Even psy-



chical illness makes the evil appear good and compels the lascivious to extremes which are vices. In this case, we must consult the wise who are the soul physicians. They will prescribe the proper remedy to cure the soul (ch. IV). Thus we see, perfect bodily health is required and a soul that gauges its actions by a standard of moderation, called the "golden mean". This is in thorough accord with Aristotle's ethics.

### Free will.

Judaism and Greek philosophy agree that man is a voluntary agent. There is no external force that constantly impels men to perform an act.<sup>(a)</sup> The Biblical commands and prohibitions prove that their author had a free moral agent in view for, if a man were an involuntary agent, all such laws would be fruitless, even education, instruction and a knowledge of practical art would be of no avail. It would further be useless to take precaution to attempt to accumulate wealth or form

social ties. Society would be overturned religious sentiments destroyed and man would be impelled to the belief that God is unjust. It is easy to see what a baneful result would ensue; a state of anarchy, of absolute disregard of life and property, of constant pillage and murder, for the stronger physically would feel that God has predestined him to seize all because He made him the stronger. Therefore the Bible, intellect and practical experience insist that this notion is false <sup>(a)</sup> and assert that man is the source of his own activities. He can do as he wills or refrain as he wills provided God does not punish him for his sin by depriving him of his power of willing <sup>(a)</sup>. Therefore, since man has free will, he should be taught the good and its reward, and the evil and its punishment. He must become accustomed to good deeds and refrain from evil deeds. But should he be dominated by passion

or by vice, he must not say it is natural and hence beyond his power to change.

We thus see that Maimonides implicitly believes in free will. He holds also implicit belief in the Bible. It is therefore interesting to note how he explains away those passages which contradict free will e.g. "all things are in the power of God." "This," says he, "refers to natural phenomena where man's will is not concerned. Of them, we do not use the term good and evil. These terms are applied only to man's acts and where his will decides the acts performed; "neither good or bad cometh from the mouth of God for they are not in the province of God's power." A pretty argument but quite circular proving the Bible by the Bible. (?) "again," they will make them servants and afflict them." (speaking the Egyptians of Russia of Israel) "If Egypt is pre-destined to oppress Israel: why punish Egypt?"



It is as if God had said that among those who are to be born in the future, such an act will occur lawfully or unlawfully, virtuously or unvirtuously. <sup>(a)</sup> The Good or Evil are not forced to do evil and God's word here has no definite person in view but is a general statement which leaves to the individual the will to afflict or refrain from harming Israel, for it was not decreed that man should oppress."

Again, "Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, then this people shall arise and lust after strange gods" which is equivalent to the statement, whoever commits idolatry, so and so shall be done to him. Had there been no idolatry, there would be no punishment and likewise as regards all punishment decreed in the Torah. The victim was not pre-determined to commit the act, he did so of his own accord and free will.

But how reconcile free will with God's knowledge of the future? God certainly knows it



know the future. "Does He also know the act of each individual?" If you say, "yes," then man was forced to the deed or God's knowledge is false. If you say, "no," then many absurdities arise. It is interesting to note how Maimonides attempts to explain away the dilemma. It reads as follows: "God is not known by any one life, so that He and knowledge and life are separate and distinct entities. Else there would be a plurality of everlasting things, viz., God, knowledge, life, power, etc. Therefore God and his attributes are identical so <sup>הוא</sup> can be read only "by the living God," not "by the life of God", as if God and life are two distinct things<sup>(a)</sup>. Further God's being is perfect, hence it cannot be comprehended by man who is imperfect, and as God and his knowledge are identical, His knowledge cannot be comprehended by our knowledge. We can only say, God is all-knowing etc. but we do not know what His wisdom is or what His nature is. If we

did, we ~~would~~<sup>st</sup> know God himself. But this  
 is impossible for "Canst thou by searching  
 find out God, or canst thou know the  
 Almighty to perfection?" (Job.) Maimonides'  
 argument is that as God's knowledge and ~~deeds~~  
 are identical with God himself, they are  
 inscrutable to man. They are inexplicable<sup>and</sup>  
 unsearchable. Human knowledge has there-  
 fore its limitations<sup>(4)</sup> and just this enigma  
 of God's omniscience and man's free will is  
 one of the riddles, it can never solve. It  
 is one of those problems upon which  
 the mind may ponder unto eternity but  
 never solve. And as Job's query, why  
 the righteous suffer and the sinful pros-  
 per, is answered by the evasion, that  
 as God is infinite, he is incomprehensible  
 to man, so Maimonides solves his problem  
 with God's infinity and man's inability  
 to conceive God's knowledge, but never-  
 theless we know that man has free will.

(4) "Studies of good & evil" Royce. (Introduction p. II)

### Virtue and Vice.

Virtues are such dispositions and Conditions of the soul as are balanced between two evil dispositions, one of which is the too much, the other, the too little. Hence virtue are means between two extremes, the extremes being vices.<sup>(a)</sup> Virtue and vice are not innate but acquired. They are developed by frequent repetition of the actions caused by the respective moral dispositions.<sup>(b)</sup> If the action is good, virtue is the result; if bad, vice is the result. It often happens that a person is endowed with an aptitude to easily attain to perfection in a certain calling, yet education is necessary to develop this endowed capacity.<sup>(c)</sup> This is an exception rather than the rule and the astrologers are false when they assert that a man's birth makes him subject to virtue or vice and that he is compelled to deeds by his very dispos-

(a) Chap. II. P. 11.

(b) Chap. IV - P. 14.

(c) Chap. VIII P. 35-H.

tion.<sup>(a)</sup> But although man has neither vice  
or virtue by nature, He is impelled after  
birth to vicious habits by his surround-  
ings. The result is, no man is without  
moral defects - as the Bible proves. (Job. 4<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>,  
25<sup>th</sup> Eccl. 7<sup>th</sup>) Even Moses had faults (though  
he is considered perfect in Jewish tradition).  
These faults, man should constantly keep  
before him and aim to cure himself of them  
by attempting to attain the "mean". Thus he  
will reach the highest human plane<sup>(b)</sup> and  
approach nearer, to God and his bliss. (c)  
Virtues and vices are two-fold, moral and  
intellectual. Intellectual virtues belong  
to the rational function e.g. shrewdness  
and good understanding. Moral virtues  
belong to the desiring function - the sen-  
sation function is a servant of this  
function. Here reside many virtues,  
abstinence, beneficence, honesty, gentleness,  
meekness, economy, courage<sup>(d)</sup> and faith etc.  
These virtues are all "means" between

(a) Chap. VIII P 39.

(b) Chap. IV P 24



extremes. They represent the moderate in choice and action. Abstinence is the medial point between lust and entire lack of desire and corresponds to Aristotle's virtue of temperance.

Liberality is a mean between parsimony and prodigality;

Courage, a mean between rashness and cowardice;

Generosity, a mean between avarice and squandering. (a)

The error is often made that the extremes are good; some say that rashness is bravery, slothfulness is contentment etc. but this conception is false; only the "mean" is praiseworthy. Man must consider his acts so that they follow the "mean". (b)

The "mean", with Maimonides as with Aristotle, is the measure of virtue. The medial point is to be sought at all times, man must learn to measure

(a) Chap IV P 12

(b) Chap III P 13 Par 2.

every act by the mean and value it  
according to the nearness with which  
it approaches the mean. This will  
cure the soul and make it a fit  
pupil to approach and contemplate  
God<sup>(a)</sup> which is the end and aim of all  
activity. The further man departs from  
the mean, the further he departs from  
Godly Contemplation and becomes more  
vicious. Now, vices are the walls  
separating man from God<sup>(b)</sup>. This is  
substantiated by the prophetic verse, "your  
iniquities separate you from your  
God". Prophecy is the highest phase  
of human activity. It is possessed  
only by him who is the possessor  
of all the intellectual virtues and  
most of the moral virtues. But as all  
men, even prophets have their vices,  
the prophetic power is greater, the  
fewer the vices in the prophet.  
Still some vices make prophecy wholly

(a) Chap. IV. P 24.  
(b) Chap. VII P 34 End.

impossible, such as anger, grief or sadness. In the case of Moses, though there was no separating wall between him and God, yet he could not see God's glory because he possessed bodily form and matter. (c) As we have already said, though man is not endowed with either virtue or vice at birth, his surroundings are of such a nature that he acquires vice. Now how can he regain the mean and hence become virtuous? He must employ the opposite extremes until the mean is reached and then discontinue the remedy. (d) Avarice is cured not by prescribing deeds of liberality but rather extreme prodigality and when avarice has disappeared, the extreme prodigality should cease and liberality take its place. This cure is well known to the virtuous who, when they find that a habit has gained the mastery over

(c) Chap. III p. 37.

(d) Chap. IV p. 14. middle.



them, lean to the opposite extreme, such as  
by fasting, asceticism etc. to cure themselves  
of the opposite vice, and they escape from  
the contaminating influences that  
surround them, just as Jeremiah did.  
Such castigation is proper but ceases  
to be so when the ignorant practice  
them, because they think such casti-  
gation - though unnecessary - is a meri-  
torious act. Bodily degradation can  
not make one more Godly unless it  
removes grounded sin, nor should  
bodily punishment be continuous,  
for God is not the enemy of the body.  
After all even such deviation from the  
"mean" is abnormal, fit only in the  
times of sickness. A life of moderation is  
the normal life, one must live justly  
and equitably in the community,  
and this is a life in conformity to the  
mean, which is the virtuous life.  
The Bible proves this by its regulations  
by Zach. 10:7, and by the prohibition of certain  
(a) Chap. IV. P. 17.



things, tends to make us abstinent and by commanding certain things, tends to make us liberal and thus avoid avarice.

Abstinent versus virtuous: The philosophers and the prophets agree that the abstinent perform good under stress. They are prone to do evil but combat with it. The virtuous, on the other hand, crave to do good and have no desire to do evil; therefore the virtuous are more perfect in their opinion.<sup>(a)</sup> The sages, however, hold that the abstinent are better than the virtuous and that the more perfect a man is, the greater are his desires for vice and the pain in avoiding it. They say, "whoever is greater than his neighbor, has greater desires than his neighbor." and "the reward of the abstinent is as great as the discomfort caused by abstinence." Man must possess desires and passions.<sup>(b)</sup>

<sup>(a)</sup> Chap VI P 30

<sup>(b)</sup> Chap VI P 31.

Maimonides here gives us another example of his power of harmonizing. The philosophers and prophets say the virtues are better than the abstinent. The sages say the virtuous are not as good as the abstinent. There appears to be an entire difference of opinion between them. But Maimonides does not think so. The philosophers and prophets refer to theft and murder, those things that are known to all men as bad, while the sages refer to the "revealed law" as eating meat and drinking milk, together, using garments of wool and cotton, or incest, special statutes of God as opposed to Commandments.

### The End<sup>nd</sup> Aim of Ethics.

But why should man strive to be virtuous? Why should he strive to keep his body in perfect health and supply the soul with a perfect implement to perform its task? Why keep the soul pure and well? The aim of the Greek's activity was

happiness. Aristotle besought the Greek  
to be virtuous because it lead to happi-  
ness; not so, ~~as~~ Maimonides reason. He  
tells us nothing about happiness,  
pleasure, delight, except that these  
are to be shunned if they are con-  
ducive to body or soul illness, for  
they then thrust man out of the path  
which leads to the true goal of life,  
i.e. the comprehension <sup>and</sup> knowledge of God.  
This consists in fixed in the soul an image  
of God as he really is and found in  
God alone. The greatest object in life  
is to acquire this knowledge of God. All  
other tasks are subordinate to it. They  
are or should be means to this great  
end and aim. Only those elements of  
science and knowledge as lead to this  
end should be acquired. All words  
and actions should have this aim,  
which is substantiated by the great  
scriptural verse, "thou shalt love the Lord  
thy God with all thy heart, with all thy



soul and with all thy might" (a) While man cannot acquire a perfect knowledge of God, yet he can come near to it. Moses saw God's back, which really means, he attained to a slightly lesser degree. (b) But he who directs his soul with all its powers to God, and has as his highest aim, the knowledge of God, is equal to the prophets (a). "In all thy actions, acknowledge God" is the Summum Bonum of Maimonides' Ethics.

### Summary

Man must keep his body in as healthy a state as possible to the end that his soul may have a perfect implement at its command. If bodily castigation is necessary to cure a soul illness, it should last only so long as the opposite habit continues, then it should be discontinued. Bodily castigation is justified only when it is employed to cure a body or soul illness.

(a) Chap. I. § 29.

(b) Chap. VII. § 38.



Otherwise, it is a sin against the flesh and against God<sup>(a)</sup>. The soul is one and fulfills its duty when it so acts that it approaches nearer to God and increases its knowledge of Him and His wisdom. The soul becomes a soul in the true sense when it acquires intellect. It then acquires form and symmetry. Without intellect, the soul is formless, useless, is merely matter, a material soul (Chap<sup>95b</sup> I). This soul is endowed with free will. Man can do or refrain from doing what he chooses. Virtue and vice are not endowed as a rule; - there are some exceptions - things are acquired from one's surroundings. Therefore man must be taught the right and the good and its rewards, wrong and the bad and its punishments.<sup>(b)</sup>

A life of virtue is a life of moderation; it is that life which avoids all extremes and attempts to attain to the "mean". The vicious life is the opposite.

<sup>(a)</sup> Chap II. 817.  
<sup>(b)</sup> Chap VIII C45

of this life above mentioned. It is cured by leaning to the vices opposite to those which afflict the vicious, e.g. an avaricious man should be a squanderer until he ceases to be avaricious and then he should cease squandering and become liberal, which is the "mean" between avarice and squandering. Man should be virtuous and pure not that virtue and purity is an end of human activity, but a means to the acquirement of a greater knowledge of God, that man become more godly. This is the end and aim of all ethical endeavor.<sup>(a)</sup> When we perform an act, we must ask ourselves whether this act brings us nearer to God. The *Summum Bonum* of Maimonidean ethics is the knowledge of God.

(a) Chap. V § 29

## Chapter III

Comparison of the Ethics of Aristotle & Maimonides

as developed in the Nicomachean Ethics & the Mishneh Torah

### Chapter III

#### A. General Comparison.

A perusal of the first two chapters proves that Maimonides is a disciple of Aristotle. Yet the former is true to Jewish law and tradition, for while the Greek philosophy is never absent, Jewish ideas and ideals are always present and lend a power and emphasis to the ethics which Greek ethics never possessed. Aristotle furnishes the framework upon which Maimonides builds his structure. Both insist that the body must be cared for, that bodily health is necessary, that the soul cannot develop along the lines of perfection without a healthy body, and that bodily castigations are vicious and sinful. The ethics of both are deeply laid, in psychology. Maimonides, especially in the ספר פריק is even more psychological than Aristotle. The Ethics of the former is a study of the soul, that of the latter a history of the soul.



Both believe that man is a voluntary agent, that he is master of his actions, since he has deliberation, and free-choice, and that he is master of his habits only at their inception. It is with this argument that Maimonides explains away the apparent difficulty in many Biblical verses which seem to point to predestination e.g. Pharaoh predestined to afflict Israel. (Exodus). God did not deprive Pharaoh and the Egyptians of their power of free-will, so that they might not repent but their continued oppression of the Israelites had become habitual with them and habits are more powerful than will and may even annul the will. Both expound the doctrine of the mean as the proper rule of life, both present the ideas with regard to virtue and vice. Virtues are means, vices are extremes. Maimonides follows closely in the footsteps of Aristotle in these latter ideas so closely in fact that frequently he nearly translates Aristotle

into Arabic without taking the pains or time to re-dress the ideas in his own language except perhaps to give them a Jewish tinge or coloring. For example, "the wise man can reveal to us how to attain to the mean" (Aristotle) "ye, "the wise can teach us how to cure the soul and so attain to the mean". (Maimonides) Likewise both assert that man should have an end or aim in view in all that he does and that this should be the highest possible end or aim, for Aristotle, it is happiness; for Maimonides, it is a knowledge of God. To approach near to God. Bodily care, virtuous acts, soul development are merely means to this end. Happiness is attained when one is morally and intellectually perfect. (Aristotle). The nearest approach to God is made when one is morally and intellectually perfect (Maim.)

In method of argument and arrangement, Maimonides is Aristotelian. In detail and aim he is Jewish. He is a

Greek in his use of the great doctrine of the mean, but a Jew, in the doctrine of free will, good and evil, and as to end and aim of all ethical activity. Maimonides' ethical system is therefore a treatise which harmonizes the ethical thought of Greece and Judea. An attempt at subjecting the strong, venerable ethical teaching of Judaism to the logic and philosophy of Greece, of making logic and philosophy, rather than the ought, the source of moral sanction.

## B. Specific Comparison.

### I Body.

1. Compare Aristotle's Politics & Economics Bk. VII

2. " Maimonides' שמנה פרקים Chap. 5.

A. The body necessarily demands our care previous to the care of the soul - the body for the sake of the soul.

Arist. Pol. Econ Bk. VII Ch. 13. Last para.

B. The purpose of bodily health is that the soul have an implement that is hale and perfect. שמנה פרקים להרמ'ם Chap. 5.



## II Soul

Compare Aristotle's *De Anima* Bk II Ch. 1-2-3-4-5

Especially Ch. I Par. 4 and 6, Bk III Chap. 1, Par. 15

Nic. Eth. Bk VI Ch. I-2-3-4-5

Maimonides, Chap. I. שמונה פרקים

A. In the book and chapters of the *De Anima* above quoted, Aristotle discusses the soul, its divisions, subdivisions; which divisions possess the power of performing virtuous acts and which lack this power. It is, therefore, the basis of the first part of Chap I of ש"פ' להרמ"ב. E.g. the soul is said to have five parts

- (1) Nutritive (2) Sentient (3) Imaginative
- (4) Appetitive (5) Rational

*De Anima* Bk III Chap III ש"פ' Ch. I.

B. Bk VI Ch. 1-2-3-4-5 of the Nic. Ethics forms the basis for the whole of the latter part of this first chapter of ש"פ'. The rational faculty is that by which man comprehends, considers, and obtains knowledge

(1) E.g. Nic. Eth. Bk VI Ch. I Par 4.

There are two divisions of the rational



part (of the soul): one by which we contemplate those existing things, the principles of which, are in necessary matter; the other by which we contemplate those, the principle of which are contingent (i.e. Knowledge necessary and contingent is acquired through the rational faculty)

- (2) The subject of science has a necessary existence. Therefore it is eternal. *Met. Eth. Bk. I. Ch. 1*
- (b) Things that are not subject to change are called sciences. *Met. Eth. Bk. I. Ch. 1*

### III Free-will

*Cf. Maimonides*  $\equiv$  "ע"ח. 8

*Aristotle* *Met. Eth. Bk. III Ch. 1-2-3-4-5, especially Ch. 5*

*Aristotle* *Par. 1-2-3-9-12-17-18-19*

(a) Man is the origin of all actions  
*Ch. 5 Par. 9 & 12*

(b) Virtue and vice are in our power; when we have the power to do, we also have the power not to do. *Ch. 5 Par. 1-2*

(c) If virtues are voluntary, vices are also voluntary.

(d) Virtues are under our power as

voluntary and guided by right reason.

Par. 18 Ch. 5

(c) We are masters of our actions from beginning to end. Ch. 5. Par. 19.

Maimonides Chap. VIII 30

(a) All actions are voluntary and there is no external force that compels man to act virtuously or viciously.

(b) The unquestioned truth of the whole matter is that man is the source of his own actions possessing the power to do or not to do an act.

(c) Man is a voluntary agent; he can do what he wills or refrain from what he wills ... and he has the power to acquire virtue or vice.

#### IV. The mean

Cf. Maimonides Ch. 4. 30 with Aristotle's Nic. Ethics. Bk. II Ch. VII and IX and Bk. III Ch. VI.

Maimonides follows Aristotle more closely in his discussion of virtue and vice and the mean, than in any other topic. At times, the discussions are almost identical. Maimonides like

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Aristotle deeming the mean the right course to pursue and the one that leads man to virtue and a perfect life.

Both state that:

- (a) Courage is a mean between rashness and cowardice
- (b) Liberality is mean between avarice and prodigality
- (c) Temperance is a mean between intemperance and insensibility (to any desire)
- (d) Meekness is a mean between passion and insensibility to desire
- (e) Modesty is a mean between that state which makes one man ashamed of anything and another ashamed of nothing.

Nic. Eth. BK II Ch. IV, Maimonides Ch. 4. 50

f) It is necessary to consider to which of the vices, we ourselves are most inclined, for some of us are naturally disposed to one and others to another, and thus we shall be able to discover from

the pleasure and pain which arise in us But it is necessary to drag ourselves away, toward the opposite extreme, for, by bringing ourselves far from the side of error, we shall arrive at the mean; as people do with Crooked sticks to make them straight. (Nic. Eth. Bk II Ch. IX)

(g) We examine in what direction the soul has gone and employ the opposite extremes to turn it back to the mean. (Chap. 4 '30)

(h) Energies and habits act reciprocally. Abstaining from pleasures, makes us temperate. (Nic. Eth. Bk II Ch. II)

V. Virtue and Vice

Cf. Maimonides Chap. 4 '30 with Aristotle Nic. Ethics Bk II Ch. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7

(a) Virtues are twofold - one part intellectual, the other, moral.

Arist. Nic. Ethics Bk I Ch. XII par. 10

Maimonides Chap. IV '30

(b) Virtue is a mean state between two vices, one in excess, the other deficient. (Nic. Eth. Bk II Ch. II, Maimonides Chapter



(c) Moral virtues arise from habit, not  
one of them springs up in us by nature  
Nic. Eth. Bk. II. Ch. I.

(d) Know that these moral virtues and  
vices are neither formed or fastened in  
the soul but are developed & acquired  
by frequent repetition of the actions  
caused by the respective moral dispositions.  
Man has neither virtue nor vice by  
nature. (Maimonides Chap 4)

(e) Truth belongs to the intellect  
{ Nic. Eth. Bk. VI Ch. II }  
{ Maimonides Chap IV 3 & 4 }

VI. End and Aim of Life.

Of. Mai Ch. 5 20 with Aristotle Bk. X me. ed.

(a) Analysis of Bk. VII (W. R. Browne M.A. Analysis of Aristotle's  
moral philosophy)

Whether man can or cannot attain  
to perfect virtue, there can be no  
doubt that if he aims at happiness,  
he must endeavor to do so. He must  
labor to form imperfect habits  
of virtue in his onward course  
toward the acquisition of perfect

virtue. He must earnestly strive to improve them day by day and thus gradually approach nearer and nearer to the standard of absolute perfection which is coincident with the idea of perfect virtue.

(b) Man should regulate all his actions, deeds and speech to accomplish one end the comprehending of God i.e. perfection. Man should therefore choose the useful rather than the enjoyable to attain this end perfectly. He should have this idea in view not only in spiritual affairs but even when he acquires wealth, buildings, ornaments etc.

Maimonides. Chap. V '35

## CHAPTER I.

The soul of man and its functions.

The soul of man is one; but it has many varied functions.

These are by some called souls. Some men are supposed to have

two souls, as physicians think, whose master in the beginning of

life, states that there are three souls; the natural, the

## Part II.

### שמונה פרקים להרמ"ב TRANSLATION of

## CHAPTER I.

### The Soul of Man and Its Functions.

The soul of man is one; but it has many varied functions. These are by some called souls. Thus man is supposed to have many souls, as physicians think, whose master in the beginning of his book, states that there are three souls; the natural, the animal, and the ~~p~~ychical.

Sometimes these powers are called powers and parts. Hence the expression: "parts of the soul." The philosophers very frequently make use of this expression. But when they speak of parts they do not mean to imply that the soul is divided into parts as bodies are divided; But, that the various functions in ensemble equals the soul--just as the parts in ensemble is made up of those parts. Now you know that the moral betterment is the healing of the soul and its powers. And as it is necessary for the physician, who heals the body, to first know the whole body, as well as its parts, which he has to heal,-- I refer to the human body,--and he must further know the things that make it ill, to forbid them, and the things that make it well, to prescribe them, so the soul physician who desires to better the morals of man must know the soul and its functions in totality and in part. Also what makes it ill and what well.



For this reason the soul is said to have five parts; the nutritive,--which is also called vegetative,--the sentient or perceptive, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the rational. We have already stated in this chapter that we would only speak of the soul of man. Now the nutritive faculty, by which man is sustained, is not like that by which the horse or the ass is sustained. Man is sustained by the nutritive function of the human soul, the ass by that of the asinine soul; the eagle, by that of the aquiline soul. But for the sake of uniformity of expression, in speaking of all of them, we use the term "ψιτς" not that the meaning of one is the same for all of them. Similarly, speaking of man and the rest of the living animals, we use the term perceptive by mere homonymy, and not to imply that human perception is the same as animal perception, nor that the perception in one species is the same which another species experiences; but every species that possesses a soul has its own peculiar soul, differing from that of other species. And necessarily one soul has certain functions, another soul has other functions. It is indeed possible that one function appear similar to another, so that both be considered identical, but this is not the case. To illustrate: Three dark places are illuminated: One by the sun, the other by the moon, the third by a lamp, And while each place has light, yet the source of this light is in the first case, the

sun, in the second case the moon, in the third case the lamp. So the human soul is the efficient cause of the perception of man, the soul of the ass the efficient cause of the perception of the ass, and the soul of the eagle the efficient cause of the perception of the eagle, And these have nothing in common except the uniformity of expression. Remember this thing, for it is very important, through it many philosophers err, and as a consequence are led to sophistries and fallacies.

I now return to our subject: The parts of the soul, and say, to the nutritive part belong the powers of absorption, retention, digestion, excretion of the superfluous growth, reproduction, separating of the humours into useful and injurious. But the consideration of these seven functions,--the cause and manner of their activity, and in what organs their actions are more perceptible, which of them are permanent, and which temporary,--all this appears to be the province of the physician and it is not necessary to discuss it here. As to the function of perception, the faculties well known belong to it. They are: Sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. The latter is spread over the whole surface of the body and has no special organ as the four other powers have.

The imaginative function: Is that power which retains the impression of perceived objects after they have ceased to be in

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immediate contact with the senses which observe them, and which unites and separates them. Therefore, this function may produce out of the objects which the senses have observed, objects it has not at all observed, and which it can not observe. For instance: One may imagine an iron ship flying in the air, or a man whose head reaches into the sky, while his feet are on the earth, or an animal with a thousand eyes, and many similar impossibilities, produced by, and existing in, the imagination. Here is where the Mutakallimin committed the great error, upon which they lay the corner stone of their false philosophy. I mean with regard to the classification of things into the necessary, the possible, and the impossible. For they brought people to believe that everything imaginable is possible, without considering that the imaginative faculty creates images whose existence as we have just shown is impossible.

The appetitive faculty is the power by which man has a desire or ~~dis like~~ for something. The following functions belong to this power: To seek or shun a thing, to choose or avoid, anger and kindness, fear and courage, cruelty and charity, love and hatred, and many other psychic attributes. All parts of the body are agents of this power, e.g., the power of the hand is to take, of the foot to walk, of the eye to see, of the heart to be brave, or to quail, as the case may be. So the other external and in-



ternal parts of the body. Together with their functions are agencies of this power of desiring.

The rational faculty, is that by means of which men comprehend considers, and obtains knowledge, and by which he distinguishes between bad and good actions. Of these actions, some are practical, others speculative. The practical are partly artistic, partly reflective. The speculative function: is that function by which a man sees those things as they really are, that are not subject to changes. These are called sciences. The artistic function: is the power by means of which we learn the arts. For instance, architecture, agriculture, medicine, navigation. The reflective function is that power by which a man considers the manner of carrying out his intentions, whether it be possible or impossible, and if it is possible, *(it is not like as in the text)* how he must do it. So much had to be shown here of the things which concern the soul.

But know that this unitary soul, whose powers and functions have been described above, is, as it were, matter; of which the intellect is its form. If the soul lacks this form then its adaptation to assume this form would <sup>seem</sup> to be in vain, as is expressed (in the Bible, Proverbs 19,2) "It is not good that the soul be without knowledge". Which means that the existence of a soul that



has not assumed form,--that is, remains without intellect, -- is not good. But the question concerning form, matter, intellect, and idea, their number and mode of formation, are out of place in connection with our discussion on morals. Their discussion belong more properly to the book of prophecy which we have mentioned. I now close this chapter and begin a new topic on the soul.

## CHAPTER II.

Concerning the Contrary Activities of the Powers of the Soul and the Purposes of That Part from Which Virtues and Vices Issue.

Right and wrong actions belong to only two parts of the soul, the sentient and the appetitive part. In these two parts lie every violation and observation of law. There is neither the power of obedience nor of transgression in the vegetative, or imaginative part, because neither have knowledge or free will; they can do nothing, nor can man by his knowledge, suspend or diminish their activity,--you well know that during sleep, the vegetative and imaginative faculties perform their special functions, which is not the case with the other powers of the soul. There is a doubt concerning the rational part; but I say that this function also can obey or transgress, because it clings to

an incorrect or correct idea. Nevertheless it has no power to do the deed, that it could be said: This function also has the power to obey or transgress the law. On this account I said above that violation and observation of the law is only found in those two parts.

Regarding the virtues, they are two fold, the moral, and the intellectual virtues. Opposed to these are the two kinds of vices. The intellectual virtues belong<sup>to</sup> the rational function of the soul. Wisdom is derived from these virtues. It being that knowledge of mediate and immediate causes which arise after the knowledge of the existence of the object whose causes are being considered,-- also the intellect. And first: the theoretic intellect is a gift to us from nature,--I mean the elementary ideas --Second: the acquired intellect,--its discussion here is out of place. Third. shrewdness and good understanding,--which is the ability to pass judgment upon a certain thing, to quickly understand it without hesitation or at least in a very short time, the faults of this power are the contrary to these virtues. The moral virtues belong along to the appetitive part of the soul and in this respect the sentient part is only a servant of the appetitive part; this part has many virtues: For instance, abstinence --that is fear of sin --beneficence, honesty, gentleness, meekness,

economy,--this is what the wise call wealth, when they say: "Who is wealthy? He who is contented with his lot,"-- courage, faith, and other virtues. The faults of this part is the "too little" or the "too much" of these virtues. Concerning the vegetative and reflective functions we do not speak of virtues and vices; but say that nutrition proceeds in either a right or a wrong way, just as we say that a certain man's digestion is good or bad; that his imagination is deranged or that it acts in a proper manner. We find neither virtue nor vice here, which was the subject of this chapter.

### CHAPTER III.

#### The Diseases of the Soul.

The ancients were wont to say: "The soul, like the body, is subject to health and to illness." The soul is healthy, when it and its parts are in such a state that they perform good and beautiful deeds. It is ill when it and its parts are in such a state that they commit the evil and bad deeds. The health and illness of the body is the special work of the physician; but in the same degree as the illness of the body tend to unbalance their (where?) senses so that they believe the sweet to be bitter and the bitter to be sweet and imagine that which is wholesome to be unwholesome.



having a strong desire for and deriving a great enjoyment from such things as could be of no enjoyment to the healthy, on the contrary only a source of pain, for instance the eating of dirt or coals, acrid and very bitter things, and foods of similar qualities, such as no healthy individual desires, but rather has an aversion for. So the illnesses of the soul act in the same manner. That is, the evil and lascivious believe the evil to be good and the good to be evil, and the wicked man continually longs for the extremes which are in truth vices, imagining, because his soul is ill, that they are good.

And just as the physically ill, when they become cognizant of the fact that they are ill,--since they have not the knowledge of the art of healing,--consult the physicians who prescribe for them what they must do and deny to them what the patient considers wholesome, compelling them (the patients) to take disagreeable and bitter remedies until they have cured their bodies and have regained the faculty to derive pleasure from the wholesome and pain from the unwholesome.

So is it necessary for those who are ill in soul to consult the wise, who are its physicians. These will prevent them from doing the evil which appears to be good, and effect a cure by the method of cure of the virtues of the soul which is prescribed in the following chapter.



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*As to*  
Concerning those who suffer from soul sickness, but who had no knowledge of being ill, even considering themselves well, or if they are cognizant of it, yet do not use a remedy, their end will be similar to the sickman, who, yielding to the pleasing and using no remedy, must certainly die.

Concerning those who realize their condition but who persevere in their enjoyments, the Bible,--the revealed truth,--using their own words, say: "For I shall walk in the stubbornness of my heart" Deut.Ch.29, V.18. which means, while the wicked tries to quench his thirst, he himself adds to his thirst.

Concerning those who are not aware of their illness, Solomon speaks as follows: "The way of the fool seems right in his own eyes, but he is wise who listeneth to counsel,"--Prov.Ch.12, That is, he who listeneth to the counsel of the wise is wise; because *X* he truly reveals the right path; not the one which he thought to be right. He also says: "There is a path which seems right to a man, but whose end is death."

Concerning those who suffer from soul sickness, but do not know what is harmful or beneficial for themselves, Solomon applies the following: "The way of the wicked is like a thick darkness; they know not on what they stumble." In the next chapter I will explain the method of the cure of the soul.

# CHAPTER IV.

## How To Cure the Sicknesses of the Soul.

Good deeds are exact means between two extremes, both of which are bad. One of which is an excess, the other a defect. The virtues are such dispositions and conditions of the soul as are balanced between two evil dispositions, one of which is the "too much", the other the "too little." These deeds above mentioned ~~in parentheses~~ necessarily <sup>emanate</sup> animate from these dispositions. An example of this is abstinence, since it is a mean between the desire and the renouncing of a known pleasure. Therefore abstinence is a virtue. But the disposition of the soul from which abstinence necessarily emanates, is a moral virtue. Hence craving is one extreme, and total abstinence from the pleasurable the other extreme, both of which are wholly bad. As regards both dispositions of the soul, one of which is the craving for lust,--which is the disposition for the "too much,"-- and the other lack of desire,--which is the disposition for the "too little,"--they belong equally to the moral faults. So with liberality which is a mean between parsimony and prodigality; courage is a mean between rashness and cowardice; proper judgment is a mean between flattery and cynicism (Ibn Tibbon here defines *51050* as one who honors and judges as is proper and thus does not act stupidly

while **התנשאות** means flattery.) Modesty is a mean between haughtiness and self humiliation. (Generosity is a mean between avarice and squandering.) Satisfaction is a mean between slothfulness and desire. And since there are no known words in our language that denotes these virtues, it is necessary to explain their meaning and what the philosophers desire to imply by them. Generosity is applied to him whose intentions are favorable to man, personally or by counsel, or by whatever wealth he possesses, so that neither injury or loss comes to him; such an one is in the mean and the vicious man does the opposite of this. He is of such a nature that he does not desire man should profit by anything, except in that where there is no lack of trouble and injury, it is the one extreme. Over-goodness of heart is that capacity which makes man perform deeds that leave a good impression in the mind, but result in great injury and damage, or great trouble and disturbance; it is the other extreme. Meekness is a mean between prone-ness to anger and a phlegmatic temperament. Modesty is a mean between impudence and bashfulness. ---Agreeing with the opinion of the rabbis we have defined **ג"ש** as being excessive modesty or bashfulness. While modesty is the mean ---from a quotation in the sayings of the fathers, we learn that the bashful can not learn. which does not imply that the modest can not learn. Another verse informs us that the modest are



worthy of inheriting paradise, which is not said of the bashful. Therefore I have arranged these ideas as above stated. And so with the remaining virtues, they require names applied to them by general agreement, that a clear meaning of them be fixed in the mind.

Frequently, men err in regard to these activities when they say that one of the extremes is good and <sup>is</sup> one of the virtues of the soul. Sometimes they imagine the first extreme is good, for instance they consider rashness a virtue, and call rash men courageous. And when they see a man who disregards this virtue, that is he faces destruction itself but is accidentally saved, they praise him and say that he is courageous. At other times they consider the other extreme ~~as~~ virtue and call the phlegmatic gentle and the slothful content. And they call him who has no desire for pleasure on account of the listlessness of his nature abstinent, — as if he feared to sin. Likewise they wrongly consider prodigality and over-goodness of heart as good deeds. This is wholly wrong; only the mean is in truth praise-worthy. This must be man's aim, and man should very carefully consider all his actions, that they always follow the mean.

But know that these moral virtues and vices are neither formed or fastened in the soul, but are developed and acquired by frequent and lasting repetition of the actions caused by the re-



spective moral dispositions. If such actions are good the result in us will be virtue, but if they are bad the result in us will be a vice. And as man has neither virtue nor vice by nature,--as we will show in the Eighth chapter,-- and without doubt acquires habits from his childhood, that agree with the habits of his associated and his countrymen, these actions taking sometimes the mean, sometimes exceeding, sometimes falling short of the proper limit, as we have shown, and he so becomes ill. Therefore, it seems proper that he should proceed to cure his soul in the same way that the body, which has departed from its usual condition, is cured. We examine in what direction it has gone and we employ the opposite means to turn it back, so that it regains its normal condition, and when this condition is reached, to discontinue the treatment, making use of only so much as will re-create the state of health.

The same method must be applied to morals, for instance, if we see a man whose soul is so disposed that he abstain from all good, which is one of the faults of the soul, and the act which he commits is an evil act-- as we have shown in this chapter. When we undertake to cure this sick soul we do not prescribe liberality, for this would be the same in effect as when we attempt to cure a high fever by the application of that which lies between hot and cold, which would not relieve the patient of his sickness. It is necessary to lead him again and again to

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squander, until the prone-ness to avarice has left his soul, and he almost acquires the disposition to be prodigal; then we shall forbid his squandering inclination and command him to continually practice deeds of liberality and incline toward it, neither exceeding or falling short of this disposition. Likewise when we see a prodigal we command him to perform deeds of avarice, but we do not allow him to practice avarice very much, as we allow acts of prodigality. This fine distinction is the secret and method of curing a soul. For a man more easily returns from prodigality to liberality than from avarice to liberality. So also will he who is entirely indifferent to desire desist and fear sin,--more easily and quickly return than will he desist who is lustful and we will compel the lustful to repeatedly abstain from lust more than we will require him who is indifferent to lust to do deeds of lustfulness. And we will urge the timid to more deeds of rashness than the rash to deeds of timidity. And we shall require the indifferent to be covetous more than we shall require of him who is of a covetous disposition to be indifferent. This is the method of cure. Bear it well in mind.

For this reason the virtuous in their souls are not always accustomed to follow the medial disposition, but they lean to one side toward the "too much," or the "too little." I mean for instance that they diverge from abstinence a little toward the

lack of desire of enjoyment, and from bravery a little toward the disposition of recklessness, and from contentment a little toward the disposition of covetousness, and from gentleness a little toward humility; and so with the other dispositions. This recalls the saying, "Within the limit of the law." But what these virtuous men did at one time and that some of these lean toward one of the extremes by fasting, rising at night, and abstaining from flesh and wine and women, clothing themselves in wool or fur, and dwelling in the mountains, and hiding themselves in the wilderness,--they did all these things to heal, as we have shown, and also on account of the looseness of the inhabitants among whom they dwelt, when they saw that they must associate with them as neighbors, and look upon their evil deeds, and thereby become corrupt, on account of the loose morals of such people. Therefore they fled to deserts and to places where there were no evil men as Jeremiah the prophet said, "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people and go from them, for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men."

When the fools saw the virtuous do these things without knowing the reason, they thought such action was good, for all, and at all times, and that they would become like the virtuous, so the foolish castigated their bodies in all conceivable manners and thought that thereby they had performed a moral act and had done something quite vir-



tous and good, and by this means they would approach nearer to God, as if God were the enemy of the body and desired to destroy it! They never conceived that these actions were bad and that vices of the soul arise from them. Such people can be compared to him who is inexperienced in medicine, and who sees the experienced physician prescribe, to dying patients, poisons called colicquintida, scamony, aloe, and similar things, and even deny the dying patient his usual food. It happens that the patient recovers from the illness, escaping death in an apparently miraculous manner. The inexperienced fellow then concludes: "If these things cure the sick how much more liable are they to preserve health or even add to it." He begins to take these remedies continually. He shapes his mode of living to accord with the mode of the sick, so that he really becomes ill. So, those who take medicine when well become sick in soul, which the Torah, perfect, leading us to perfection, - as one who knows, has testified, "The instruction of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul, the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple." These verses convey the idea that man should live in accordance with his nature, holding to the mean. To eat and drink what is allowed him, to be moderate in his sexual habits, and to live justly and equitably in the community. He should not live in deserts or caves nor clothe himself in wool or fur, nor castigate his body. He is forbidden to do this



by the traditional law concerning the Nazarite, as we find, "The priest shall make him atone for committing a sin against the soul." The rabbis inquired ( In discussing this passage) "against which soul has he committed a sin?" And are met with the reply, "Against his own soul," (Ibn Tibbon omits this phrase in the Hebrew text.) because he denied himself the wine ; we can infer a major inference here; , if he who denies himself wine must atone, how much more necessary is it for him who denies himself all things to atone. And in the words of our prophets and philosophers, we see that their aim was the mean, and to keep the soul and body in the condition which the law demands. And God, through his prophet, Zachariah, answered those who inquired whether they should or should not keep the one yearly fast. " Should we," they inquire, "weep on the fifth month, or abstain as we have done these many years?" - As we have said, - God answered them: "When you fasted and mourned during the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, did you fast for my sake? And when you ate and drank did you not eat and drink for yourselves?" After this God commanded them to be moderate and virtuous but not to fast as he said: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, execute true judgment and let every man perform deeds of kindness and mercy toward his fellow-men; Do not defraud the widow, the orphan, the stranger or the poor, nor must you imagine evil against your brother in your heart." Zach., chap. 7. v. 9 and 10

It is further said: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the fasts of the fourth, the fifth, the seventh and the tenth months, shall be turned into <sup>e</sup>feasts of joy and gladness, and cheering festivals. Thus love, truth and peace." You must understand that truth is one of the intellectual virtues because they are unchangeable truths, as I have shown in the second chapter. And peace indicates the moral virtues upon which the peace of the world rests.

I now return to the proper subject. If the professors of our laws,--I speak only of those who imitate other religions,--insist that they only castigate their bodies and abstain from all things to control their physical bodies and on this account incline somewhat to one extreme, as we have explained in this chapter, he must necessarily keep up this condition, which is wrong, as I shall explain.

The Bible has given us prohibitory and <sup>com</sup>mandatory laws for this very purpose, That by their help we shall avoid that one extreme more than the other. For the prohibition of all forbidden food, of sexual intercourse, of association with prostitutes, compulsion of legal marriage, when co-habitation is not allowed,--even forbidden during menstrual period, and after confinement, besides, the rabbis established the rule that it be limited and entirely avoided during the day, as we have shown in our treatise on Sanhedrion. God has ordained all this that we may the more avoid the extreme of lust, leaning somewhat from the mean toward

abstinence and by this practice strengthen in our soul the disposition of abstinence. So it is with every law in the Torah; about the giving of the after-gathering, about the forgotten sheaves, about the letting of the corner of the fields, the berries and grapes dropped in the vineyards, the regulations concerning the shemita and jubilee years, and giving as much charity as the poor need. All this approaches the extreme of squandering, in this respect only, that we keep ourselves very far from the extreme of avarice and approach the other extreme above mentioned, until generosity has taken a good hold on us. If you look upon most of the laws from this point of view, you will find that all of them aim at the power of the control of the soul. For instance, forbidding revenge, vindictiveness, and the avenger of the blood. As is said: "Thou shalt neither avenge nor bear grudge." "Thou shalt loose the ass's bonds." "Thou shalt surely lift him up." So that anger and wrath lose their power. Similarly the words: "Thou shalt surely return them to him." — To put an end to the disposition of covetousness. Also: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary and honor the aged." "Honor thy father and thy mother." "Thou shalt not deviate from that which has been told to thee." Which is intended to put an end to rudeness of disposition, and create a reverent disposition. Again, keep away from the other extreme of extreme shyness, as is said, "Thou shalt



rebuke thy neighbor." "Thou shalt not be afraid of him." Until extreme shyness is dispensed with and we attain to the mean.

Doubtless when a foolish man comes and desires to add to these things for instance he adds to the forbidden food a general prohibition of eating and drinking. Because sexual intercourse is forbidden with certain persons he forbids marriage entirely. Because the Torah demands gifts, charity, and tribute, he spends all his wealth in charitable pursuits and religious duties. Such an one, un-knowingly, performs evil and leaving the exact meaning, inclines towards the extreme of squandering. The wise have a saying for this, more peculiar than which I have never heard; We find in the Babylonian Talmud, Chapter Nine, Tract Nedarin, a criticism of those who bind themselves by oaths and swearing and who are compared to those who are in bondage. "Rabbi Adai in the name of Rabbi Isaac, spoke as follows, 'Has not the Torah forbidden enough to you, that you deny yourself still more?'" This conveys the same meaning that we have desired to convey, neither more nor less.

It is proven to you from all that has been said in this chapter that we must keep in the mean, nor depart from them and lean towards one of the extremes, except for medicinal purposes and by using the opposite to relieve. And just as a man who is acquainted with the science of medicine, when he notes that his condition has



suffered a slight change, does not allow the sickness to grow on him until he is compelled to undergo an extremely radical cure. When he realizes that one of his bodily organs is ailing, he will constantly spare it, and avoid those things which are detrimental to it, seeking that which is helpful, until the organ regains its health, or at least does not become worse. Likewise a man must carefully and constantly examine his moral qualities. He must weigh his actions and examine, day by day, the disposition of his soul. When he perceives it inclining to one of the extremes he hastily resorts to the cure, thus preventing the bad disposition from gaining hold upon him, by frequent repetition of the evil. Thus a man should keep his moral defects before him and constantly aim to cure them, for no man is faultless. As the philosophers have said: "It is extremely difficult to find any one adapted by nature to possess both the moral and intellectual virtues." We find many remarks of a similar nature in the prophetic books. For instance, Job, Chap. 4, v. 18, "Behold he put no trust in his servants and his angels he charged with folly." Job, Chap. 25, v. 4, "How can a man be justified with God." Job, Chap. 15, v. 14, "How can he be clean that is born of woman." "There is not a just man on earth that doeth good and sinneth not," Ecclesiastes Chap. 7, v. 20

It is well known what God said to Moses,--the master of all before us and after us: "Because you had no faith in me, to sanctify me before all Israel and rebelled against me at the waters of Meriba, and you did not glorify me," Moses sinned against God by inclining to one of the extremes of the moral virtues. His fault here consisted in his inclination to the extreme of hasty temper as he exclaimed: "Hear, now, you rebels;" God reprimanded him because a man like himself should become angered in the congregation of Israel and in a place where it is not meet to be angry. For this man, such an act was a desecration of God, because all his deeds and words were exemplars by which they hoped to gain bliss in this and the future world. How could he display anger to them, which, as we have explained, is an action of the bad, and is the result of bad disposition of the soul. Now, God's words "You have rebelled against me," have this meaning, as I shall prove: Moses did not address illiterate or wicked people, but men whose wives,--even the smallest,--were like Ezekiel the son of Busi, as our sages have expressed it, and whatever he said or did they performed. When they saw him angry they said: "He was certainly not one of those who possessed a moral fault, for he became only angry, when he saw that we had roused God's anger by demanding water." Nor do we find that God spoke angrily in this matter, but said, "Take the staff, and assemble the congre-

gation.

We have departed from the subject of the chapter, but withal we have solved one of the difficult problems of the Bible of which much has been said. Still one is often asked, "Wherein did Moses commit a sin?" Compare what has been said and what we ourselves have said, and the truth of the matter will appear to you.

I shall return to my subject, if man would constantly weigh his deeds and aim<sup>at</sup> the mean he would reach the highest human plane, thus approach nearer to God and share in his bliss,--which is the peace which comes from the service, in my (God's) path. The Sages have treated and discussed this subject. In regard to it they say: "He who ordereth his path aright, and beholdeth purity in them, shall be worthy of the salvation of God." As is written, "to him that ordereth his conversation aright shall I show the salvation of God." (Read  $\text{שֶׁמֶשׁ}$ ! instead of  $\text{שֶׁמֶשׁ}$ ! The term  $\text{הַשִּׁמְרָה}$  means the regulation of measure and value.) which is the entire thought developed in this chapter. It was necessary to say this much on the chapter.



## CHAPTER V.

### The Functions of a Man's Soul Should Have a Single Purpose.

It is necessary for man, as we have shown in the previous chapter, to direct all the powers of his soul, after careful consideration, and to hold before him continually, this single aim: The comprehension of God as far as man can comprehend him. To so regulate all his actions, deeds, failures, and speech, so as to accomplish this result, that none of his deeds be purposeless. I mean a deed that has not this end in view. An example of this is seen in the case of eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, sleeping, waking, exercise, and resting. Here one should consider the health of the body alone, and the purpose of the bodily health is that the soul may possess tools that are hale and perfect, so as to acquire wisdom, and moral and intellectual virtues; to attain this result, and this means that he does not crave simply for enjoyment,--choosing that which is most pleasing of food and drink and of those things which are enjoyable; but rather selecting the useful, whether it is incidentally pleasing or displeasing, or he will select the pleasing for medicinal purposes. For instance, he suffers from poor appetite; he attempts to stimulate the appetite with delicious tasteful food which tempts a man's soul, likewise, when he is melancholy, he tries to cure it by listening to songs and musical renditions, taking a walk in the parks and in



beautiful buildings, spending his time in examining works of art,  
 and similar objects that can arouse the soul, and drive the melan-  
 choly thoughts from it; his purpose being in all this to keep the  
 body well, and this state in turn having as an aim the acquirement  
 of knowledge. Also he, who is actively engaged in acquiring  
 wealth, should have this purpose, namely, to use his wealth in  
 the service of the virtues and the preservation of his body from  
 sickness and to lengthen his life so that he attain to as great a  
 knowledge of God as possible. From this standpoint the knowledge  
 of medicine is of very great service, in the acquirement of in-  
 tellectual virtues, knowledge of God, and acquisition of true  
 bliss,- This is one of the greatest tasks to seek and know. The  
 task of weaving and carpentering can not be compared to it, since  
 these deeds are merely human deeds that are means to the acquisi-  
 tion of virtue and truth. For if a man were to eat sweet tasting,  
 fine smelling food, that the soul longs for, but which is un-  
 wholesome and even caused dangerous sickness or sudden death, such  
 a man is like an animal whose action is not like that of a man  
 in the sense of man, but in the sense of an animal functioned  
 creature. He only acts as a human being when he eats the whole-  
 some, and at times leaves the most wholesome alone and eats the  
 unpalatable, as if in search of the wholesome. I would call this  
 an act performed according to reason. And by this man differs in  
 his acts from other beings. Likewise, when he satisfies his de-

sires for intercourse without considering the injury or benefits he may suffer he then acts brutishly. Still, it is possible that his mode of life may be shaped in accordance with the most wholesome, without anything else in view, except the health of his body and its protection from sickness. Now such a man is not virtuous, since he derives pleasure from health, as the former derives pleasure from food, or the gratification of his desires. The actions of neither of these accomplish the proper object. Such an one acts properly only when all his activities aim at bodily health, continuity of life, and perfect health, so that he preserve the implements of the functions of his soul, that is, the members of his body be sound, that his soul, without hindrance, be active in the acquisition of moral and intellectual virtues. This holds also with whatever is tangible with every thought in science or knowledge. He should acquire only that which leads to this end. However, we will not discuss those things which are not directly of benefit for the accomplishment of this end: As the rules of algebra, the books of various cones, (of Appolonious), the technological tricks, the advanced study of geometry and mechanics, and many similar things; their purpose is to invigorate the intellect and to exercise the rational powers that man thus acquire the ability to discern demonstrative conclusions from others, and thus be aided in acquiring the knowledge of the truth of the existence of God.

The same is the case when man speaks. He may speak only of things which are of benefit to ~~his~~<sup>his</sup> soul or which ward off the harmful from his soul or body. He may speak of wisdom or virtue or praise virtue, or the virtuous, to blame the evil and the evil-doer, to reprove them and pronounce their actions as bad. Such an one performs his duty and is virtuous if his action is for the purpose of be-littling them in the opinions of other men, that <sup>it</sup>~~it~~ would be a warning to them, and they do not do likewise. Do you not know that God said: "Ye shall not do after the manner of the land of Egypt and after the manner of the land of Canaan." And the description of the Sodomites and all statements in the Bible, where the evil-doers are reprov'd and their action pronounced bad. The virtuous, on the other hand, are lauded and praised and have only this purpose, as I have mentioned, that men follow the example of the good and avoid the example of the bad. Should a man have this as a purpose in life, he would discontinue many of his actions and with-hold a great many of his comments. Who-ever tries to reach this state will not strive to <sup>in</sup>lay his door with gold, or embroider his garments with gold embroidery,--except it be to cheer his soul and make it well and drive sickness from it, so that it be like a shining mirror to receive knowledge. As the sages say: "Wise men ought to possess a beautiful residence, a beautiful wife and a well prepared bed." For the constant consideration of



difficult matters makes the soul weary and the thoughts to flag. As the body becomes worn out from doing hard work, and only when rested regains its proper condition, so is it necessary for the soul to engage in re-creation, viewing paintings and beautiful things, until weariness leaves it. As has been said, "Whenever the wise men were worn out from their study, they were wont to speak of something humorous." At this stage their actions are to be looked upon as neither bad or aimless. I refer to the decorations of buildings, vessels and garments, with paintings and colored ornaments. But you must understand that this is a very lofty conception, reached only by very few, and after hard practice. If there be a man who accomplishes this, I shall say he is not lower than prophets. I mean that he directs his soul with all its powers to God and makes His knowledge the highest aim. Neither does he perform a deed, be it small or great, or say a word, except they lead directly or indirectly to virtue; besides, he considers and weighs all his deeds and actions to determine whether they would attain that purpose or not, then he acts. This should be our aim in accordance with God's commandments which is as follows: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." That is, with every faculty of the soul. That you shall make one aim for each part; To love God. The prophets also---be they blessed,---admonish us to try to reach this state when they said: "IN all thy



works acknowledge Him." Which the wise men explain as including even violation of God's commandments, make this the aim and true end.

This whole thought has already been expressed by a wise man with a few incisive words and yet in a most perfect manner. (So that when you consider that so few words completely express so great and important a thought,--about which work upon work has been written without fathoming,-- you must realize that it was doubtless spoken with God's help.) I refer to the phrase found among the sayings of the fathers: "In all thy actions acknowledge GOD." This is the thought we have developed in this chapter. It was necessary to say this much, according to the introduction.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Difference Between the Virtuous and the Abstinent.

The philosophers say that even though the abstinent performs virtuous deeds, he does them while possessed of a desire and longing for the vicious and he combats with his appetite and struggles against the deeds which his functions desire and the disposition of his soul urges him and he does the good acts though he is troubled by doing them. But the virtuous pursues in his actions that which he desires and his dispositions dictate, doing the good because he longs to do the good. The philosophers are

unanimous in the opinion that the virtuous are better and more perfect than the abstinent. But they admit that the latter is like the former in many things, though the abstinent ranks below the virtuous as the former possesses the desire to do evil, and even though he does not permit the act, still his desire for vice is a bad disposition of the soul. Solomon expressed himself as follows: "The soul of the wicked desires evil." Also regarding the joy, the virtuous experience in the performance of good deeds and the dis-satisfaction the wicked experience in the performance of the same; "It is a pleasure to the just to do judgment but destruction to the workers of iniquity." Prov., Chap. 21, v. 15. Thus the prophets are in harmony with the philosophers. But when we examine the words of the *Sayid* concerning this subject, we found them saying "He who pants after wickedness, yet refrains is better and more perfect than he who does not wrong after evil, nor experiences pain in avoiding it." They even hold that in whatever a man is better or more perfect, his desire for vice and the pain in avoiding them is greater. They cite the following to prove this fact: "Whoever is greater than his neighbor has greater desires than his neighbor." Nor do they stop here, but hold that "the reward of the abstinent is as great as the discomfort caused by abstinence," adding, "The reward is proportionate to the pain."

Nay, more, they demand that man shall possess an appetite, that he may not say: "I by nature have no desire to perform this

transgression, though the Torah did not forbid it." They agreed with rabbi Simon B. Gamliel, who said: "A man must not say I do not like to eat meat and drink milk at the same time, I do not care to wear garments of wool and linen, I will not practice incest; rather let them say, I would like to do this, but how shall I do it when God has decreed against me." If at the very beginning you consider the apparent meaning of both opinions you would suppose that they contradict one another, but this is not the case. Both are true. The so-called evil of the philosophers, ---of which they say that he who has no desire of it is better and more perfect than he who having a desire curbs it,--refers to those evils which are known to all men as such. For instance, murder, theft, robbery, fraud, injuring the innocent, requiting evil for good and treating parents unworthily, etc. These are the laws which the wise men say: "Had they not been written, it would be proper to do so." Some of our latter day philosophers who are afflicted by the ills of the Mutakalemin call them "laws of common sense," there is no doubt that the soul which has a desire and longing for these things is defective, and a virtuous soul has no desire for any of these evils, sustaining no unpleasant sensations when it abstains from them.

But those things which the wise men say, namely, that he who restrains his desires is better and his reward will be greater refers to that which is forbidden in the positive law, namely,--



revelations, and this is true for if there were no laws of God, there could be no wickedness. It is therefore necessary for man to retain a love of these things in his soul, and avoid them simply because of the Torah. Note that the wise men did not give as an example, nor Rabbi Simon B. Gamliel say "Man must not say 'I do not wish to murder, I do not wish to steal, I do not wish to lie, but I would like to do, still how can I do this when God has decreed against me?'" But he mentions only revealed laws, namely, eating meat and drinking milk at the same time, using garments of wool and cotton, and incest. These and similar laws are such as God denominates statutes. Our rabbis say: "Statutes which I have decreed for you and upon which you are not permitted to ponder," people as a rule and Satan complain against such statutes. For instance, the statute concerning the red-heifer, the black sheep, etc. And those laws which the later philosophers called the laws of common sense are such as the wise explained to be commandments. We have already shown in what we have said upon what unlawful actions does it depend that he who has no desire be considered better than he who has desires but abstains from them, and wherein the opposite is true. This is, a fine distinction, but withal a peculiar computation of the true views, yet their wording points to the truth of our interpretation, which carries out the purpose of this chapter.



## CHAPTER VII.

### The Dividing Walls and Their Meaning.

We often find in the Midrash, the Hagadoth and in even the Gemara, that some prophets who saw God saw him behind many, others behind few, partitions, the number decreasing with the nearest to God, and in accordance with their prophetic rank. It is even said that Moses, -our teacher, be he blessed, -saw God through a single clear, or transparent partition. Here it says: "He looked into a specular light (specular is the name of the mirror made of transparent material, of crystal and glass, as we will explain at the end of Tract מ'ב); I will now tell you the meaning of the sentence. In the second chapter we have explained that the virtues are partly intellectual and partly moral, and also the vices are partly intellectual, --as ignorance, --dullness and inaction-- and partly moral, --as abnormal desire, haughtiness, quick temper, anger, impudence, avarice, and similar aptitudes of which there are very many, the arrangement of which we have detailed in the Fourth Chapter. These failures, in their entirety are those walls which separate man from God. The prophet teaches this when he says: "Your iniquities separate you from your God." He means that our sins --which are vices as we have stated, --are the walls that separate us from God. But know that no prophet receives the prophetic power until he possesses all the intellectual virtues and the most unyielding of the moral virtues. As is said: "The gift

of prophecy rests only with the wise man, who is brave and rich." Wise, without doubt, implies the intellectual virtues, while rich refers to the moral virtues, I mean contentment, because he who is content is called rich. As the wise define rich, when they reply to the interrogation: "Who is rich?" "He who is content with his lot." That is, who is contented with what

fortune has given him nor complains of what he has been deprived of. Likewise brave belongs to the moral virtues. I mean the brave man directs his power on careful consideration as has been shown in the Fifth Chapter. Thus the fathers reply, to the question "Who is brave?" as follows: "He who conquers his desires."

Yet it is not an absolute quality of the prophet that he possess all the moral virtues so that he does not do a single fault, because even Solomon, who was a prophet, according to the testimony of Scriptures: "In Gideon the Lord appeared to Solomon." We find in him a moral fault, namely Lust, as is proven by the fact that he had many wives, which is one of the deeds which arises from a lustful disposition. The Scriptures also say: "Has not Solomon sinned in this?" Likewise David, (peace be to him) was a prophet, as is said: "To me has the rod of Israel spoken", yet we find him cruel and even if he only practiced cruelty against the heathen, and in the destruction of the unbeliever, and was kindly disposed towards Israel, yet it is clearly stated in Chronicles that God

did not deem him worthy of building the temple because of the multitude he had slain. God said: "Thou shalt <sup>not</sup> build a temple to my name because thou hast shed so much blood." We also find in Elijah (blessed be he) a quick tempered disposition, although he practiced it and was angered only at the unbelievers, and yet the wise say: "God took him," and told him that whoever had as much temper as he had was not fit to rule or minister to man because he (Elijah) would kill them. So we find that Samuel was afraid before the presence of Saul, and Jacob, like a coward, avoided Esau. These and similar vices are the walls that separate the prophets from God. Whoever has two or three such dispositions as are not the mean, as we have explained in the Fourth Chapter, of such an one it is said: "He sees God behind one or two or three walls." Therefore do not think it strange that the faultiness of a few dispositions of character contract from the rank of prophecy, for we even find that some vices make prophecy altogether impossible: as anger, as the wise say: "If a prophet be prone to anger, prophecy withdraws from him." And they cite as a proof that the gift of prophecy departs from the prophet as long as he is angered and only returns when anger ceases. Then he is wont to say: "Bring me a minstrel." Also the grief and sadness of Jacob, our father, (peace be to him.) when he mourned for Joseph, 23, (the mourning) caused the holy spirit to depart from him, until he received the joyful news that Joseph was still alive. "The spirit of Jacob



their father revived," which the Targum translates: "The spirit of prophecy returned to Jacob their father." The wise men, however, declare that prophecy dulls neither with laziness nor sadness but with joy.

When Moses our teacher (blessed be he) found that no separating wall remained and that <sup>he</sup> had ~~in~~ perfection all moral and intellectual virtues, he sought to know God as ~~He~~ truly is, and he said "Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory." But God told him this was impossible, because man is an intellectual being (whose existence is only possible) on a physical basis, so God says: "No man can see me and live." Only one separating wall was left between him and God in reality, which was human intellect not yet separated from matter. Yet God showed him more kindness and disclosed to him more knowledge after he sought this. He revealed to him that because the highest degree of knowledge can not be reached by man as long as he has a body, that therefore he called the real knowledge (in an unusual manner) "the seeing of the face," for if a man sees the face of his neighbor an image of it is fixed in the soul, so that he can not mistake his neighbor for another, even when the neighbor is absent. But if he sees his back, even if he distinguished the neighbor, he perhaps feels some uncertainty that he might mistake his neighbor for another person, and herein also consists the knowledge of God as he really is: In fixing in the soul an image of God as he really is an image found in God alone



and in no other existing being, so that a fixed image exists in the soul of the seeker, differing entirely from all other beings. It has never been possible for man to reach this degree of knowledge of God, although Moses attained to a slightly lesser degree. This is what is meant when God said: "Thou shalt see my back." But I shall treat of this subject more fully in my book on prophecy.

Because the wise men know that both kinds of faults, intellectual and moral, separate man from God, and because of them, the ranks of prophecy differ in degree, they say of some of them, (the philosophers) on account of their wisdom and character they seem worthy of the Shekinah, as it came upon Moses, still you must not fail to notice the meaning of this comparison. They do not compare Moses with the philosophers, but the philosophers with Moses. As they say of others, "like Joshua, the son of Nun," This is the subject we intended to treat of in this chapter.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### The Nature of Man.

It is not possible to conceive that man was endowed from his birth with virtue or vice. As it is impossible for man to possess from his birth an innate ability for one of the fine arts. Though he may have been born with a pre-disposition for a certain virtue or vice, So that it is much easier for him to do this one

than to do another. For instance, a certain person's temperament leads him to dryness. His brain is clear and contains little moisture. He will more easily retain, remember, and understand, than the phlegmatic, whose brain contains much moisture. But even if he possesses this natural aptitude or intellectual attainment and this aptitude is not properly directed, he will undoubtedly, remain ignorant. Conversely, he who is burdened with a great deal of moisture, if he be educated, will acquire knowledge and understanding, Of course with difficulty; in the same manner, if a man's heart is hotter tempered than it should be the man leans to bravery and when taught bravery, quickly becomes brave.

Another man whose heart is of a colder disposition than the natural, leans to cowardice and fear. If he be taught this habit he will quickly acquire the habit of cowardice. On the other hand, should he be urged to be brave, he will become so but only after very hard training. I explained this to you, so that you may not believe the absurdity advanced by the astrologers, that the time of a man's birth makes him subject to a virtue or a vice, and the individual is therefore impelled to do these deeds by his very disposition. Yet I know that the proposition is taught by our religion and by the philosophers of Greece,--a truth found upon truth; that all actions are voluntary and there is no external force that impels man to act virtuously or viciously, even though there is

in him as above stated, an inborn disposition which makes a thing easy or difficult, but that he must or must not do this is not at all true. If man were an involuntary agent the commandatory and prohibitory laws of the Torah would be void, and the whole scheme a travesty; education and instruction and a knowledge of practical art would be fruitless and their acquirement a waste of time, since, according to the believers of this view, man is inevitably impelled by outside forces to do a certain deed, to have a certain knowledge and to assume a certain disposition. Then reward and punishment would be unjust,--whether from ourselves or from God. If A is compelled by outside agencies to kill B who is predestined to be killed, why should we punish A, and how is it possible for the Almighty, who is righteous and upright, to punish A, because of an act he was forced to do? For, even if it had been his will not to do the act he could not have carried it out. All precaution would then be useless,-- as in building a home, collecting wealth, or flight in time of fear, &c. For the predestined must happen. But this is false doctrine, contradictory to intellectual and practical experience, and tears down the wall of religion and intimates that God is unjust. But the unquestioned truth of the whole matter is: That man is the source of his own actions, possessing the power to do or not to do an act without coercion. On this conception alone can we justify the command: "Behold, I have set before thee this day life and



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good, death and evil. Choose the life." He gives us a free choice. On this account the rebellious were punished and the obedient rewarded. As is said: "If you shall obey and if you shall not obey." Also teaching and learning is demanded; "Ye shall teach them to your children;" "Ye shall learn them and be careful to do them," and so with all those verses in the Scriptures which treat of teaching the commandments. From it also resulted all precaution written in the Bible. For instance, "when you build a house, you shall make a fence around the edge of the roof so that no blood be spilt in thy houses." Also, "Lest he die in battle." "Where shall he sleep?" Another, "No man shall give in pledge, the upper and lower mill-stone,"----and many other similar passages in the Torah and prophets. I refer to the idea of precaution expressed. Concerning that which has been written in the prophets (blessed be they) "All this is from God, except fear of God." This is true and points to what we have already explained. But men often err and imagine many voluntary actions as involuntary, as marrying a certain woman, or that he had money. But this is not true. For, he married her by the marriage contract and ceremony, that is, provided he was allowed to marry her to perpetuate the race, which is a commandment. But God has not decreed that it be fulfilled. And if there is something objectionable in her the act of marriage is a transgression and God does not decree deeds of transgression.



So with him who steals money or embezzles and denies it, swearing falsely against the defrauded, if he say that God has decreed that the latter take the wealth and the former lose it, in this case, God has predestined a transgression which is impossible because only in connection with voluntary action can obedience or disobedience to law arise. We have proved in the Second Chapter that all commandatory and prohibitory laws concern those actions in which man has free will.

From the soul emanates the fear of God. It does not rest with God, but, as we have proved, is a matter of the free will of man. If this is so, you ask why the phrase "All things are in the power of God." This refers to natural things in which man's will is not concerned, e.g., that a man be tall or short; that it rain or be dry, that the air be <sup>in</sup> a healthy or unhealthy state or similar physical phenomena, except the doing or avoidances of man. And this is the thing which the wise men taught that the obedience to and transgression of laws does not rest in God but in the Will of man. This is deduced from the words of Jeremiah: "Neither the good or the bad cometh from the mouth of God." Bad means evil action, while good means good actions. He says God does not predestine man to evil or good. Since this is true, it is proper for man to repent and mourn for the sins and transgressions he has committed, of his own free will. Therefore we read: "Why does a man complain for the punishment he receives because of his sins?"

To which is added a verse: "The cure of this is in our own power, for as we can sin, so we can reform from sin." Further, it is said: "Let us examine our ways and return to God. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in Heaven." Concerning the well known expression held by sage and prophet that standing and sitting and all its expressions of activity depend on God's will and his desire, they are truths in one respect, as for instance a man throws a stone in the air and it drops down, this latter act is done in accordance with God's will, which is true, for God has willed that the earth and all its possessions be the center of the universe. On this account, whenever anything is thrown up it attempts to seek the central point; so all fire ascends, in accordance with the will which has manifested itself this way, and not that God just when that part of the earth was in motion, desired that it descend, rather than ascend. On this point, the Mutakalemin differ with us, for I have heard them say: "The will of God is always effective." But we are not of this opinion, as God's will regulated everything in six days and all things continually take their natural course, as Solomon says: "That which was shall be, and that which was done shall be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." Therefore the wise man had to admit that all miracles which deviate from the natural course, both those which have occurred and those prophesied in future, all have been provided for in the first six days of creation, according

to the will of God. Even at that time he instilled into the nature of things, the new elements needed for future miracles and which only came to light when the miracles took place. So that, it seemed to be something new, which is really not the case. This has been extensively treated in the Midrash to Koheleth and other parts of Scripture. One quotation of theirs bears on this question, "The world proceeds in its accustomed way?" You will note that they constantly refrain in all their utterances from picturing God's will as the moving spirit in a special thing or during a special period of time, so when they say that man obeys God's will when he rises or sits down, they mean that God in the beginning endowed man with the faculty to rise or sit down as he willed. But this does not mean that God willed that man should rise or remain seated at the moment of the act. This is as improbable as the claim that God willed the stone should fall or not at the moment of its movement. In a word we must believe that as God willed a man to have an upright position, broad chest, and fingers and toes, he also willed that man be active or inactive and that he act according to his own free will, without compulsion or hindrance. God teaches this in the Torah: "Behold man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." The Targum explains these words thus: "One of himself, to know good and evil." That is, man's species is the only species which possesses this peculiar quality with which he is endowed, meaning that he himself knows



the good and the evil, doing one or other of them. So when he eats of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he lives forever.

Since free will is necessarily implanted in the nature of man, justice demands that he be taught the good path in which he should walk, and the evil path which he should avoid. Also the reward of the former and the punishment arising from the latter. He must become accustomed to good deeds until he becomes virtuous and refrain from evil deeds until they depart from him. If vices control him he must not say they are natural and can not be changed. For all such things can be changed, whether from good to evil or from evil to good, all is in his power. For this very reason we cited what we did about lawful and unlawful actions.

Concerning this statement, only one more point is to be considered. There are some passages in Scripture which lead men to suppose that God predestined and compelled man to do evil. This is not true. It is necessary, however, for us to explain these passages, for many people have expressed an inconsistent opinion on these points. One passage is where God spoke to Abraham: "They will make them servants and afflict them for four hundred years." The mis-interpreters say: "Do you not perceive here that God has pre-destined Egypt to oppress the descendants of Abraham,--why did God then punish the Egyptians? Were they not compelled to make the Israelites servants as God pre-destined them to do?" The answer to this is: it is as if God had said



that among those who are born in the future such an act will occur, lawfully or unlawfully, virtuously, or unvirtuously. Which is the true meaning of the verse. The evil and the righteous man are not forced to do evil or righteousness, but every man, whether he be bad or good, is so of his own free will. If he is good or bad he can become the opposite at his will. God's words have no definite person in view, who might say, he was predestined <sup>to</sup> do the deed; But it is intended for all, while it left every individual the free will with which he was originally constituted. So every Egyptian who oppressed and afflicted the Israelites if he had the will not to oppress them, he could refrain,--for it was not decreed that man should practice oppression. This explanation can also be used with reference to the verse: "Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, then this people shall arise and lust after strange gods." It would be the same if God had said: "Whoever commits idolatry, so and so shall be done to him." If there never had been any transgressor against the prohibition of idolatry all punishment and all curses would have been void. So with all punishment decreed in the Torah: Because death by stoning is decreed we must not say that he who has desecrated the Sabbath was predestined to do so, nor should we say because of the curses against idolators in the Torah, the idolators were predestined to commit idolatry. The transgressor has committed the act of his own free will, therefore he was punished, as the Bible says:

"Yea, they have chosen their own ways." And affixes to this phrase God's reproof: "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fear upon them," Isa. Chap. 66, v.4. But concerning the passage: "And I shall harden the heart of Pharaoh," after which God punished and killed him, much can be said, and from it we derive an important fundamental principle,--carefully consider what I have to say. Take it to heart and compare it with the best opinions of others. If the only sin which Pharaoh and his follows committed, was that they did not give Israel its freedom, the matter would be difficult, for God prevented the Egyptians from freeing Israel as this verse proves: "For I shall harden (Pharaoh) heart, and the heart of his servants." How then could God demand the Egyptians to free the Israelites when he had pre-destined the Egyptians not to do so, even punished Pharaoh because he did not liberate them? This would certainly be unjust and would contradict everything we have already stated, but this is not the case, for Pharaoh and his followers sinned of their own free, voluntarily oppressing the strangers in their land, committing great injustice against them, as the quotation clearly proves: "Behold the people of Israel are more numerous and mighty than we. Come, let us deal wisely with them," &c. They did this simple act of their own free will, not because an external force impelled them, and the punishment which God imposed upon them

was that they could not reform, so that they be subjected to the punishment which God deemed they justly deserved. God could have destroyed Pharaoh and his followers and then speedily liberate the Israelites; but God deserved to punish Egypt at the time he liberated Israel because of the oppression that the former inflicted upon the latter. As we read in the verse: "And also that nation whom they serve, will I judge," after which they will depart with great wealth. Yet, had they repented, they would not have been punished. So God prevented them from reforming, even hardened their hearts against Israel. As God says: "For now I have stretched forth my hand; etc. We do not err if we say that God punishes man by preventing him from mending his way, and depriving him of his free will, for God knows the sinners and His wisdom and His justice fixes the measure of the punishment; extending it at times to this life, again to the future life, and at times to both the here and the hereafter. The punishment also varies in this life. Sometimes the body, sometimes the wealth, sometimes both are effected, and just as he at times suspends voluntary action which is in the power of man, in order to punish, as paralysis of the hand, which God decreed against Jereboam the son of Nebat, or blindness which happened to the Sodomites who turned against Lot, so he deprived man of the faculty of reforming of his own free will, that he may no longer retain any desire to reform, and dies of his sin. But it is <sup>not</sup> necessary that he be punished."



to such a degree as to understand why He used just this kind of punishment and not another kind. Just as little as we should know why a certain species has a certain form and not another. It is a fixed rule that all His ways are merciful and just. He punishes the sinner in accordance with his sin, and rewards the good according to his goodness. But if you ask why God on several occasions had demanded the liberation of Israel from Pharaoh, when he was prevented from liberating them,--because he remained firmly opposed in spite of the plagues that came upon him, these are, as we have said, the afflictions with which God punished him, because he remained obstinate and not because of the negation of that which was impossible for him to do, was sought. And even this was done by God in wisdom, i.e., to teach that God can annul Pharaoh's will when he desires to do so. As God said to him: "Behold, I demanded their liberation from you and you have not done it; but if

you set them free you shall be saved." Although I knew that you would not liberate them until you perished. Again, it would have been necessary for him, (Pharaoh) to praise God with the liberation of Israel, which would appear contrary to the prophet's (Moses) assertion, that he was prevented from giving praise.

Herein lies a great revelation for all men: "That my name be declared throughout all of the earth." This revelation reveals the fact that God sometimes punishes a man by preventing him from doing a single act of his own free will. The victim knows this,



but is unable to free his soul, and regain free will, So, Sihon the king of Chesbon, was punished for his former disobedience, which was not forced upon. God here punished him by making it impossible for him to obey the Israelites who made war against him and killed him, as it is said: "Sihon, the king of Chesbon, would not leave us pass through his kingdom," &c. What made this verse so difficult for all expounders was the fact that they thought that Sihon was punished simply for the reason that he forbade the Israelites a passage through his land. Therefore, they say: "How could God punish him, when he was forced to act as he did ---after God had hardened his spirit and his heart. The case is similar to the case of Pharaoh and the Israelites, and the explanation is the same in both cases. As God has taught through the prophet Isaiah that He punishes the rebellious by taking from them the power of reformation and depriving them of free will, as he says: "Let the heart of this people be fat and their ears heavy (that is deaf) and their eyes dim." This statement is so plain that it needs no explanation, but it is the key that opens many locks and on this statement are based the words of Elijah, directed against the unbelievers of his time: "Thou hast turned their hearts backwards." This means that after they have sinned of their own free will, God punished them, by preventing them from reforming, and depriving them of the faculty of free will,

so that they did not desire to cease from sin, but to continue in it, as is said: "Ephraim is joined to idols, leave him alone." This means that Ephraim has adopted idolatry of his own free will. His punishment is that he persevere, in his false affection. This is a very good interpretation to him who understands fine thoughts.

Regarding Isaiah's words: "Oh God, why hast thou made us err, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" this sentence has absolutely no connection with the question. The meaning of the verse when taken in connection with the context is, the prophet complains about our exile and our lot, the destruction of our kingdom, and the mighty nation that rules over us, and he prays as follows: "God, my Lord, when the Israelites see the power of the unbelievers they will depart from the truth and incline their heart away from the fear of Thee." As if Thou had given given cause to these fools to depart from the truth, as our teacher Moses says: "Then the nations who have a report of these shall say 'You were not able!' " Therefore Isaiah said: "Return on account of thy servants and thy inheritance." That is, "That no desecration of thy name should occur." The speech of those who followed the truth and were oppressed by idolators in the exile, is explained in the same manner in the twelve minor prophets. The oppressed say: "Every one who doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them." Or, "Where is the God of judgment?"

So he allowed them liberty to speak as freely as they did because of the hardships of the exile. For instance: "It is vain to serve God and what profit is there for us to keep his ordinances and that we have walked in garments of mourning before the Lord." Malachi, Chap. 3, v. 14.

But now that we are rich, it would be presumption, and he declares that in future God will reveal the truth, when he says, "You shall reform and discern between the righteous and the wicked" (Malachi). These are the most difficult passages in the Torah and the prophets, wherein it appears that God impels man to act evilly. The true meaning of which passages we have certainly explained and in the right manner.

Therefore we adhere to our original assertion: That man is a voluntary agent; he can do what he wills, or refrain from that which he wills,--provided God does not so punish him for his sin, as to deprive him of his faculty of willing. Also he has the power to acquire virtue and vice. And to acquire virtue, he must be active and make efforts or no external motive can affect him in this acquisition. As the wise say, in this collection of proverbs: "If I do not care for myself, who shall care for me?"

One more point in this subject remains to be discussed. Few words need be said on it to complete this chapter, and although I had no intention of discussing it at all I am compelled to do so: I refer to God's knowledge of the future, and the events that will



happen in the future. Those who think that man is pre-destined to obey or dis-obey the law (that man's acts are not of his own choice but of God's choice) Argue against us as follows: "Did the Creator know that this man would be good or bad, or did he now know this? " If you say : "God did know it," you must confess that either man was forced to the act known before hand by God or that the knowledge of God is false. If you say God did not know before hand, many important absurdities arise, and more than one support must fall. The following explanation is undoubtedly the true one,--note it carefully. This has been sufficiently proved in the metaphysics, that God is not known by any one knowledge nor does he live by any one life, so that He and knowledge might be two things, as man and his knowledge are two distinct things. If God perceived through some knowledge this would presuppose a plurality and there would be several everlasting things, namely, God, the knowledge by which He knows, the life through which He lives, and the power which makes Him powerful, and so on with the rest of his attributes. -- I give you here such an easy and simple argument that even the masses can understand it. There are other arguments and proofs that contradict the above opinion. These also are very powerful, and are true evidence against. It is an established rule that God is identical with His attributes, so that we may say: "He is the knowledge, and



the possessor of it, he is the life and the possessor of life, and the giver of his attribute, "The life." Likewise with all other attributes, but these things are very recondite, which you can hardly hope to completely understand from two or three lines in my treatise, whose sole object is only to give you a primitive, a primary knowledge of the subject. In accordance with this important principal, the Hebrew language, does not permit us to translate

ה' חיה                      by the life of God,

as it permits us to say by the life of Pharaoh, by the life of thy soul,--that is, with nominal suffix, because the thing suffixed and the thing ~~to which~~ to which it is suffixed are two different things, as a thing can not be suffixed to itself, but as God's life is His being and His being is His life and nothing else, we can not employ the genitive case, but must say "By the living God." That is, the life of God which made this quality of soul for us, it and His life are one. It is also proven in the metaphysics that our minds are unable to comprehend the being of God, because of his perfection, and the imperfection of our knowledge, and because there are no means by which His nature may be comprehended. Just as our eyes are unable to look at the sun.---This is not due to the dimness of the sun's light, but because its light is stronger than the light by which it can be observed. Many writers have treated this question, and all have spoken

truthfully. On this account we can not by our own knowledge comprehend God's knowledge because God and his knowledge are one. This idea is exceedingly profound, and the truth was with-held from them who asked the question and though they said that the nature of God was perfect, that He could not be comprehended. Still, they endeavored to comprehend his wisdom, which is impossible, for if we could comprehend God's wisdom through our knowledge, we would be able to comprehend his nature, because both are one. The perfect comprehension of God consists in this that He is understood in His full nature: Wisdom, power, life, and will. And all his other glorious qualities. We have already proven that meditation on God's wisdom is sheer folly. We only know that He is all-knowing, that he exists; but if we are asked of what his wisdom consists? we answer that we do not know just as we can not perfectly comprehend his nature. Therefore, whoever attempts to comprehend God's true wisdom, is mentioned with displeasure. In Job<sup>11</sup> it is said of him: "Canst thou by searching find out God, or canst thou know the Almighty unto perfection?"

Summing up the whole matter we may say, man's deeds are of his own choosing. He can be good or bad, as he chooses, God does not force him in any way to commit either the one or the other.

Therefore these seem proper; ordinances of duty, education, and measures of prevention; also reward and punishment. There is no difficulty in this matter. But as regards the nature of God's wisdom and the method by which he knows all things pertaining to our knowledge, this subject passes our understanding. This is what we intended to develop in this chapter, and it is time to bring it to close.

F i n i s .