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Abravanel's Theory of Dogmas
in Judaism as Reflected in
His Rosh Amana.

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partial requirement for the
degree of Rabbi.

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In Memory

of

My Father

זכר צדיק לעולם

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INTRODUCTION

A. Sketch of the Problem

Efforts to formulate the principles of Judaism have been made by many Jewish thinkers. There are numerous reasons,¹ no doubt, which urged them to work on this problem; but in general one might say they were prompted by a two-fold reason: 1) the desire to present in clear-cut fashion the beliefs that every Jew should hold, (the beliefs that are distinctive of Judaism and separate it from other religions.) 2) The inner desire for unity and system building which is characteristic of the Jewish philosopher.

The articles of faith formulated by Maimonides (1135-1204) in his Perek Helek² is the most famous of all these efforts at creed-building. It is the 'locus classicus' of the dogma question in Judaism. Maimonides listed thirteen. They are:

1. Existence of God
2. Unity of God
3. Incorporeality
4. Eternity of God (translated 'priority' by Abelson, p.49)
5. God alone is worthy of being worshipped.
6. Belief in prophecy.
7. Pre-eminence of Moses as prophet
8. Divine revelation
9. Immutability of Torah
10. God knows all deeds and actions of men.
11. Belief in reward and punishment
12. Belief in coming of Messiah
13. Belief in resurrection of the dead.

The thirteen principles of Maimonides aroused considerable interest; in fact, a controversy began to rage on the very point. Schechter³ states that the dispute about the thirteen articles led to the Maimonists and the anti-Maimonists.⁴ The Maimonists accepted Maimonides' thirteen principles. The anti-Maimonists were of two kinds: one group admitted the existence of Ikkarim in Judaism but disagreed with Maimonides as to what they were; the second group denied categorically the existence of dogma in Judaism.

Hisdai⁵ Crescas is one of the outstanding members in the first group of the anti-Maimonists. He declared in his Or Adonoi, 1405, that Maimonides' confused dogmas or fundamental beliefs, without which Judaism is inconceivable, with beliefs or doctrines which Judaism teaches, yet the denial of which does not make Judaism impossible even tho it may involve strong heresy. Of the fundamental teachings without which Judaism could not exist, there should be only six, says Crescas. They are:

1. Omniscience - God's knowledge of our actions.
2. Providence
3. Omnipotence
4. Prophecy
5. Free-will
6. Purpose

On the existence of God it should be noted that Crescas is undecided whether or not he should include it among the fundamental teachings. He holds that the existence of God is axiomatic with every religion and is uncertain whether it should be included as an 'Ikkar.'

There are in addition, says Crescas, certain doctrines which

every Jew should believe, the denial of which makes one a 'min' or 'epikoros,' yet Judaism is not impossible without them. These doctrines are divided into two groups. In the first group there are eight. They are:

1. Creation of world.
2. Immortality of soul
3. Reward and punishment
4. Resurrection of the dead
5. Eternity of law
6. Pre-eminence of Moses as prophet
7. The Urim Vetumim answered High Priest when he sought instruction from the Lord.
8. The coming of the Messiah.

In the second group there are three principles which express the practical doctrines of Judaism. They are:

1. Belief in efficacy of prayer and belief in the efficacy of the benedictions of the priests.
2. Belief in repentance.
3. Belief in certain holy days - Rosh Hashanah, Pesach, Shebuoth, Sukkoth, and Yom Kippur.⁶

Joseph Albo, disciple of Crescas, was also one of the anti-Maimonists who agreed that Judaism had dogmas but disagreed with Maimonides on what they were. He presented a list of dogmas in his work entitled "Ikkarim" (1425). He saw religion as a living tree with roots and stems. Judaism had three roots: Existence of God, Divine revelation, and reward and punishment. The roots "existence of God" had the stems of 1. unity 2. incorporeality and 3. independence of time and freedom from defects. The root of revelation had the stems of prophecy and the authenticity of messenger. The root of reward and

punishment had as stems God's knowledge and Providence.⁷

With Abravanel we come to a man who belongs to the anti-Maimonists of the second class: those who categorically denied the existence of dogmas in Judaism. I shall not discuss Abravanel's position at this point because it will be treated in Chapter VI.

B. Proposed Treatment

This thesis will attempt a critical analysis of Abravanel's Rosh Amana. It will aim at four things: 1) a presentation and analysis of the criticism that Crescas, Albo, and Abravanel raised against Maimonides; 2) a presentation and critique of Abravanel's defense of the Maimonidean position against Crescas, Albo, and himself; 3) a presentation and evaluation of Abravanel's attitude to dogmas; 4) a consideration of the question: Has Judaism dogmas?

Chapter I

Critique of Maimonides

In Chapters III, IV, and V Abravanel presents the various objections and criticisms advanced against Maimonides' thirteen articles of faith. I shall present the objections raised by Albo, the objections raised by Crescas, and finally, the criticism which Abravanel himself advanced against the master.

1. Albo's Critique of Maimonides

Albo takes Maimonides to task on a number of points. His list of objections, so far as I have been able to ascertain, total sixteen. They are as follows:

Objection I. If the word "Ikkar" is a term applied to a thing upon which another thing depends and without which it can not endure, as the root is a thing upon which the endurance of the tree depends, then why should Maimonides include as "Ikkarim" unity and incorporeality of God? They may be true doctrines - doctrines that everyone should believe - yet they are not fundamental principles since the Torah would not be nullified if one believed otherwise.¹

Objection II. Why should Maimonides declare that "it is proper to serve God and worship Him" is a fundamental principle? This is a specific commandment, and if specific commandments are counted dogmas, then there would be as many principles as commandments.²

Objection III. Why should Maimonides make as a principle "God alone should be worshipped without intermediaries?" Suppose a man believes in God and the Law and yet prays to Gabriel and Raphael to intercede in his behalf, does this nullify the Torah?³

Objection IV.⁴ Why should Maimonides declare as a principle "the immutability of the Torah" and base it on the verse "thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it"? In the first place, the divine law changed from time to time; God may add or diminish the Torah in whole or in part, according to the capability of the receiver.⁵ In the second place, the verse "thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish thereof" does not refer to the eternity of the commandments; this commandment has no reference to the adding or subtracting of the mitzvot but to the manner of performing them.⁶ If the matter were as Maimonides supposed, how could the rabbis say that "the court is entitled to abolish a divine law and do such a thing no more",⁷ or "that Solomon established the (law) of Erubim and the washing of the hands"⁸? Furthermore, even admitting that Maimonides is right in his interpretation of the verse, it only proves that we may not change the Torah but does not exclude the possibility that the Torah may not be changed by God.

Objection V.⁹ Why should belief in the Messiah, altho a true belief, be considered a fundamental principle since its denial would not nullify the Torah?¹⁰

Objection VI. Why should resurrection of the dead, altho a true belief, be considered a fundamental principle since its denial would not overthrow the Torah? Furthermore, is it not quite possible for a man to believe in reward and punishment both in this world and in the world to come and still not believe in bodily resurrection?¹¹

Objection VII. If Maimonides says the law will never be changed at any time then how can he reconcile the following contradiction: that when the Messiah and resurrection will come about, they will

no longer be fundamental principles, and since ~~these~~ have been derived from the law, it will of necessity constitute a change in the law.¹²

Objection VIII. If it be said that the intention of Maimonides was not to establish fundamental principles but only to present the most essential articles of faith, then why did Maimonides not mention the "Shekinah", one of the exclusive favors which Israel enjoyed?¹³

Objection IX. Why does Maimonides omit "creation of the world by God" which as a principle everyone professing a divine law is obliged to believe - especially since Maimonides in his "More" (Chapter XXV, Part II)¹⁴ says "creation" is a belief that everyone should hold?¹⁵

Objection X.¹⁶ Why does Maimonides not include in his list a belief in all miracles because it is a principle of faith upon which everything depends?¹⁷

Objection XI.¹⁸ Why does Maimonides omit the principle that every Israelite should follow the tradition of his fathers?¹⁹

Objection XII.²⁰ Why does Maimonides omit freedom of will, without which no religion can exist - especially in view of the fact that Maimonides has already stated that it is a first principle?²¹

Objection XIII. Why does Maimonides not give God the attributes of life, wisdom, and power? And why does Maimonides have thirteen dogmas? Is it because of the thirteen attributes of God or the thirteen ways of interpreting the Torah?²²

Objection XIV. Why does Maimonides not include, as Crescas did,²³ the final end of man's existence and belief in the immor-

talities of the soul?

Objection XV. Why does Maimonides not include, as Crescas did, the power of repentance by the Urim Vetumim?

Objection XVI. Why does Maimonides not include, as Crescas did, the remission of sin by repentance and belief in holy days like Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, etc.?

2. Crescas' Critique of Maimonides

In Chapter IV of the Rosh Amara Abravanel presents the following criticism as having been advanced by Crescas against Maimonides' thirteen articles of faith.

I. How can the commandment אנכי ה' אחד bid us to believe in God? If this commandment implies a belief in God, then we must assume the existence of God to make this commandment; as a result, two gods would have to exist - one to make the commandment and one to whom we are commanded to believe in. Here a thing is made the cause of itself.²⁴

II. If free will is absent in our knowing and believing, how can it be said that we should believe in the existence of God and his unity?²⁵

III. Maimonides errs in thinking that R. Simlai said (Macoth ^{23a} 23b) that "אנכי ה'" is a commandment. It is the contention of the rabbis that the whole passage in the Decalogue from "I am the Lord thy God" to "Those who love me and keep my commandments" was spoken by God himself since it is in the first person; and they count "thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" and "thou shalt not bow down unto them" as two distinct commandments. Consequently, if "I am the Lord thy God" and "thou shalt have no other gods" are considered commandments, then the list is not 613, as it should be, but 615. And so R. Simlai could not have said, as Maimonides imagines, that "אנכי ה'" is a commandment. "אנכי ה'" is the root of all commandments but contains no particular commandment; and אשר יהיה לך could not be a commandment because it is not subject to free-will. It is an introductory statement containing the two commandments, לוא יהיה לך and לוא יהיה לך.²⁶

3. Abravanel's Critique of Maimonides

Abravanel advances eight objections of his own against Maimonides. They are:

Objection I. Why does Maimonides mention only some²⁷ of the cardinal principles and omit others in the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah of the Sefer Hamada? This Abravanel thinks strange because it implies that the principles which come under the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah are different from the other cardinal principles.

Objection II. Why does Maimonides in the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah²⁸ mention such matters, which he omits in the Perek Helek, as "to love God", "to fear him", "to walk in his ways"? If it be said that they belong to the "principles of the law" then why did Maimonides not include them among his articles of faith? And if this is the case then there are more than thirteen fundamental principles - there are twenty or thirty.

Objection III. Why should Maimonides say of the thirteen articles that only the existence of God and his unity²⁹ are divine commandments based on a positive commandment while the others are not considered divine commandments, either *de zar k'zar* or *de zar*. This, says Abravanel, is strange. If they are fundamental principles which we must believe, how can it be said that God did not command their belief?

Objection IV. Why should Maimonides refer to the first principle as the "Principle of principles" and "the pillar of wisdom" in the Sefer Hamada³⁰ and fail to use the same expression ("Principle of principles") in his commentary to the Mishnah and the Sefer Minyan Hamitzvot? If the expression is so important it should have been used in his other works. Again, what difference

does it make to us from the Jewish point of view whether the first principle is the pillar of all secular wisdom? It would have been more appropriate had he said "one of the principles" and not the "principle of principles."

Objection V. Why does Maimonides use a doubtful demonstration like the argument of the celestial spheres to prove his first principle?³¹

Objection VI. Abravanel says that Maimonides, finding it difficult to prove God's unity, used ~~the~~ indirect evidence and tried to prove God's unity thru the premise of God's incorporeality and the motion of the orbits which Maimonides had previously given as evidence for the existence of God. Again, why should Maimonides in Sefer Hamada say, in explaining the first principle, that³² "whoever thinks that there is another God besides this one transgresses the negative commandment - thou shalt have no other gods before me." Since this argument is advanced against polytheism, it would have been more appropriate had it been advanced in connection with the unity of God and not, as Maimonides has done, in connection with the explanation of the first principle, *of existence*.

Objection VII. If God is the necessary existence, this includes principles 2, 3, and 4 (unity, incorporeality, and eternity). Why the undue repetition?

Objection VIII. Why should Maimonides make פְּלִיטָה אֱלֹהִים a cardinal doctrine when the Mishna (which is his source) is concerned only with stating that resurrection is taught in the Bible?

Chapter II

Abravanel's Defense of Maimonides

The major part of Abravanel's "Rosh Amana" deals with his defense and analysis of the Maimonidean position. First of all, he presents his premises; then he takes up for discussion all the arguments of Albo, Crescas, and those advanced by himself. In every case he decides that Maimonides is right and his critics, including himself, are in the wrong. Abravanel's method of reasoning is not always philosophical; in fact, for the most part, it is nothing more than skillful exegesis. One might with a great deal of fairness say that Abravanel approaches his criticism of Maimonides with almost as much reverence as he would approach Scriptures. For this reason everything that Abravanel says is of little import. Had he been less reverent in his attitude to Maimonides and more independent in his thinking, he might have made a contribution in the philosophy of religion.

1. Abravanel's Premises

In Chapters VI-XI Abravanel presents his premises. In many instances they are really not premises but preliminary arguments for the refutation of the objections raised against Maimonides. Abravanel's premises are nine in number. I am presenting each separately and have made a brief analysis as to the validity of each.

1. In the first premise¹ Abravanel tries to establish the thought that the term נִשְׁעָר does not necessarily mean, as Albo held, "a thing upon which another thing depends, without which it cannot endure." It can have the meaning, says Abravanel, of a term of

praise. For example, take the expression² *פירות אינוסר חרות עיקר*.
 The word *עיקר* is used in the sense of praise; or *לא שתעקר יציאת*
 (Ber. 12b) *מזריק מחקומו אלא שתהא שבע מלכות עיקר ויציאת מזריק טעם*;
 here *עיקר* is used for something that is praised. From this point
 Abravanel goes on to object to Albo's criticism that some of Mai-
 monides "Ikkarim" are not "Ikkarim" but branches. Furthermore, says
 Abravanel, it was not the intention of Maimonides to frame thirteen
 principles of which, if one is violated, the Torah ^{nullifies} ~~is nullified~~ but
 it was the intention of Maimonides to explain the Mishnah verse
כל ישראל יושעם רחוק לירושלם and to present the principles, belief in
 which makes one an Israelite and a *בן העולם הבא* even tho he is
 ignorant of the Torah.

Abravanel's attempt to undermine Albo's definition of "Ikkar"
 is, it seems to me, rather futile. The examples he cites do not
 in any way effect Albo's definition. The "Ikkar" of anything is its
essence; the essence of something may in a secondary sense contain
 a meaning of praise or may refer to something that is superior in
 its kind but this does not nullify its basic meaning.

Abravanel's attempt to justify Maimonides' thirteen "Ikkarim"
 on the grounds that it was not his (Maimonides') intention to pre-
 sent principles that if denied would nullify the Torah, but that
 Maimonides was interested only in those principles a Jew must be-
 lieve to make him eligible to be a *בן העולם הבא* is rather lame. If
 one is choosing basic principles there must be some criterion for
 selection; otherwise it is an arbitrary and subjective affair, and
 Maimonides' choice of essential beliefs carries no more weight than
 the choice of anyone else.³

Indeed, one might say that Abravanel's method of approach in

the presentation of the first premise was more exegetical than philosophic.

2. It is not enough to say that God exists.⁴ We must say that God is the absolute and necessary existence, the cause of all things whose existence does not depend upon anything outside of himself, and who is perfect in essence. This principle is derived from the commandment "יְיָ יְחַד"ש.

Abravanel maintains,⁵ and rightly I think, that there is no grounds to Crescas' assertion that Maimonides contradicted himself when he said in the Sefer Hamada that the first commandment is belief in God's existence and when he said in the Sefer Minyan Hamitzvot that God is the creator of the universe. These two statements, says Abravanel, merely complement each other; the meaning of Maimonides about the first principle and the first commandment is always the same. Maimonides in Sefer Hamada makes this statement: "The foundation of foundations and the pillar of pillars is to know that there is a first being who has caused all things to be and that beings from heaven and earth could not exist except by him" - this passage shows that Maimonides meant more than just a belief in existence of God; and when he speaks of God ^{אל} יְיָ יְחַד"ש in Sefer Minyan Hamitzvot he is continuing the same line of thought.

3. Every principle has two aspects. The first principle - God is the most perfect being possible - contains these aspects: (a) God has no partner, (b) God is not composite with a plurality of qualities. The two aspects of the third principle - God's incorporeality - are: (a) God is not a body, composite or simple, (b) God is not a spirit in a body, of accidental or of natural form.

The two aspects of the fourth principle - God's eternity - are:

a) God has no beginning, b) everything outside of God is dependent upon him and can not be eternal.

The two aspects of the fifth principle - to worship God - are:

a) God has infinite power to act and it is proper to worship him,
b) God alone is the true leader and it is not proper to have intermediaries.

The two aspects of the sixth principle - prophecy - are: a) Natural and intellectual preparation, b) divine will should not be withheld.

The aspects of the seventh principle - pre-eminence of Moses as prophet - are: a) Moses' temperament and intellect were superior to any man's, b) as a prophet he was more exalted than any other prophet.

The two aspects of the eighth principle - divine revelation - are: a) the תורה שכתובה as we have it today is the Torah that Moses received from God, b) that the תורה שבעל פה was also given by God to Moses as has been taught orally to the children of Israel.

The two aspects of the ninth principle - the eternity of the law - are: a) it will never be changed or altered, b) another Torah, neither in a general form nor by any additions and diminutions, will ever come from God.

The two aspects of the tenth principle - the omniscience of God - are: a) the Holy One knows all the individual deeds of man, b) God does not hide his eyes from the human scene.

The two aspects of the eleventh principle - reward and punishment - are: a) God rewards those who fulfil his commandments and punishes those who violate them, b) the great reward of the righteous is eternal life and the punishment is הכרת הנפש.

The two aspects of the twelfth principle - belief in Messiah -

are: a) must await the arrival of the Messiah even tho he may be delayed, b) the Messiah will be of the seed of David.

The two aspects of the thirteenth principle - resurrection - are: a) ^{the} dead live with soul and body, b) resurrection is only for the righteous and they will use their senses and live and die just as we do.

4. Premise 4 is that some of the dogmas include others. For example, Principle I, God is the necessary existence, includes the unity of God, his incorporeality, and eternity; the principle of divine revelation includes prophecy and pre-eminence of Moses as prophet; and reward and punishment includes omniscience, providence, Messiah, and resurrection. The reason that Maimonides listed these principles separately is because he wrote them not only for the intellectual class but for the masses as well and he found it desirable for pedagogical reasons to present each principle by itself so that those who were not advanced in speculation could grasp its meaning at once.

When Abravanel says that principles 2, 3, and 4 come under principle 1, he approaches in a way Albo's arrangement of dogmas. On the basis of what Abravanel says, it would be very easy to conceive of principles 2, 3, and 4 as being the stems of the "ikkar" God is the necessary existence.

The contention that Maimonides wrote his creed for the masses can neither be affirmed nor disputed. On the whole, there seems to be no reason to disagree with the view that Abravanel takes in this matter.

5. In the fifth premise Abravanel tries to present the basis for Maimonides' selection of his thirteen principles. The thirteen

articles of faith as stated by Maimonides do not, says Abravanel, correspond to the thirteen attributes of God; nor has their selection been casual or accidental. One of three profound speculations, or perhaps all three, underlie the selection of the number of principles which Maimonides decided upon. The first is that he who is a true worker before God must make as the goal of his work the pre-eminence of God's commandments and its perfection. This premise, in turn, carries with it three aspects. The first is that God is the most perfect being possible and the necessary existence; this consideration makes it essential that we have the first five principles. The second aspect is from the angle of $\overline{17/3}$, or from the Torah itself; and as a result of this consideration, Maimonides presented the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth articles. The third aspect is from the standpoint of reward and punishment, since there are many people who observe the Torah not for its own sake but for the sake of receiving a reward; and in view of this consideration Maimonides presents the rest of the principles.⁶

The second possible premise behind Maimonides' selection of these thirteen beliefs is that after due inquiry he found that there is agreement among philosophers on the first three principles since they are explicable by rational investigation; the next three principles can be attained partly by rational investigation; the next three principles are possible by rational investigation yet not necessarily so; the last four principles are impossible to ascertain by philosophical investigation but since all are true beliefs according to the Torah, it is proper and essential that they be included among the fundamental articles of faith.

The third possible reason which prompted Maimonides to select his thirteen principles was the belief that nothing exists outside of God and his deeds. Such a belief takes in the thirteen articles of faith. The principles related to God, who is the necessary existence, are the first four. (Abravanel says that God can be described only negatively and for this reason he speaks of unity, incorporeality, and eternity because in essence they are negative; when we say that God is one, that he is incorporeal, and that he is eternal, it implies that the Holy One is not included in anything and is not limited either in number, space, or time). Principles five and six refer to God's deeds; the seventh, eighth, and ninth principles are special and temporary, which are related to the Torah; principles ten and eleven are general and eternal and are held in common by all men; principles twelve and thirteen refer to special deeds that are to come in the future.

This fifth premise is only a guess on the part of Abravanel as to what reasons Maimonides had in mind for the selection of his thirteen principles; consequently, it can only be evaluated as such.

6. The divine Torah has commandments of action and commandments of belief; the former is in the category of matter and the latter is in the category of form. Since form is the foundation of matter, it is essential that all "ikkarim" be based exclusively on the commandments of belief (which are in the category of form) for they constitute the pillar on which the divine Torah rests.

7. All principles of the Torah should be based on that which is divine; they should not be based on the principles of any other religion, be they natural or ethical; they should be distinctive of the "Torah Elohis"; if they are not distinctive, then one need not

believe in God's Torah.

It was from this standpoint, says Abravanel, that Albo criticized Crescas' list of dogmas. Albo says that many of Crescas' dogmas are universal in character, without which divine religion could not exist, yet belief in them does not make the Torah Elohis exist; eating and feeling are characteristic of man but we can not conclude that if eating and feeling are present we have a man. We must add the unique feature of speech.⁷

8. All the principles which Maimonides set forth, says Abravanel, are beliefs in God and his works. All speculative and theoretical inquiries, altho justifiable from the standpoint of knowledge, are not distinctive principles of Divine Religion. For this reason, says Abravanel, Maimonides did not include among the principles the ⁸immortality of the soul. Beliefs like this, altho true, are not basic to the Divine law, and do not necessarily follow from a belief in the exalted perfection of God and his deeds.⁹

9. Abravanel no doubt feels that the objection of the anti-Maimonists who criticize the master for omitting free-will, is quite serious ; as a result he tries to justify Maimonides' position by saying that in belief there is a certain amount of free-will and choice as well as compulsion. Free-will is involved in the preliminary preparation to belief but once this is done, the rest is a matter of compulsion.

2. Defense Against Albo

Chapters XII thru XVI of the Rosh Amana present Abravanel's solutions to the objections which Albo raised. For the most part, Abravanel's solutions are rather weak. Sometimes he even contradicts his own premises. At the same time it must be pointed out, as I will attempt to indicate in the analysis of this section, that many of Albo's objections are not basic and do not undermine Maimonides. In fact, when we examine Albo's list of dogmas and compare them with the thirteen principles of Maimonides, the major difference is only one of arrangement. Schechter in this connection writes: "The chief merit of Albo consists in popularising other peoples' thoughts, tho he does not always care to mention their names. And the student who is a little familiar with the contents of the Roots will easily find that Albo has taken his best ideas either from Chasdai or from Duran. As it is of little consequence to us whether an article of faith is called 'stem' or 'root' or 'branch' there is scarcely anything fresh left to quote in the name of Albo....For, after all the subtle distinctions Albo makes between different classes of dogmas, he declares that everyone who denies the immutability of the law or the coming of the Messiah, which are, according to him, articles of minor importance, is a heretic who will be excluded from the world to come." (Studies in Judaism 1896, pp.171,2). What Schechter writes seems to be true. Altho, in all fairness, it should be said that Albo's arrangement of the dogmas is a clearer and more logical presentation, even tho he does not add anything new.

1. Abravanel tries to answer Albo's first objection on the basis of his first premise. In the first place, he says the word "ikkar" may refer to something that is superior in its kind; and this is what Maimonides had in mind when he presented "unity" and "incorporeality". It was his wish to present those dogmas that are necessary in the category of perfection and so "unity" and "incorporeality" are included.

Abravanel's defense is rather weak.¹⁰ But in all fairness it must be said that Albo's objection is not very fundamental. Even Albo includes "unity" and "incorporeality" as stems under the main root of "Existence of God." Albo's criticism on this point is only one of arrangement. It does not in any way nullify Maimonides' position. Albo's presentation of "unity" and "incorporeality" as stems rather than fundamental principles only clarifies his list of dogmas.

2. With regards to Albo's second objection,¹¹ Abravanel says that Albo misunderstood the fifth principle of Maimonides. It was not Maimonides' intention to present his fifth principle as a command¹² to serve and worship God, says Abravanel. The matter of serving God and worshipping with prayer is incidental in this "Ik-kar." The real meaning of Maimonides, says Abravanel, is that it is proper to believe in God and raise our voices in his praise and serve him because of his exalted nature and power; that only the Holy One is exalted and he alone is worthy of being served. It is this "Ikkar" which forbids us to worship other gods.

Once again we have an instance where Abravanel's reasoning is exegetical and not philosophical. He realizes that if special commandments can be "Ikkarim" then the list of "ikkarim" would be

endless. But his explanation is untenable. Maimonides' first, second, and third principles exclude idolatry and make Abravanel's interpretation repetitious.

Albo's criticism of Maimonides in this case is, I think, a good one. Yet we must recognize that no provision for prayer has been made in these articles; and it does not necessarily follow from any of these principles that we should pray. We can still believe in God and in God's reward and punishment, etc. and still find no reason why we should worship him in prayer. For this reason Maimonides may have wisely included this fifth principle among his articles of faith.

3. Abravanel meets the third objection in an exegetical fashion. He points out that the relationship between God and Israel, unlike that of the other nations, is direct. God leads Israel without the intervention of another heavenly intermediary or star. When we speak of Michael and Gabriel we are not to understand that they have been appointed heavenly intermediators over Israel; Michael and Gabriel are only good advocates - *G. S. N.* *21C* - before God; and when Maimonides says we should have no mediators, he means that we should have no heavenly intermediators as the Greeks and the Persians, but we should direct our thoughts to the Holy One.

Abravanel does not disagree with Albo. He thinks it is quite all right for a man who believes in God and the law to ask Gabriel and Michael to intercede. But at the same time he tries to defend Maimonides. In all probability Maimonides opposed any form of mediatorship, whether it was in the form of a mediator or advocate. (Abravanel's distinction between *P. S. N.* and *G. S. N.* is not

very fundamental.) Maimonides' God-idea was very pure and exalted; much more so in this respect than the God-idea which Albo and Crescas espoused.

4. Abravanel upholds the eternity of the Torah and gives the following answers to Albo's objection..The divine law is eternal and cannot change because God made it. God's form is stamped on the form of the Torah and just as the form of God's existence does not change, so God's Torah doesnot change.¹³ Albo's reference to Adam and Noah do not, says Abravanel, point to any contradiction because what has been said previous to the Law of Moses are in the category of customs, arranged for observance by human society, according to the nature of the time. But the Law of Moses is immutable. There may be variations in the observance of the law from time to time as there may be variations in types of food, but just as food which nourishes the physical side of man remains eternal so the Torah which nourishes the spiritual side of man is eternal.¹⁴

The next point in Abravanel's defense of Maimonides is in respect to the verse "thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish thereof." This commandment was not used, as Albo thinks, to explain the belief about the eternity of the law. Abravanel says that it was Maimonides' intention that we should believe that this Torah should never be added to or detracted from in one part; but Maimonides did not present the verse to explain the belief about eternity of the law, i.e., that the Holy One will not change the Torah and will not add or detract from it.

And as to the instances which Albo quotes, such as the power of the Beth Din to abolish divine law and Solæmon establishing

the laws of Erubim and washing of hands, to prove the non-eter-nity of the commandments - as to this Abravanel says that there is no difficulty whatsoever. Those decrees do not nullify the law because they come from the Torah itself.

Albo's objection indicates rather keen insight into the makeup of the Bible, but really does not break Maimonides' point of view. It is quite possible for the Torah to come as a progres-sive revelation and still be immutable. As to the use of the verse "thou shalt not add thereto or detract thereof" Abravanel's answer is from an exegetical point of view at least, rather skillful. It is also the traditional Rabbinic viewpoint. However, if we approach this from the Peshat interpretation, Albo's criticism stands un-refuted.

5. Abravanel defends Maimonides' inclusion of the coming of a Messiah as a principle with three arguments. In the first place, the coming of the Messiah is an aspect of reward and punishment.¹⁵ Another reason for including the coming of the Messiah is to remove any doubt whatsoever about God's providence. The third reason for including *וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְרָא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ* as a principle is because it is stated explic-itly in the Torah.

Abravanel's defense of Maimonides is really no defense. His first argument, based as it is on premise 5, is not very solid. Albo also had the root of reward and punishment, yet he does not include Messiah as an aspect of it. As to Abravanel's second and third arguments they are only opinions based on tradition. Abra-vanel would have been better off had he carried out the line of reasoning in first premise. (See note 16).

6. Abravanel admits that belief in resurrection is not some-

thing, the denial of which would nullify the Torah. Yet he feels that Maimonides is justified in presenting it as a principle for three reasons. In the first place, resurrection is part of the principle of reward and punishment; since reward and punishment is a principle of religion, then resurrection, which is part of it, should also be a principle.¹⁶ In the second place, belief in resurrection has been stated in the Torah; in the third place it was deemed wise to present resurrection as a principle because such a principle is difficult to arrive at by human speculation, and as a result man is prone to doubt it altogether.

The same criticism which was applied to the answer which Abravanel gave Albo's fifth objection holds in the case of the first reason; as for the second and third reasons which Abravanel advances, they are not strong arguments but opinions based on tradition. Furthermore, Abravanel fails to answer this query which Albo advanced in his objection: "Is it not possible," asked Albo, "for a man to believe in reward and punishment both in this world and the world to come and still not believe in bodily resurrection?"

7. Albo argues that if the Torah can never be changed, then when the Messiah and resurrection come these two principles will be changed necessarily. To this Abravanel replies that the coming of the Messiah and resurrection are not joined to time, past or future. Just as the Torah stated that Israel would come into exile, be released, and inherit Palestine, and it came about, and the Torah was not changed but fulfilled, so these two principles will be fulfilled without changing the Torah.

Abravanel's analogy does not hold nor is it possible if we

take things on the Peshat basis to say that these two principles are not attached to time, past or future. When the Messiah and resurrection come, our belief in Messiah and resurrection will still remain but we will have to believe them as things that are and not as things that will be. Albo's argument seems like a quibble at first glance; yet it has some validity; still it does *not* invalidate Maimonides' position.

8. If Maimonides was not establishing fundamental principles, but was only presenting articles of belief, then why did he not include the Shekina, asks Albo? Abravanel bases his answer on Rabbi Moses, the priest, and says that the Shekina depends on a special commandment, the erection of the Mishcan. Furthermore, says Abravanel, Maimonides has said that what proceeds from a $\text{דבר} \text{שנ} \text{א} \text{לא} \text{היה} \text{עליו} \text{צו}$ cannot properly be counted a $\text{דבר} \text{שנ} \text{א} \text{היה} \text{עליו} \text{צו}$, and accordingly cannot be included among the "Ikkarim."

Albo's objection only has strength if we understand Maimonides' "Ikkarim" not as fundamental principles but as essential doctrines of faith. Otherwise the objection is of little account; for even Albo does not include the "Shekina" among his principles. Whatever criterion Maimonides had in mind as the basis of his selection, it seems fairly certain that he was presenting principles and not essential verities of faith. The chief value of Albo's objection is that it draws very clearly the line of cleavage between doctrines a Jew believes in and the fundamental principles. This contribution is not original with Albo because it had already been stated by Crescas.¹⁷

9. Why does Maimonides, asks Abravanel, omit "creation of

the world by God"?¹⁸ Abravanel replies that "creation of the world by God" is implied in the fourth principle which speaks of God's eternity. And when Maimonides speaks of God's eternity he means that only God is eternal and everything outside of God, since it depends upon him, is not eternal and had to be created by him.¹⁹

Albo's objection to Maimonides in this case is easily dissolved by Abravanel.

10. Why does Maimonides not include belief in miracles as a principle of faith, asks Albo? Abravanel replies that this belief is implied in the acceptance of the eighth principle *אברהם*
פיהו נ.

Theoretically Abravanel is right; but if one uses this same argument it might be shown that many of Maimonides' principles are extraneous because they, too, can be included under the head of *פיהו נ* *אברהם*. Furthermore, it should be noted that many people hold to a theoretical belief in divine revelation and yet when it comes to the acceptance of miracles they try to allegorize or rationalize them in such a manner that they no longer become crude anti-natural phenomena.

11. Why does Maimonides not include the principle that every Israelite should follow the tradition of his fathers, asks Albo?²⁰ This principle, replies Abravanel, is included in Maimonides' eighth principle, that the Torah which we have came from God. This means the oral law as well, says Abravanel, and the principle of following the tradition of ones fathers is contained therein.

Abravanel's reply is exegetical and is based on Jewish tradition. It would have been better if Abravanel had advanced the reason he gave in his sixth premise. (See note 20 in this chapter.)

12. Abravanel advances his ninth premise for the omission of free-will by Maimonides. The main reason for omitting free-will, says Abravanel, is because it is a concept which, like the existence of soul, is arrived at thru human speculation and Maimonides, in listing his principles, was interested solely in the beliefs concerning God and the Torah. Furthermore, says Abravanel, when Maimonides emphasized the importance of free-will, he did not say it was an *ikkar* but an *ikkar*; nor did he say it was an *ikkar* but an *ikkar*. An "Ikkar," continues Abravanel, is part of a thing, i.e., *ikkar*, while an *ikkar* is not part of a house but something external on which a house rests.

If we go back and read Abravanel's first premise, we notice that he says that the reason for Maimonides' formulation of principles was to list those beliefs which make one a *ikkar*; now he gives another reason. Again, his definition of "Ikkar" is the same definition that he argues against in his premise. It seems clear that Abravanel is so anxious to defend Maimonides that he gives every term two or three meanings and uses the meaning which suits his argument. He certainly does not use terms with consistency.

13. Why does Maimonides fail to ascribe the attributes of life, eternity, wisdom, power? Abravanel answers this questions by saying that these attributes are included in the concept of a perfect and absolute necessary existence (Principle 1). As for the reason Maimonides has thirteen dogmas, Abravanel refers us to his fifth premise where he discusses the matter and points out that it is an error to think that the number for these thirteen dogmas is in any way related to the thirteen attributes of God or the thirteen ways of interpreting the Torah.

Albo's objection is rather weak and Abravanel in this case answers it.

14. Abravanel claims in respect to the fourteenth objection that the end of man and immortality of the soul is included in the eleventh principle about reward and punishment.

This seems rather strange because in his eighth premise Abravanel makes the statement that immortality of the soul, altho a true belief, is not basic to the divine law. In some places Abravanel rules out the very same things which he keeps in other places.

15. Abravanel says that the Urim V'tumim is a form of the holy spirit and is in the second category of prophecy;²¹ and the second category wherein Maimonides deals with the *רוח הקודש*, he mentions the matter of *נבואה פשוטה*.²²

Abravanel is not altogether right. Maimonides in the second degree of prophecy is speaking about the something which comes upon a man which encourages him to compose hymns or discuss theological problems, etc. and which comes upon a man while he is awake and in the full possession of his senses. "Such a person," says Maimonides, "is said to speak by the holy spirit." And then Maimonides goes on to cite instances of what he means. In doing so he makes this statement: "Every high priest that inquired of God by the Urim V'tumim." Nowhere does Maimonides, however, speak of repentance thru Urim V'tumim which is the point at issue.

16. Abravanel answers this objection on the basis of his sixth premise where he lays down the rule that it is not proper to make "Ikkarim" of special commandments. Moreover, says Abravanel, all these things of which Cēscas speaks are included in principles 5, 10, and 11.

Abravanel is so anxious to defend Maimonides that he tries to

read everything, whether it be important or not, into the thirteen principles. Just where principles 5, 10, or 11 speak of the remission of sin by repentance or belief in certain holy days I fail to see.

3. Defense Against Crescas

In Chapters XVII and XVIII Abravanel takes up for consideration the objections of Crescas. Crescas' main contribution, as was pointed out in page 2, is that he distinguished between fundamental beliefs and the doctrines of Judaism. However, it should be noted that Crescas' list of dogmas could be applied to Christianity. In the main, the objections which Crescas raises against Maimonides are not sufficiently serious to undermine Maimonides' position. His criticisms are keen and sometimes ingenious yet they do not effect the thirteen principles of Maimonides. Moreover, it should be noted that Crescas' list of doctrines which he says Judaism teaches, but which he does not regard as part of fundamental beliefs, are in many respects arbitrary. One might make many other additions. Nevertheless, as far as arrangement is concerned, I prefer Crescas' presentation to that of Albo or Maimonides. Crescas has a certain criterion in mind and carries out his arrangement with precision and logic.

1. Crescas' first objection against Maimonides is rather ingenious. Abravanel, in commenting upon it, says that Crescas' criticism would have had validity if Maimonides had only said that God exists; but, continues Abravanel,²³ the essence of the first commandment contains more than just a belief in God's existence, God is ^{of} infinite perfection and is the necessary existence from himself and does not depend on anything outside of himself. Since God is the absolute necessary existence there can be no analogy between him and anything outside of him, and therefore, we cannot even think of some other power outside of God who could command anything.

Cohon makes the following statement about Crescas' criticism of Maimonides on this point:²⁴ "At the outset of his critique, he (Crescas) confuses dogma with specific pentateuchal precepts and proceeds to take issue with Maimonides for including the belief in the existence of God among the 'affirmative precepts,' arguing that whereas all precepts are dictated by some authority, there is no authority higher than God that can command belief in him."²⁵ This statement seems to be an accurate analysis and an effective criticism of Crescas' objection. Abravanel's answer has an element of truth in it but he fails to make the distinction between a dogma and an 'affirmative precept.'

2. Crescas raises the question as to how one can believe in the existence of God and his unity if free-will is absent in our knowing and believing. Abravanel replies that just as he has pointed out in his ninth premise,²⁶ free-will or choice are only involved in the matter of preliminary preparation but beliefs like natural forms are attained without free-will or choice.

At first glance it may seem that Abravanel is dodging the

issue with a half and half compromise. But there is a great deal of merit in the argument. In the first place, it seems to me that Crescas' argument for free-will is unnecessary. Maimonides is not presenting a list of commandments but a list of beliefs and principles, and since many of them are derived by reason, free-will or choice is not even involved. It is only in the matter of the preliminary attitude that there is a certain amount of choice. The scientist in his laboratory comes to his conclusions not thru choice but by compulsion of facts and logic.

3. Abravanel, in taking up the cudgels for Maimonides against Crescas' objection, says that Maimonides, when he says ואין ייחוד אלא and אין ייחוד were heard from God, refers only to these verses and no more; and as for אין ייחוד אלא and the rest of the commandments, they come from Moses; they are part of the 611 commandments. This is the opinion of the sages, says Abravanel. The statement of Crescas, based for the most part on the Halachoth Gedolot of Simeon Kahira and the Sefer Hasagoth of Ramban, is not the approved tradition.

Crescas shows fine acumen in pointing out that "אין ייחוד" is not a commandment. He understands "אין ייחוד" as the root of all commandments yet containing no particular commandment. In this connection it is interesting to point out that modern biblical critics²⁷ declare that "אין ייחוד" is only an introductory statement to the Ten Commandments. Yet it must be admitted that Crescas' objection to Maimonides does not in any way undermine any of the fundamental principles. Suppose it be granted that Maimonides were wrong in the matter of "אין ייחוד" would that reverse any of his principles? Furthermore, the opinion of Maimonides and Abravanel are based on tradition where tradition is the only authority. As a matter of fact, the whole discussion is pilpulistic and not philosophical.

4. Defense Against Himself

Abravanel's reverence for the master knows no bounds. After defending Maimonides against the criticisms hurled by Albo and Crescas, Abravanel now takes sides for Maimonides against his own objections. One is led to wonder whether Abravanel's arguments against himself and his defense of Maimonides whose position he later reflects is not due to a fondness for argument.

1. and 2. The first of Abravanel's objections is of little account, and the solution that he proposes is again an instance of exegesis rather than any manifestation of sound thinking.

By fundamental principles Abravanel understands *שְׁנֵי עֲשָׂרִים* '310' and so he raises the question against Maimonides as to why, in the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah, Maimonides mentions only some of the thirteen principles. Furthermore (this is the second of Abravanel's objections), why should Maimonides omit in the Perek Helek such matters as to "love of God," "to fear God," etc. which he mentions in the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah?

Abravanel answers his own objection by saying that Maimonides' prime purpose in the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah is the explanation of the Mitzvoth, and while discussing mitzvoth, Maimonides considers those yesodoth - and only those yesodoth and no others - which are related to them; and it was in this connection also that Maimonides mentions "to love God," "to fear God," etc. as they are basic commandments related to yesodoth. Furthermore, says Abravanel, when we investigate carefully, we begin to see, altho they are not stated explicitly, all the "Ikkarim" and "Yesodoth" in the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah.

It seems to me that any criticism against Maimonides' thirteen

articles must be directed solely against what Maimonides has said about this matter in his Perek Helek. Any reference to the Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah is extraneous to the subject and is besides the point at issue.²⁸ The only merit to Abravanel's argument, it seems to me, is that, indirectly, he begins to wonder just what criterion Maimonides used to select his principles. It is in this connection that Crescas made his most important contribution. He said that Maimonides confused dogmas or fundamental beliefs, without which Judaism is inconceivable, with beliefs or doctrines which Judaism teaches yet, the denial of which does not make Judaism impossible even tho it may involve strong heresy.

3. Abravanel objected to the fact that Maimonides in the Sefer Minyan Hamitzvoth said that only the existence of God and his unity are divine commandments based on a positive commandment. Is it possible, asks Abravanel, that if the rest of the principles are principles we must believe God did not command their belief? Abravanel then goes on to solve his own objection by saying that the first two principles are divine commandments because God gave specific verses which command us to believe in his existence and his unity whereas in the case of the rest of the principles, the beliefs are only derived from passages in the Torah.

Neither Abravanel's objection nor his solution seem very sound. The solution he offers is rather weak. The proof for the existence of God on the basis of the passage "וְיֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים" which Abravanel regards as being one of the verses which command a belief in God is no stronger than the verse "וְיֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים" which is supposed to be the derived basis for the fourth principle about God's eternity. Abravanel's main consideration is to defend Maimonides but indirectly and perhaps unwittingly Abravanel is really weakening Maimonides' posi-

tion. Because, in pointing out that Maimonides said certain things in later works which he never mentioned in the Perek Helek, one begins to wonder how seriously Maimonides really regarded his creed. Emil G. Hirsch makes this interesting statement in this connection: ²⁹ "This creed," says Hirsch, "Maimonides wrote while still a young man; it forms a part of his Mishna commentary, but he never referred to it in his later works (see S. Adler "Tenets of Faith and their authority in the Talmud," in his Kobez al Yad, P.92 where Yad ha-hazaka, Issure Biah XIV:2 is referred to as proof that Maimonides in his advanced age regarded as fundamentals of the faith only unity of God and prohibition of idolatry.)"

4. The reason why Maimonides speaks of *אין סוף אין סוף*, says Abravanel in answer to his fourth objection, is that Maimonides wishes to bring out that God is the *אין סוף* who is first in exalted perfection and the necessary existence. This "yesod" is the yesod on which all the "yesodoth" rest; if it were nullified, all the "yesodoth" would be undermined; from this consideration the *אין סוף* was called the *אין סוף*. Furthermore, says Abravanel, the reason that Maimonides referred to the *אין סוף* as the pillar of all wisdom is because in this case reason and religion are agreed; and this principle both from the standpoint of the Torah and demonstrable investigation is the *אין סוף*.

5. In speaking of the *אין סוף*, Maimonides goes on to point out, says Abravanel, as he presents the solution to his fifth objection, that God who is of infinite power is the ruler of the earth and the one who guides the heavenly spheres. Maimonides presents this matter about God being the mover of the heavenly spheres as a continuation of his discussion concerning the *אין סוף*. It

is as if Maimonides had said, this existence which we have explained according to the Torah is the same as has been made clear by the investigation of philosophers who describe God as the ruler of the earth and the mover of the heavenly spheres.

6. Abravanel goes to answer the questions he raised in his sixth objection. In reference to Maimonides' statement that "whoever thinks that there is another God besides this one transgresses the negative commandment לֹא יִהְיֶה אִתְּךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְפָנַי." Abravanel now says that Maimonides was right in his analysis. This שְׁמַע כֹּחַ commandment is not directed against polytheism. What Maimonides had in mind in this matter, says Abravanel, is that if one should say that Israel's God is not the necessary existence but a God other than this, that individual violates the commandment "thou shalt have no other gods before me" and denies the first principle. Furthermore, says Abravanel, when Maimonides resorts to incorporeality of God in trying to prove God's unity, he is justified because unity and incorporeality are taken together.

In commenting on Abravanel's fourth, fifth, and sixth objections, I would say that they do not seem to be basic criticism. Indeed, Abravanel solves many of them so easily that one wonders why he advanced them in the first place. Moreover, many of the comments that Abravanel makes about points in the Sefer Hamada have no connection with the Perek Helek.

7. The undue repetition on the part of Maimonides in presenting principles 2, 3, 4 separately when they really are included under the first principle is due to the fact that the master desired to make articles of faith clearer for those who were not trained in philosophic speculation.

1

Chapter III

Abravanel's View of Dogmas

Strangely enough, after defending Maimonides against Crescas and Albo and even against himself, Abravanel rejects Maimonides' conception of dogma entirely.¹ The reason that Maimonides compiled his list of dogmas, says Abravanel, is because he was acting in accordance with the fashion of other nations who set up principles and axioms for their science. But our Torah, continues Abravanel, is different. It came to us by tradition and there is no other Torah. All beliefs of the Torah are true; everything is a revelation from God; all commandments - great and small *גדול וקטן* - are alike. Therefore, it is improper to speak of "ikkarim" and "yesodoth" in the matter of belief; we are obligated to believe in everything that is written in the Torah. We can not doubt even the slightest thing; it is just as important and as true as the roots. He who denies or doubts anything is an "Epikoros" and "min." Moreover, we have no right to speak of "ikkarim" and "yesodoth" because in so doing we make some things more important than others. How can we choose some beliefs and omit others when our sages declared:²

היו פסוקי אמנות קדש כמציאות חסודת שאין אותה יוצא מתוך פה של מלכות.

Why did Maimonides present thirteen "ikkarim"? Only because he wanted to give the man who was untrained in speculation the essential beliefs of Judaism in an abbreviated fashion but not, as many people thought, because he regarded his presentation of dogmas as basically valid. This is why Maimonides did not mention his "ikkarim" in his Moreh. In the *דפוס* which he wrote in his youth for the masses, however, he presents his dogmas. And as for Crescas and Albo, they misunderstood Maimonides and took his work literally; in consequence, they were misled and made dogmas.

Abravanel, however, is still troubled with the passage in Sanhedrin 90a³ which is the basis of the dogma question. But he maintains that our sages had no intention of presenting the fundamentals of the Torah and that we should not understand this passage as being a reference to "ikkarim" in Judaism. There are a number of reasons why this passage can not refer to principles which, if denied, would make one lose his position in the world to come. In the first place, why does it speak of *אשר יסור*? It would have been better and more proper to say *אשר יסור ויהי עונותיו* *אשר יסור ויהי*.⁴ In the second place, why, if the intention of the sages was to present the roots and fundamentals that we should believe, does this passage speak negatively?⁵ In the third place, why does this Mishna passage omit such important beliefs as providence, unity of God, reward and punishment if it were a presentation of fundamental principles?⁶ In the fourth place, it would have been better in the order of arrangement to put "epikoros" first.⁷ In the fifth place, why does Gemara discuss *אשר יסור* so much and yet fail to say why its denial should bring such a punishment?⁸

So concludes Abravanel, the sages did not wish to stipulate dogmas or principles of religion; they presented this passage in Sanhedrin as a warning and desired only to specify the serious sins and despicable deeds which prevent a man from being attached to the inheritance of the holy ones - life eternal.

In many quarters Abravanel's view is regarded as conservative and even reactionary. That it is conservative I do not deny; and it is reactionary in that he regards philosophy with a certain amount of suspicion. Yet I think there is something to the case he espouses. Abravanel denies that it is possible to make one belief or one commandment more important than another. Everything came from God and has in importance the same rating. This appears to me to

be a very logical point of view. If one accepts the divine revelation of the Torah and regards the oral tradition as binding, what right does one have and what criterion can one use to say that such a doctrine is more important than another and that this principle is an "ikkar" and that principle is not? Suppose we use the criterion of Crescas;⁹ that we should call dogmas only those beliefs without which Judaism can not exist. When it comes to the selection of such principles, there will inevitably be a disagreement of opinion as to what principles are the principles without which Judaism can not exist. Moreover, someone may, if he so wishes, decide that Crescas' criterion is not a good one and set up another criterion on which to decide the principles of Judaism. As a result, a great deal of subjectivity must necessarily arise if one declare this belief more important than another; and for this reason I think there is some weight in Abravanel's argument. I do not wish to imply that I am in full accord with Abravanel's view. I only wish to be fair and point out what I consider worthwhile in his argument. I am in disagreement with Abravanel for two reasons. In the first place, I do not accept his major premise - divine character of the written and oral tradition; in the second place - and this is more important - Abravanel sees Judaism as a closed system; he fails to see the evolution and historical development of Judaism and, in consequence, does not realize what factors made Judaism what it has come to be. He overlooks the fact that these laws and commandments came into being as a process of adaptation, and that they may continue to do so in the future.

Chapter IV

Has Judaism Dogmas

1. Some Opinions on the Question

The most significant statement - at least from the standpoint of stimulating discussion - on the dogma-question in recent times was formulated by Moses Mendelssohn. In the second volume of his "Jerusalem" he has this to say: "I now come again to my previous observation. Judaism boasts of no exclusive revelation of immutable truths indispensable to salvation; of no revealed religion in the sense in which that term is usually taken. Revealed religion is one thing, revealed legislation is another....There is not, amongst all the precepts and tenets of the Mosaic law, a single one which says, 'Thou shalt believe this,' or 'Thou shalt not believe it;' but they all say, 'Thou shalt do,' or 'Thou shalt forbear.' There, faith is not commanded; for that takes no commands, but what get to it by the road of conviction. All the commandments of the Mosaic law are addressed to the will of man, and to his acting faculty. Nay, the word in the original language, which they are wont to translate 'to believe,' in most cases, properly means 'to trust in,' 'to rely on,' 'to have full confidence in what is promised or caused to be expected.'...Ancient Judaism has no symbolical books, no articles of faith. No one needed be sworn to symbols; to subscribe to articles of faith." (Quoted from pp.102-107, translated by M. Samuels, vol.II).

Mendelssohn's position aroused considerable controversy and re-opened the question of dogmas in Judaism. "Ever since Moses Mendelssohn in his "Jerusalem" claimed that Judaism has no dogmas," writes Philipson, "this has been the subject of discussion. Geiger held that there are dogmas in Judaism, but no creed as a condition of salvation. (I N.J., VII, 1846, 222)....Holdheim taught likewise

that Judaism has dogmas but does not make their acceptance a condition sine qua non of salvation as does Christianity; (G.J.R.G. B., 225ff)....Hess in a leading article in his Israelit des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts claimed that a creed is not objectionable if it be understood that the statement of creed is merely a concensus of opinion, and that it is left to each one to hold that conception of Judaism which appeals to his thought and conscience; in other words, a creed must not be made the measure of salvation but it is to be considered merely as a definition or a declaration of principles.² (VI, 1845, 330-1)"

Schechter's view on the question may be summed up by what he says at the end of his essay on "The Dogmas of Judaism": "Political economy, hygiene, statistics are very fine things. But no sane man would for them make those sacrifices which Judaism requires from us. It is only for God's sake, to fulfil His commands and to accomplish His purpose, that religion becomes worth living for and dying for. And this can only be possible with a religion which possesses dogmas. It is true that every great religion is a 'concentration of many ideas and ideals,' which make this religion able to adapt itself to various modes of thinking and living. But there must always be a point round which all these ideas concentrate themselves. This centre is dogma."³ But Schechter does not, it should be understood, "ascribe any saving power" to dogmas. "The belief in a dogma or a doctrine," he writes, "without abiding by its real or supposed consequences (e.g., the belief in creatio ex nihilo without keeping the Sabbath) is of no value. And the question about certain doctrines is not whether they possess or do not possess the desired charm against certain diseases of the soul, but whether

they ought to be considered as characteristics of Judaism or not."⁴

In the preface to his book "Jewish Theology,"⁵ Kohler says that in his opinion "the Jewish religion has never been static, fixed for all time by an ecclesiastical authority, but has ever been and still is the result of a dynamic process of growth and development." And in the fourth chapter of his book, Kohler goes on to say, "while the Jewish concept of faith underwent a certain transformation, influenced by other systems of belief, and the formulation of Jewish doctrines appeared necessary particularly in opposition to the Christian and Mohammedan creeds, still belief never became the essential part of religion, conditioning salvation, as in the church founded by Paul. For, as pointed out above, Judaism lays all stress upon conduct, not confession; upon a hallowed life, not a hollow creed."⁶ Every attempt to formulate the doctrines or articles of Judaism was made in order to guard the Jewish faith from the intrusion of foreign beliefs, never to impose disputed beliefs upon the Jewish community itself.⁷....The present age of historical research imposes the same necessity of restatement or reformulation upon us. We must do as Maimonides did - as Jews have always done - point out anew the really fundamental doctrines and discard those which have lost their hold upon the modern Jew, or which conflict directly with his religious consciousness.⁸....Many attempts of this character have been made by modern Rabbis and teachers, most of them founded on Albo's three articles. Those who penetrated somewhat more deeply into the essence of Judaism added a fourth article, belief in Israel's priestly mission, or at the same time, instead of the belief in retribution, included the doctrine of man's kinship, his God-childship. Few, however, have succeeded in working out the entire content of the Jewish faith from a modern view point, which must in-

clude historical, critical, and psychological research, as well as the study of comparative religion.⁹ Kohler then goes on to give what he considers a systematic presentation of Jewish doctrines for the present era. His tripartite plan is as follows:

I. God

- a. Man's consciousness of God and divine revelation.
- b. God's spirituality, His unity, His holiness, His perfection.
- c. His relation to the world: Creation and Providence.
- d. His relation to man: His justice, His love, and mercy.

II. Man

- a. Man's God-childship; his moral freedom and yearning for God.
- b. Sin and repentance; prayer and worship; immortality. reward and punishment.
- c. Man and humanity; the moral factors in history.

III. Israel and the Kingdom of God

- a. The priest-mission of Israel, its destiny as teacher and martyr.
- b. The Kingdom of God: the nations and the religions of the world in a divine plan of universal salvation.
- c. The Synagogue and its institutions.
- d. The ethics of Judaism and the Kingdom of God.¹⁰

M.L. Margolis in a 122-page paper¹¹ which he read before the Central Conference of American Rabbis maintains that Judaism not only has dogmas but it is the task of Reformed Judaism to reformulate the principles of Judaism and present it before the world as our creed. "Brethren without creed we shall ever be vulnerable," he declared. "Indeed, our creedless status pleases our enemies; they can ~~the~~ go on holding up to scorn this and that belief, this and ~~that~~ doctrine of the transformation or reformulation, of which, in post-

biblical times, much more in our own time, they stubbornly refuse to take notice. And just as vulnerable we shall be if we fail in creating the proper ecclesiastical organization....¹² And, without presumption, in line with my foregoing formulation of the doctrines of the Judaism that preceded our reformation, I may be permitted to present what I consider to be the CREED OF REFORMED JUDAISM; that sum of dogmas - I prefer the Greek word to the Latin "principles" - which in the opinion of Reformed Jews constitutes the very core and kernel of Judaism, das Wesen des Judenthums."¹³ Then Margolis continues with the following creedal presentation:

A. Theology (and Cosmology): I believe in God, the one and holy, the creator and sustainer of the world.

B. Anthropology: I believe that man possesses a Divine power wherewith he may subdue evil impulses and passions, strive to come nearer and nearer the Perfection of God, and commune with Him in prayer;

That select individuals are, from time to come, called by God as prophets and charged with the mission of declaring His will unto men;

That man is subject to God's law and responsible to the searcher of the human heart and the righteous judge for all his thoughts and deeds;

That he who confesses his sins and turns from his evil ways and truly repents is lovingly forgiven by his father in heaven.

C. Psychology: I believe that the pious who in this life obey God's laws and do His will with a perfect heart and those who truly repent, share, as immortal souls, in the everlasting life of God.

D. Ecclesiology: I believe that Israel was chosen by God as His anointed servant to proclaim unto the families of mankind His

truth, and, tho despised and rejected of men, to continue as His witness until there come in and thru him the Kingdom of peace and moral perfection and the fulness of the knowledge of God, the true community of the living God.¹⁴

Two years later, in 1903, a committee headed by Kaufman Kohler presented a report before the Central Conference of American Rabbis on Margolis' paper, "The Theological Aspect of Reformed Judaism" and on his motion "to have a creed of Reformed Judaism prepared for final adoption by a Synod."¹⁵ The committee seemed to concur with Margolis that Judaism had dogmas¹⁶ but regarded the formulation of a creed inadvisable and unnecessary. "It is a quite a different thing, however, to enrich and fructualize the liturgy by solemn declarations of our faith from the point of view of progressive Judaism, and to venture out upon lines altogether unknown in Jewish history and endow a body of Jews with ecclesiastical power and authority to fix for all time, or even for a certain time only, the ~~the~~ beliefs of the Jew or of a class of Jews in the shape of dogmas," reads the report. "There is nothing so anatgonistic to the spirit of Judaism as is the creation of a church or a Synod shaping the belief of the Jews. There is nothing as fatal to the free development and progress of the Jewish faith as dogmas which shackle the mind and impede free research. Nor are liberal dogmatists less presumptuous and less rigorous in their assertions than conservative ones, as a glance at modern Christian theology amply shows. That Professor Margolis himself has been entrapped in this network of theological rigorisms, notwithstanding his radical views, has been well pointed out by Rabbi Friedlander when he calls attention to the attitude taken by him as if his, or our, Reform had reached a state of finality instead of giving full scope to an un-

ending historical progress of Judaism keeping pace with the progress of humanity."¹⁷

Emil G. Hirsch has an exceptionally sound viewpoint on this question. "In the same sense as Christianity or Islam, Judaism can not be credited with the possession of articles of faith," he writes. "Many attempts have indeed been made at systematizing and reducing to a fixed phraseology and sequence the contents of the Jewish religion. But these have always lacked the one essential element: authoritative sanction on the part of a supreme ecclesiastical body. And for this reason they have not been recognized as final or regarded as of universally binding force. Tho to a certain extent incorporated in the liturgy and utilized for purposes of instruction, these formulations of the cardinal tenets of Judaism carried no greater weight than that imparted to them by the fame and scholarship of their respective authors."¹⁸

The reason that Judaism has no fixed dogmas, according to Hirsch, is because the two provocations for creed-building - proselytising zeal and internal dissension - were on the whole less intense in our religion.

Hirsch goes on to say that "the controversy whether Judaism demands belief in dogma, or inculcates obedience to practical laws alone, has enlisted many, competent scholars. Moses Mendelssohn in his "Jerusalem" defended the non-dogmatic nature of Judaism, while Löw among others (see "Gesammelte Schriften," I.31-52, 433 et seq. 1871) took the opposite side. Löw made it clear that the Mendelssohnian theory had been carried beyond its legitimate bounds. The meaning of the word for faith and belief in Hebrew (אמונה) had undoubtedly been strained too far to substantiate the Mendelssohnian thesis. Underlying the practice of the law¹⁹ was assuredly the

recognition of certain fundamental and decisive religious principles culminating in the belief in God and revelation, and likewise in the doctrine of retributive divine justice²⁰....To say that Judaism is a barren legalistic convention, as Mendelssohn avers, is an unmistakable exaggeration. The modicum of truth in his theory is that thruout Biblical Judaism, as in fact thruout all later phases of Jewish religious thinking and practice, this doctrinal element remains always in solution. It is not crystallized into fixed phraseology or rigid dogma."²¹

The dogma-question was reopened recently with the appearance of a series of articles in the "Monatsschrift." I. Scheftelowitz in an article entitled "Ist das überlieferte Judentum eine Religion ohne Dogmen"²² takes Leo Baeck to task²³ for saying in his "Das Wesen des Judentums" that Judaism has no dogmas in the exact sense because Judaism never had any authoritative agency to enforce religious formulas. Scheftelowitz maintains that Judaism has dogmas,²⁴ even tho they are not clothed in stereotyped garb. In ancient times the first set of dogmas was the Ten Commandments - the first three of these commandments was the point of difference between Judaism and the heathen religions. Besides the prescriptions in the Pentateuch there were other doctrines, like immortality, divine providence, divinity of Torah, Messiah, resurrection of dead, day of judgment, hell, Satan, and angels. And in the time of the Sanhedrin, certain dogmas were formulated and those who denied them were called *חסידים* and *חסידים* and could not enter the Olom Haba.

If there were no dogmas in Judaism, Scheftelowitz argues, then we could wipe out the differences between Judaism on the one hand and Christianity and Islam on the other hand because both have our Bible. Only because Judaism had dogmas could Spinoza be banned. Of

course, this does not mean, says Scheftelowitz, that Judaism need have its dogmas bound up in definite words; Judaism is like the Zarathustra religion in this respect. But to say that the doctrines of Judaism are not to be considered dogmas because it has dispensed with the authority which enforces them, ^{is to} must admit that there is no binding religious law for Jews any more and that Judaism as a religion no longer has a firm hold upon men....Such a conclusion is not in harmony with the spirit of Leo Baeck.

In the July-August issue of the "Monatsschrift"²⁵ Leo Baeck takes up the cudgels in his own defense. Baeck gives what he considers to be the definition of a dogma. He points out that in its original use in the Greek and Latin, it had the meaning of executive decree; in the Greek Bible it was the promulgations of the kings of Babylon and Persia; in philosophy it was used to describe those axioms and fundamentals which are in a certain measure decrees of wisdom. When ancient philosophy became the philosophy of Christianity, it called its doctrines dogmas; and when the Catholic Church became, in the Middle Ages, the temporal dictator of human destiny, it made all its church decrees dogmas in which one must believe.²⁶ It is not enough to say, as Scheftelowitz does, that dogmas are the unalterable and acknowledged doctrines upon which orthodoxy rests. Such a statement, argues Baeck, is vague. It does not state how they are unalterable. Moreover, acknowledgement comes only thru ^{the} authority of a body - a body such as the Catholic Church, for example. Has Judaism dogmas in this sense? No one doubts that Judaism acknowledges revelation, God, purity of soul, election of Israel. But the question is, are they dogmas? Judaism never had dogmas because it never had power to declare doctrines as dogmas and the power to enforce them. The formulation of dogmas in Juda-

ism came as result of contact with Greek philosophy.²⁷ Yet there was no Sanhedrin to act upon them officially. While in the time of the Sanhedrin²⁸ they did not have the doctrines which came as result of Greek philosophy. These two prerequisites - the existence of an authoritative body and a concept of doctrines - was present only in the church. Dogma from the aspect of history as well as in its essence belongs to the church; and the church character does not fit Judaism. Judaism never built a church. Its being was in the community. In the church the belief of the church is at the top while in the community it is belief of the individual. In Judaism every individual is a bearer of belief; the individual and not the church is the bearer of tradition. Search precedes possession in the community while in the church possession precedes search. This difference contradicts dogma at its very heart.

In his reply to Baech,²⁹ Scheftelowitz says that the Judaism of the past was churchlike in character, differing only from Christianity in that the Rabbis were not Cohanim. It was only because the Judaism of the past did have a church authority that the Beth Din could punish those who ate trefe and chomez with scourging. The same power of authority was vested in the gaonate.

2. The Writer's Opinion

Has Judaism dogmas? The answer to this question, it seems to me, rests in the meaning of certain words; and the meaning of the words which, in this connection, should be carefully analyzed are dogma and doctrine. What is a dogma? What is a doctrine?

For the meaning of dogma, the Century dictionary offers these definitions:

a. "A principle or doctrine propounded or received on authority, as opposed to one based on experience or demonstration; specifically an authoritative religious doctrine."³⁰

b. "Authoritative teaching or doctrine; a system of established principles or tenets, especially religious ones; specifically the whole body or system of Christian doctrine, as accepted either by the church at large or by any branch of it."³¹³²

For the meaning of doctrine the Century dictionary gives this definition: It is "in general whatever is taught, whatever is laid down as true by an instructor master; hence, a principle or body of principles relating to or with religion, science, politics, or any department of knowledge; anything held as true; a tenet or set of tenets, as the doctrines of the Gospel; the doctrines of Plato; the doctrine of evolution."³³

The Century dictionary distinguishes in the meanings of the following words:

a. "Precept"³⁴ is a rule of conduct, generally of some exactness, laid down by some competent or authoritative person, and to be obeyed; it differs from the others in not being specifically a matter of belief."³⁵

b. "Doctrine is the only other of these words referring to conduct, and in that meaning it is biblical and obsolescent. In the Bible it refers equally to teaching as to the abstract truths and as to the duties of religion: 'In vain they do worship, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' (Math.XV:9). As distinguished from dogma and tenet, doctrine is a thing taught by an individual, a school, a sect, etc. while a dogma is a specific doctrine formulated as the position of some school, sect, etc. and pressed for acceptance as important or essential. Dogma is falling

into disrepute as the word for an opinion which one is expected to accept on pure authority and without investigation."

c. "Tenet is a belief viewed as held, a doctrinal position taken and defended. It is equally applicable to the beliefs of an individual and of a number; it has no unfavorable sense."³⁶

How, then, shall we answer the question, "Has Judaism dogmas?" I believe this question should be answered in the negative for the following reasons.

1. It seems to me that dogma is contrary to the very heart of Judaism. To whatever definition of Judaism we may subscribe, on one point we all can agree: that salvation in Judaism depends not on profession but practice (obedience to commandments), not "upon a hollow creed but a hallowed life."³⁷ This statement need not exclude the possibility that Judaism may have a creedal aspect along with its emphasis upon deed.³⁸ But it is significant that we keep clearly in mind that the basic feature of Judaism is its emphasis upon the right practice and not confession. Now then, if the heart of Judaism is hallowed conduct, how can we reconcile it with dogma; for dogma means the acknowledgement of certain immutable, authoritative beliefs by confession. In other words, its emphasis is directly at the opposite pole. Where Judaism stands preeminently for deed, those religions which have dogma as their centre stand for creed. It may be argued that creed may exist side by side with deed, that belief can be present along with conduct. This may be true. But the question is not whether Judaism has beliefs but whether Judaism has dogmas. A belief and a dogma are not synonymous; dogma involves belief but not every belief is a dogma. A dogma is preeminently a belief superimposed by an authoritative group upon which salvation depends. In this sense Judaism has no

dogmas because salvation in Judaism does not depend exclusively upon confession. Christianity, on the other hand, does; and so Baech~~x~~ is certainly right when he identifies dogma with church.

To say, as Holdheim and Geiger and many modern Rabbis do,³⁹ that Judaism has dogmas but there is no creed as a condition of salvation, is a contradiction or a misuse of terms. Dogma, as has been pointed out above, is more than a belief; it is a belief that brings salvation when acknowledged. How then can we say that Judaism has dogmas but does not make them a condition of salvation? This is a contradiction in terms. If Judaism has dogmas - in the precise sense of the word - then they should be a condition of Judaism.

2. In the second place, Judaism can have no dogmas because dogma involves authority - there must be some ecclesiastical board which can force people to accept certain articles of faith. Without the cause of things there can be no effect. The cause for a dogma is a powerful agency which formulates certain beliefs and can force people to acknowledge them. This Judaism does not possess: since Judaism does not, it follows as a matter of fact that Judaism can not have dogmas. I find myself in perfect agreement with Leo Baech~~x~~ on this point. Dogma in its strictest meaning belongs to the Christian church. They alone had the power to enforce their religious formulas.

Scheftelowitz says that the Sanhedrin was comparable to the church in Christianity and would enforce decrees. To a great extent this is true; but it is significant to note that in all of Rabbinic literature there is really only one passage⁴⁰ which might be construed as being of a dogmatic character. Whether this lack of

3. Has Judaism Beliefs?

I have attempted to show that Judaism is not, if definitions are strictly applied, a religion of dogmas. It seems to me that the true nature of Judaism is best described if we consider it a religion of precepts;⁴⁴ for a "precept" is primarily a rule of conduct and salvation in Judaism is hallowed conduct. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Judaism possessed no beliefs in any form. Belief is present in Judaism⁴⁵ in a secondary sense, i.e., sometimes - not always - a commandment comes into being as the result of a belief, or a belief is derived from a certain commandment. It is in this sense that beliefs like existence of God, reward and punishment, etc. have their place in Judaism. But these beliefs are secondary in importance; profession of beliefs exclusively without observing certain rules of conduct is meaningless. The primary emphasis in Judaism is conduct and because of this beliefs must occupy a secondary role.

On the surface it may seem like a contradiction to deny the existence of dogmas in Judaism and then to affirm the presence of beliefs. What difference does it make, we are apt to ask, if Judaism has dogmas or beliefs? A moment's reflection, however, will convince us that there is considerable difference between a belief and a dogma, that a religion which has beliefs but makes them of secondary importance is vastly different from a religion which offers salvation by the acceptance of dogmas exclusively.

4. Conclusion

A Summary of Our Subject

We have already examined various views and presentations of dogmas in Judaism; a further task still remains: that we make a

brief evaluation of these views in the light of the position we have taken toward the question in the present work.

Maimonides, Crescas, and Albo assumed, but did not prove, that Judaism had dogmas; they were extremely arbitrary in their choice of so-called dogmas; each of these writers selected the beliefs he considered basic and gave it the title of dogma. Abravanel makes a fine contribution in pointing out that these philosophers (Abravanel mentions Maimonides especially but his criticism applies to all the philosophers of this period) were led astray by the spirit of the age and that there is no sure criterion of making one belief or mitzvah more important than another. Yet it would be futile to say, as Schechter points out, that Abravanel did not have dogmas. To him everything was a dogma. Mendelssohn shows that commandments are the heart of Judaism; but he failed to point out the nature of belief in Judaism. Holdheim and Geiger were wrong, if we use the term precisely, in saying that Judaism had dogmas. Schechter uses the term "dogma" loosely. Kohler⁴⁷ and E.G. Hirsch, altho they do ^{not} differentiate between terms, have the proper approach to the subject. Margolis' remarks represent only a personal viewpoint - a very biased and exaggerated view of the role of belief in Judaism. The report of the C.C.A.R., altho liberal in every respect, really evades the issue. The best analysis on the whole question is that of Baeck. Baeck alone uses terms with precision and, consequently, throws much light on the subject.

Notes on Introduction

1. E.G. Hirsch, in an article on "Joseph Albo" in J.E. p.325, vol. 1 makes this statement: "It is an open question how far the claim may be pressed that Judaism has produced an independent philosophy of religion. But whatever labor was devoted to this field by Jewish thinkers was, in every case, primarily prompted and inspired by the ardent desire to defend the citadel of Jewish faith against the assaults of its enemies. Taking a broad survey of the whole field, it may be safely said that at four different periods Judaism must have been under the stress of this duty. When, in Alexandria, Greek thought laid siege to the fortress of Judaism, the consequent urgency of a sufficient resistance produced Philo's system. The second reasoned exposition of Judaism was produced at the time of the controversies with Karaism under the influence of the polemics of the Mohammedan schools. Maimonides, in turn, represents the reaction exerted by the Arabic Aristotelian schoolmen. And, finally, Albo enters the list as Judaism's champion under the challenge of Christian doctrine."

2. English translations of Perek Helek by J. Abelson in Jewish Quarterly Review, vol.XIX, Pp.47-55, Holzer's edition of "Mose Maimuni's Einleitung zu Chelek" has been consulted, Pp.20-30.

3. Schechter: Studies in Judaism, 1896; Pp.163-4.

4. Schechter says that the terms "Maimonist" and "anti-Maimonist" really apply to the controversy about "The Guide for the Perplexed" but he uses them in this application for the sake of brevity.

5. See Chapter II of Abravanel's Rosh Amana for this entire presentation of Crescas' doctrines. Also Holzer's "Zur Geschichte der Dogmenlehre," p.15.

6. Cohon in "Christianity and Judaism Compare Notes," p.64, makes this comment on Crescas: "His formulation of the principles of Judaism displays decided Christian and Mohammedan influence. This accounts for including repentance among the articles of faith, for stressing the importance of circumcision (corresponding to the doctrine of infant baptism) and of the sacrifice of Isaac (corresponding to the doctrine of vicarious atonement of Jesus) and of the priestly blessing as an opus operatum of the duly ordained priest, regardless of his merital or moral qualities (quotation from Neumark's "Principles of Judaism," p.447). His embodying of practical dogmas among the articles of faith is largely due to Christian influence. In his emphasis on the efficacy of the holy seasons, he imitates Islam."

7. See Chapter III of Abravanel's Rosh Amana; also Albo's "Ikkarim," p.200, Husik edition. It is significant to note that Abravanel under root I gives only two stems - unity and incorporeality - while Albo gave four i.e., unity, incorporeality, independence of time, and freedom from defects. Also under the second root,

Abravanel names as the second stem the pre-eminence of Moses as prophet - מעלות נביאות משה - while Albo speaks of the authenticity of the messenger - שליחות השליח. Also under root III Abravanel lists four stems: God's knowledge, providence, Messiah, and resurrection; while Albo mentioned only two: God's knowledge - יצירת פסא and providence in reward and punishment - תגמול שכר ועונש ואם גדולת המלך.

ואם גדולת המלך קין שיהיה רוחני אין שיהיה גשמי.

Notes on Chapter I

Notes on Albo's Critique of Maimonides

1. See Rosh Amana - Ch. III, P.6a; also Albo's "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, pp.55-58, Husik edition. At the bottom of the page Husik has this foot-note: "Part of this criticism of Maimonides finds its parallel in Duran's introduction to his commentary on Job, Ch.VIII, as was pointed out by J. Guttman in MGWJ, 53, P.58."
2. See Rosh Amana - Ch.III, P.6a; also Albo's "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.XIV, P.124. At bottom of the page Husik has this foot-note: "Jaulus L.C. points out a parallel in Duran, Introduction to Job, Ch.X."
3. Rosh Amana - Ch.III, P.6a; also Albo's "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, P.58. Albo does not mention Raphael and Gabriel. Abravanel has inserted these names. Albo admits that praying to mediators is a violation of the commandment "thou shalt have no other gods before me....thou shalt not bow down unto them or serve them (Ex. XX: 3-5)," but the violation of this commandment, he maintains, does not nullify the Torah.
4. See Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P. 6a and 6b; also Albo's "Ikkarim" Book III, Ch.XIV, P.120.
5. Albo cites the following examples to illustrate his point. Adam was forbidden to eat animal food, yet Noah was; Abraham was given the commandment of circumcision. Moses was given additional commandments, etc.. (See Albo "Ikkarim" Book III, Ch.XIV, pp.118-120; and Rosh Amana Ch.III, P.6a and 6b). *permitted*
6. Albo "Ikkarim" (Husik edition) Book III, Ch.XIV, P.121; for the examples that follow see P.126⁶ and P.6b of Rosh Amana.
7. Yebamoth 89b-90b.
8. Tal Erubin^{iv} 21b.
9. See Albo "Ikkarim" Book IV, Ch.XL, P.413; also Rosh Amana Ch.III, P.6b.
10. Albo uses this case to bring out his point: Hillel said, (Sanhedrin 98b) *היה אומר חזקת המשיח היא כחזקת המלך*. The fact that Hillel makes such a statement is proof enough, Albo maintains, to indicate that the belief in a Messiah is not a fundamental principle.
11. "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, P.58; also Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P.6b. Albo admits that Objections V and VI come from Crescas. See Book I, Ch.XVI, P.200. Also read Note I in Joel's "Don Chasdai Crescas' Religionsphilosophische Lehren", P.76.
12. I have been unable to locate this passage in the "Ikkarim."
13. Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P.6b; also "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, pp.58 and 59.

14. See "Guide for Perplexed" pp.199-200; also opening of Ch.XXVII, P.201 in M. Friedlander translation.

15. Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P.6b; also "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, P.59 and Book I, Ch.XII, P.120.

16. Objections IX and X are raised under the same head as Objection VIII, that is, Albo argues that if Maimonides had no intention of stating the fundamental principles and desired only to present the true doctrines that one professing the law of Moses should believe, then he should have included the "Shekina", the "creation", and the "acceptance of "miracles."

17. Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P.6b; "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III. P.59.

18. Albo advances Objections XI and XII under a different head. He argues that if he said that Maimonides is concerned with principles and not true doctrines of faith then he should have incorporated(1) that every Israelite should follow tradition of his fathers and(2) freedom of will. In the text Abravanel does not state Albo's reasons for advancing Objections XI and XII.

19. Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P.6b; "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, P.59.

20. Rosh Amana, Ch.III, P.6b; "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, P.59.

21. Sefer Hamada, "Hilchoth Teshuva," Ch.V:1, Maimonides says,
 אלוהים אחד ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד
 ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד ואלהים אחד

22. Rosh Amana Ch.III, P.7a; "Ikkarim" Book I, Ch.III, P.60.

23. I have been unable to locate Objections XIV, XV, XVI in Albo's "Ikkarim". I suppose them to have been said by Crescas because practically all of the objections advanced in Chapter III of Rosh Amana have been set forth by Albo. This is only a supposition.

Note also: I omitted the thirteenth objection found on pp.6b and 7a for the reason that it was not said by Albo. I.M. Wise makes this statement in his translation of Chapter III of Rosh Amana and in the American Israelite 1862, pp.212,220,228,236,244. Consequently, I have listed sixteen objections whereas this Chapter III has seventeen.

Notes on Crescas' Critique of Maimonides

24. Rosh Amana, Ch. IV, P.7a.

25. Rosh Amana, Ch.IV, P.7a.

26. Rosh Amana, Ch.IV, pp.7a and 7b. Note: that these three objections of Crescas have been taken from the second preface of his Or Adonai which has at its head these words: *וְהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא*. This passage does not directly refer to Maimonides, but it is generally taken that this is who Crescas had in mind. In P.45a, Crescas refers to Maimonides specifically as the author of the More and makes a general criticism about Maimonides' thirteen articles of faith. On P.20a Crescas states what he considers to be the fundamental dogmas of Judaism. (The Johannesburg edition of 1861 was consulted).

Notes on Abravanel's Critique of Maimonides

27. Only seven of the thirteen articles are given. Chapter I of Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah names "existence of God," "unity of God," and "incorporeality of God"; Chapter VII gives "existence of prophecy" and "pre-eminence of Moses as prophet"; and Chapter IX specifies "eternity of the law."

28. Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah, introductory remarks to Chapter I of Book I, P.120 of Mishnah Torah, vol.1, translated by S.Glazer.

29. "Sefer Hamitzvoth" - Varsha edition, No.1 and 2. "Mitzvoth asse."

30. Opening sentence of Chapter I, Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah.

31. Abravanel is referring to the following passages:

וְהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא
וְהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא
וְהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא
וְהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא
וְהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא דְּהַיְתָּא

(Sefer Hamada, Book I, ch.1:5)

32. Sefer Hamada, Book I, Ch.I:6. Mishnah Torah: Maimonides, vol.1, S.Glazer.

Notes on Chapter II

Notes on Abravanel's Defense of Maimonides

1. Rosh Amana, Chapter VI, pp.8b and 9a.

2. Ber. 44a not direct quotation but a paraphrase.

3. Abravanel at the end of P.9a says that he will explain later why Maimonides selected these thirteen principles; analysis of Abravanel's reasons for Maimonides' selection of the principles that he chose will be considered at that time.

4. Rosh Amana, Chapter VII.

5. Crescas' criticism is not serious; even if it were accurate, it would not invalidate in any way the position of Maimonides. Moreover, it seems to me that Crescas' criticism is not a fair one. He should criticize Maimonides' statements in the Perek Helek and not what he says in Sefer Minyan Hamitzvoth and Sefer Hamada.

6. There seems to be very little difference between Albo's presentation of "Ikkarim" and what Abravanel has stated. Both are agreed that the three fundamentals from which the principles are derived is Existence of God, Divine revelation, and Reward and punishment.

7. I fail to see where Albo is justified in his criticism of Crescas. Crescas' presentation of "Ikkarim" is just as adequate as Albo's. I fail to see just what it is that Crescas left out and Albo included, which is so all important. In general, however, the point which Abravanel raises is a good one because a list of principles should be unique and distinctively characteristic of the religion it represents.

8. I fail to see why immortality of the soul is less basic to the divine law than resurrection.

9. Compare in this connection the following passage taken from Kohler: "Jewish Theology" P.293. "Maimonides especially involves himself in difficulties, inasmuch as in his commentary on the Mishna he considers the resurrection of the dead an unalterable article of faith whereas in his Code (H.Teshura VIII:2) and in the Moreh he speaks only of immortality; and again he wrote, obviously in self defense, a work which seems to favor bodily resurrection, yet without clarifying his conception at any time (Maamor Tehiyath Hamasim, see Schiedl. l.c.172)." It might be argued that the reason Maimonides presents bodily resurrection in his thirteen articles of faith, altho he upholds immortality of the intellect in his Moreh, is because of pedagogical reasons; he felt that bodily resurrection would be more accepted and clearer to those who were not advanced sufficiently in philosophy to appreciate a belief like immortality of the soul. Abravanel's point of view as expressed in premise 8 is hardly tenable. Maimonides might have presented immortality of the soul just as well as bodily resurrection as one of the principles which comes from the belief in God's exalted perfection and his deeds.

20. Albo advances objections 11 and 12 under a different head. See note 18 of "Albo's Critique of Maimonides." In his sixth premise Abravanel makes the statement that tradition cannot be included

Notes on Chapter III

1. Whether it was fondness of argument or a reverence for Maimonides, or both reasons that prompted Abravanel to do this, we can not say definitely.

2. Aboth II:1.

3. *כאשר ילכו ישראל ויהיו עמו כעם אחד ויהיו עמו כעם אחד ויהיו עמו כעם אחד*
אשר ילכו ישראל ויהיו עמו כעם אחד ויהיו עמו כעם אחד ויהיו עמו כעם אחד
אשר ילכו ישראל ויהיו עמו כעם אחד ויהיו עמו כעם אחד ויהיו עמו כעם אחד

4. Even if we grant that stylistically speaking it would have been better to have used this expression, it hardly constitutes a difficulty.

5. On the surface it might seem that Abravanel's statement is not very fundamental. However, it seems to me that Abravanel has consciously or unconsciously touched on a very interesting point. The fact that the Mishna speaks in the negative reveals their psychological attitude toward this problem. The Pharisees wished to distinguish their views from the Sadducees so they stated specifically what one should not say rather than what one should say. Therefore, it appears to me that the sages were not interested in drawing up a list of beliefs to which one should adhere but they were interested in telling the people how they should react to certain moot points in order that their views would differ from those about them.

6. I shall deal with this point in Chapter IV, section 2.

7. This does not seem to be a serious difficulty.

8. Reason, no doubt, for not stating why punishment is so great is because Pharisees did not wish to say that this doctrine was held primarily to distinguish Pharisaism from Sadduceanism.

9. Whether Maimonides had a definite criterion in mind, just as Crescas did, for the selection of his dogmas, I have not been able to ascertain. It seems fairly certain that Albo took over Crescas' criterion.

Notes on Chapter IV

Notes on Chapter VI

Has Judaism Dogmas?

1. Isadore Weill denied that Mendelssohn was of the opinion that Judaism had no dogmas. "The name of Mendelssohn," he writes, "has frequently served, does in our days yet, for that singular and paradoxical idea that Mosaism is altogether nothing else than a code of laws and morals, a revealed legislation, and nothing else than a legislation; that it never proposed to its adherents any creed, any dogma, any truth to be professed....To show that there is no foundation for it, and to clear Mendelssohn of such a damaging reputation, we might confine ourselves to the most salient passages of his "Jerusalem,"....P.309, "Jewish Times," N.Y., vol.II, July 15, 1870.

M. Friedländer is also of the same opinion. "These words of Mendelssohn," he writes, "show how greatly those err who quote his opinion in support of the dictum that Judaism recognizes no dogmas. According to Mendelssohn, Judaism does not consist entirely of laws; it teaches certain truths. We have certain dogmas without which the laws can have no meaning, yet there is no precept "thou shalt believe." Nowhere in our law, whether written or oral, is a solemn declaration of our creed demanded. In so far Mendelssohn's view is correct; but when he believes that all the truths we are taught in Scripture can be made evident by logical demonstration he is mistaken." Jewish Religion, P.18.

Schechter has the following caustic remarks to make about Mendelssohn's point of view. "....there is the Mendelssohn's assertion, or supposed assertion, in his "Jerusalem,"" he writes, "that Judaism has no dogmas - an assertion which has been accepted by the majority of modern Jewish theologians as the only dogma Judaism possesses. You can hear it pronounced in scores of Jewish pulpits; you can read it written in scores of Jewish books. To admit the possibility that Mendelssohn was in error was hardly permissible, especially for those with whom he enjoys a certain infallibility. Nay, even the fact that he himself was not consistent in his theory, and on another occasion declared that Judaism has dogmas, only that they are purer and more in harmony with reason than those of other religions; or even the more important fact that he published a school-book for children, in which the so-called Thirteen Articles were embodied, only that instead of the formula "I believe" he substituted "I am convinced" - even such patent facts did not produce much effect upon many of our modern theologians." "Studies in Judaism" pp.147-8, 1896.

2. See note 28 of Chapter VI in "The Reform Movement in Judaism," P.458.

3. "Studies in Judaism," P.181, 1896.

4. Ibid. P.147.

5. P. viii.

6. "Jewish Theology," P. 20.

7. Ibid. P. 26

8. Ibid. P. 27

9. Ibid. P. 27

10. Ibid. P. 28. Kohler's presentation of doctrines seems extremely conservative in the light of the liberal statements he made in regard to how the subject should be approached. His conclusions - as manifested in his tripartite plan - do not sound like the results that should come when Judaism has been studied psychologically, critically, and comparatively. Of course, in all fairness, it should be noted that the science of religion - especially the psychological and comparative approach - was only beginning in Kohler's days and the findings would be rather scanty. Kohler's program, however, needs radical reworking in the light of modern research; as it stands now I would just as lief accept Maimonides thirteen articles of faith as Kohler's presentation.

11. Yearbook C.C.A.R., 1903 pp.185-307. "Theological Aspect of Reformed Judaism."

12. Ibid. P.306

13. Ibid. P. 296

14. Ibid. pp.296-302. Margolis' creed is really only a restatement of Maimonides.

15. C.C.A.R. Yearbook, 1905, P. 83.

16. On pp. 97 and 98 this statement appears: "It is superfluous to reiterate the remarks made by Professor Schechter and Leopold Loew with reference to the familiar Mendessohnian dictum: 'Judaism has only laws but no dogmas.' The Shema Yisroel with its declaration of the unity of God followed by the formula "Emet weYazib or Emet weEmunah,"-it is true and established that the Lord is God and none else, has ever constituted the Creed of Judaism. And when dissension arose in Israel regarding Resurrection and future redemption, the Pharisean founders of the Synagogue, the so-called A^{she} Keneset Hagedola, embodied these beliefs also in the daily liturgy. This simple fact not only proves that Judaism has dogmas, but it also shows how doctrines assumed the character of dogmatic belief. The community in accepting certain formulas declaring what they believe raises the doctrines enunciated therein to the dignity and value of a creed."

17. C.C.A.R. Yearbook, 1905, pp.99-100.

18. Jewish Encyclopedia, "Articles of Faith," vol.II, P.148.

19. Strangely enough Isadore Weill who maintains that Mendelssohn believed that Judaism has dogmas, gives almost the same argument as Hirsch, who is of the opinion that Mendelssohn denied the existence of dogmas in Judaism for the presence of certain beliefs in Judaism. Compare this statement of Weill's with what Hirsch has

written: "....even if the Pentateuch were nothing else than a collection of civil, political, ritual, and moral laws, a revealed constitution which only ordains acts and no creeds, these acts, in order to have a sacred and obligatory character, if they are to have any value or sense, imply invincibly the belief in the existence of the Legislator, in his wisdom, and providence; the belief in the mission of Moses and the prophets; in the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures; finally, the faith in certain historical and rational truths, which alone can give these acts any importance and the right to be what they are. What is any act which has not an idea for its origin and impulse; what is any practice which has not for its base a belief; what a religious ceremony which does not rest on a sentiment, on a religious idea?" Jewish Times, vol.II, July 5, 1870; P. 309. There is a great deal of soundness in this logic. I shall have more to say about it later.

22. Monatsschrift, 1926, March and April; pp.65-75.

23. Scheftelowitz says that Baeck has based himself on Mendelssohn's "Jerusalem" which he (Scheftelowitz) regards as a propoganda and not a scientific work.

24. Scheftelowitz defines dogma as the unalterable, immutable doctrines on which orthodoxy rests. The reason for the emergence of dogmas in salvation religions, Scheftelowitz claims, comes as a result of the old beliefs being attacked by rival religions or when internal dissension makes it necessary for a sect to formulate its position for the sake of preservation.

25. "Besitzt das überlieferte Judentum Dogmen?" Monatsschrift, July-August, 1926; pp.225-236.

26. Baeck also points out that the meaning of dogma in Protestant Theology is that of a doctrine belonging to Christian belief behind which there is authoritative force.

27. This fact, according to Baeck, accounts for Philo's list of fundamentals and also for the dogmas formulated by the medieval philosophers.

28. Among other passages Baeck refers us to Mishna Edoyoth 1:5 to point out that the Sanhedrin could not have put up any unalterable doctrines because its decisions were capable of being abrogated, whereas the essence of authority lies in the fact that its decisions are revered as immutable. Baeck also in this connection points out that the Mishna Sanhedrin passage refers not to dogmas but is a condemnation of certain customs and doctrines regarded as pernicious.

29. "Konnte das alte Judentum Dogmen schaffen?" 1926, November-December; pp.433-439. Monatsschrift.

30. This is listed as the second definition in the Century dictionary for "dogma."

31. Italics are mine. I have underlined this reference of dogma

in connection with Christianity because nowhere in any of these definitions is Judaism mentioned in connection with dogma. This may be an oversight or it may be that those who framed the dictionary definitions were acquainted only with Christianity; yet the fact that Judaism is not mentioned in connection with the term dogma may be of significance.

32. This is listed as the third definition on the word "dogma" in the Century dictionary.

33. This is the first definition listed under the word "doctrine" in the Century dictionary.

34. Compare the Century dictionary definition of "principle" with "precept." "That which is professed or accepted as a law of action or rule of conduct; one of the fundamental doctrines or tenets of a system; as, principles of the stoics or of the Epicureans; hence, a right rule of conduct; in general, equity, uprightness: as, a man of principle."

35. Italics are mine.

36. See list of synonyms at end of word "doctrine" in Century dictionary.

37. This phrase is taken from Kohler, see "Jewish Theology" P. 20.

38. Some have argued (see note 19) that all action presupposes a certain amount of theory, every commandment rests on an idea, every practice has a belief as its basis. To a great extent this is so but not always. It is very possible - indeed, this is what happens in most instances - that our action proceeds spontaneously and then we justify that action later by means of rationalization or try to explain as best we can. In other words, it is just as possible for action to precede theory as theory may precede action; and it is just as possible to have practice which is not the result of any belief as it is to have beliefs without making their practical application.

39. Dr. Philipson, Dean of the C.C.A.R. said in class that *this* was his view and the view of most Rabbis.

40. Mishna Sanhedrin X:1.

41. See note 27.

42. Baeck maintains that the Sanhedrin passage (Mishna San. X:1) which is locus classicus of this question is not to be understood as a formulation of dogmas but a warning against certain pernicious beliefs of the other sects. I believe that there is some merit in this interpretation. Had the Rabbis intended dogmas of belief they would have formulated this passage positively. They only wished to draw the line of distinction between Pharisaism and the other sects. (See note 5 in Chapter III).

43. Dr. Lauterbach in his lectures points out that Pharisaism came into being for just this reason.

44. See definition of precept that was offered in section 2 of this chapter.

45. To a certain extent the term doctrine might be appropriate to describe the nature of belief in Judaism. (See definition of doctrine and dogma in section 2 of this chapter; note especially the difference in the meaning of these two terms).

46. "But it is idle talk to cite this school in aid of the modern theory that Judaism has no dogmas. As we have seen it was an 'embarras de Richesse' that prevented Abravanel from accepting the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. To him and to the Cabbalists the Torah consisted of 613 Articles." Studies in Judaism, P.174.

47. In his book "Jewish Theology," Kohler speaks of doctrines and not dogmas; yet in the report (C.C.A.R., report on Margolis paper) of the committee which Kohler headed, there is a statement that Judaism has dogmas. See note 16 of this chapter.

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