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SHEM TOB BEN JOSEPH PALQUERA. A DETAILED  
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF HIS SEPHER HAMMEBAKESH,  
ACCOMPANIED BY A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

by

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TO  
MY PARENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In giving a presentation of the ideas contained in a book such as the Sepher Hammebakesh, the greatest difficulty encountered is in the arrangement of the material, so as to avoid the danger of too frequent repetition. Thus the division of the content of this thesis into various chapters is necessarily somewhat arbitrary, since the second chapter which deals with the contents of the book may in places anticipate the third, which deals with the ideas of the book. However, we shall try as far as possible, in the second chapter, to be concerned merely with a description of the contents of the book, pointing out as we go along the historical writings and authors implicitly or explicitly alluded to by Palquera, and any other relevant data of interest and significance. The third chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the general thought of the period within which Palquera lived, his own place within the scheme of medieval Jewish philosophy, and then of his ideas as expressed in the Sepher Hammebakesh.

The Sepher Hammebakesh is based upon an attempt to harmonize philosophy or reason with revealed religion, a task to which Maimonides before Palquera had set himself. In tracing the development of this basic idea in the Sepher Hammebakesh, we shall have to take up in detail, therefore, the various subordinate ideas which are expressed, such as the



problem of faith and reason, the interpretation of the Bible, ideas about the soul, ethics, the classification of the sciences, the value of the sciences, etc.

It would be interesting, if time permitted, to make a comparative study of the Sepher Hammebakesh with the works of those philosophical and scientific authors from whom Palquera received his knowledge and his ideas, especially the "Moreh Nebuchim" of Maimonides. For indeed, Palquera is profoundly indebted to Maimonides, and to those Arabian philosophers through whom the Aristotelian philosophy was made accessible to medieval thinkers. However, neither the limitations of this thesis nor the scholastic attainments of the writer permit of such an exhaustive evaluation and comparison. Nevertheless, we shall try to indicate as we go along the source of any particular idea or theory. In a great many places Palquera himself refers us to some authority for the subject matter which he presents, in addition to his own views.

The writer has found the work of preparing this thesis enjoyable and stimulating, if at times rather tedious because of the great amount of hack-work involved in the translation. The task of analyzing the ideas of the book, too, was made somewhat difficult by the fact of its arrangement into a series of involved and intricate dialogues, so that at times it was hard to distinguish whether Palquera was giving expression to his own ideas or to the ideas and beliefs of his opponents. Nevertheless, the

writer feels that he has gained some knowledge of the aims and methodology of medieval Jewish philosophers, as well as the stimulus for further study in this field.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SHEM TOB BEN JOSEPH PALQUERA

The thirteenth century, the century into which Palquera was born, is generally considered to have been the most critical and the most unenlightened in the whole of European history. It was characterized by a constant antagonism among the various nations in regard to foreign policies, and by the prevalence of almost barbaric standards in political and domestic institutions. This was due in the main to the supremacy of the Papacy (since c.1200) under the guiding rule of Pope Innocent III. The Roman Church held the masses under its tyrannous sway, stifled free thought and research, and through the method of the Inquisition hunted down and persecuted the devotees of reason and inquiry. Those who dared to question the infallibility of the Roman Church were branded and punished as heretics.

The Jew especially, since he represented a minority group, was made the particular object of the hatred of the Church. Innocent III was a bitter enemy of the Jews, and did everything within his power to broaden the social cleavage between Jews and Gentiles. At the beginning of the thirteenth century we hear of frequent trials of the Jews of the Provence during the crusades against the Albigenses. (1209-1223) The yellow badge was made compulsory by the fourth Lateran council (1215) and the Inquisition was introduced against heresy.

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In spite of this persecution, however, there was considerable literary and intellectual activity among the Jews, particularly in Spain. Here the tradition of learning in literature and in the sciences continued. A general reaction began to manifest itself towards the middle of the thirteenth century among the Talmudists to the study of philosophy and the theories of Maimonides in particular. The study of philosophy and the promulgation of Maimonides' views was feared by the anti-Maimonists to have an unfortunate effect upon Judaism and its adherents. The struggle was brought to an issue, unfavorable to philosophy, by Solomon ben Abraham of Montpelier, who informed the Inquisition about the philosophical writings of Maimonides as heretical, which in turn caused Maimonides' works to be burned publicly in Provence. (1233)

This struggle between the Talmudists and the philosophers characterized the intellectual state of the Jewry into which Shem Tob ben Joseph Palquera was born, and in which he was destined to play so prominent a part. Walter says of him, "Shem Tob ben Joseph Palquera was not a creator. But he reflects better than his contemporaries<sup>1</sup> the scientific aspirations of the Jews of his time. Little is really known of Palquera's private life. His birthplace was probably one of the provinces on the Franco-Iberian border. Still less is known of his early childhood, his family life, and his early education. Nor have we any specific record of his birth, although he is<sup>2</sup> generally assumed to have been born in 1225. He seems to

have remained unmarried throughout his whole life. The exact date of his death is unknown. We last hear of him in a debate between the Maimonists and the anti-Maimonists. <sup>3</sup>

By nature Palquera was of a modest disposition, retiring, contemplative, and somewhat of a dreamer. He was both poetic and philosophical in his inclinations, seeking solace in Biblical and Talmudic study, and in Greek and Arabic speculation. He had no desire to become famous. <sup>4</sup> He was apparently of a vagabond disposition, having no fixed abode but wandering about from place to place, and we do not know that he ever held a public position. From his poetry we gather that he was well-acquainted with poverty. <sup>5</sup> yet he felt that riches and devotion to learning go together. His scanty needs he satisfied in various ways; he derived a little income from his patrimony. He may have practiced medicine, (as we can infer from his tremendous knowledge of medicine) but had very little regard for the physicians of his time. <sup>6</sup> From all the preceding, however, it is not to be inferred that Palquera was a dreary ascetic. He was saved from this extreme by his devotion to the teachings of Judaism, as well as the Aristotelian theory of the golden mean in conduct. He regards earthly happiness as worthwhile, yet only as a means to uplift the soul.

In his philosophical thinking Palquera made no effort to be an innovator, nor was the tendency of the Jewish literary activity of his time a creative one. For the most part he follows Maimonides and the Arabian philosophers. In his "Reshit Hokmah" and Tsorai Higgayon he tells us that he is not setting forth any original

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doctrines of his own, "but merely bringing together the teachings of the greatest philosophers and scholars, to stir up the laggard and indifferent, and guiding aright the industrious and the zealous." In all of his books he constantly exhorts man to serious study and speculation. This is especially his advice in the Sepher Hammebakesh. In one place he tells us; "go forth, according to the day and the time! <sup>then you will</sup> ~~and~~ be quiet, and do not live in tribulation. And grow wiser during thy life among the sages." <sup>7</sup> And again: <sup>where?</sup> "Inquire into wisdom and know justice and times; although you may be at the end of days and time. And let thy heart inquire into understanding, though hosts of perplexities may be rooted there."

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We may epitomize all of Palquera's worldly ambitions into a single idea: "to live a holy life, to purify the will and to perfect character, to surrender oneself to study and contemplation in order to arrive through this discipline to the ultimate truths of metaphysics, and to attain to that stage of human perfection in which, according to medieval belief, the human spirit becomes part of the divine spirit, and the finite is merged into the infinite." <sup>8</sup> Thus in Palquera's own words; "to search out everything that is true, desirable, established and pleasant, and to weaken the ardor of youthful passion which is like a flaming fire; and to drive back the strange soul from the idol, so that the rational factor might be enabled to stand on guard-- to keep watch at the gates of wisdom, and to serve the God who created it; and to search out peace for my heart

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rather than much speech, which is a weariness to the flesh and a tribulation and a sigh to the soul; and to serve the Lord with gladness; and to close the eyes from seeing evil; and to shut the ears from hearing a word which is vain; and to rest the heart from grievous thoughts and disquieting meditations."

We come now to a consideration of Palquera's literary activities. Malter call him the most learned Jewish author of his time because of his command of the works of the Arabic authors, and his knowledge of every branch of Jewish learning.<sup>10</sup> His writings abound in quotations from the Bible, the Talmud, Aristotle, Maimonides, and the Arabic philosophers. According to Malter, Graetz, who otherwise makes short shrift of him, describes him as a "living encyclopedia of the sciences of his day, trustworthy on any topic on which information may be required."<sup>11</sup> He was eager to popularize his knowledge among his contemporaries, and he achieves this through the medium of a clear style and a forceful expression. In order that his books might be more widely read and understood by the masses, he wrote in Hebrew instead of in Arabic, the literary language of the day.

Palquera wrote sixteen books in all, four of which have been lost, and three of which are accessible only in manuscript:

- (1) הלכות חלין והנהגת הבריאות והנהגת הנפש, a treatise in verse on the control of the body and soul;<sup>12</sup>
- (2) אגרת המוסר, a compilation of ethical sentences;
- (3) צרי היגיון, dealing with resignation and fortitude under misfortune; (lost)

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(4) סגלת הזכרון, The Scroll Of Remembrance; (lost)

(5) אגרת הויכוח, Book Of Dispute, a dialogue between an orthodox Jew and a philosopher on the harmony between philosophy and religion, being an attempt to prove that not only the Bible but the Talmud as well is in perfect accord with philosophy;

(6) ראשית חכמה, The Beginning Of Wisdom. Treats of the moral duties, (giving the so-called ethical epistles of Aristotle) of the sciences, and of the necessity of studying philosophy. Palquera treats here of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle;

(7) ספר המעלות, Book Of Degrees, a systematic presentation of ethics, treating of the various degrees of human perfection;

(8) ספר המבקש, Book Of The Seeker, a survey of human knowledge in the form of rhymed prose interspersed with verse. This work is a remodelling of his "Reshit Hokmah."

(9) דעות הפילוסופים, The Knowledge Of The Philosophers, containing Aristotle's "Physics" and "Metaphysics" according to the interpretation of Averroes;

(10) ספר הנפש, Book Of The Soul, a psychological treatise according to the Arabian peripatetics, especially Avicenna;

(11) מורה המורה, Guide To The Guide, a commentary to the philosophical part of Maimonides' "Moreh Nebuchim;"

(12) לקוטים מספר מקור חיים, Fragments From The Book Of "The Fountain Of Life," a translation of Gabirol's philosophy from Arabic into Hebrew, thus saving for Judaism the credit for Gabirol's philosophy;

digest



- (13) **פירוש**, A Commentary on the Torah and other Biblical books, especially Proverbs. In this commentary Palquera makes use of Aristotelian thought in interpreting the Bible; (lost)
- (14) **פירוש הדברים**, an interpretation of Haggadic passages in the Bible; (lost)<sup>14</sup>
- (15) **אגרת החלום**, Letter Of The Dream, mentioned in Palquera's "Moreh Ha-Moreh." The name is misleading. This is not really a treatise on the dream, but rather<sup>15</sup> on ethical conduct, which was inspired by a dream;
- (16) **עכתיב**, a letter in defense of the "Moreh Nebuchim", which had been attacked by several French rabbis in the year 1290. The last known work of Palquera.<sup>16</sup>

Palquera tells us in his "Iggeret Ha-Vikuach" (p. 18) of several books he contemplates writing, and gives us an outline of their proposed purpose and contents. In the Sepher Hammebakesh he enumerates seven of these works: "Dietetics On Body And Soul," "The Letter Of Reproof," "The Balm of Affliction," "The Scroll Of Remembrance," "The Book Of Dispute," "The Beginning Of Wisdom," and the<sup>17</sup> "Book Of Degrees."

In his youth Palquera was a prolific writer of poetry, confessing himself to have written over twenty-thousand lines of verse, only half of which he wrote down. This predilection for poetry he never seems to have entirely gotten rid of, as all of his works contain poems, rhymed prose and epigrams. As he grew older he came to regard

preoccupation with poetry a sinful waste of time, as he tells  
us in the Sepher Hammebakesh.<sup>18</sup> He introduces his last poem  
in this book with the words, "from today and onward I shall  
have no more business with songs and no portion in poetry.  
It is about time to seek God that He may by His mercy teach  
me the proper way and keep my tongue from evil!"<sup>19</sup> He also  
had a facility for rhymed prose, a literary characteristic  
which was used by the Arabs, and which influenced the style  
of many Jewish writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth  
centuries. His books are full also of witty puns and clever  
epigrams. As a final outstanding characteristic of Palquera's  
style we may mention the sincerity and enthusiasm which is  
manifest in all of his writings.

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Malter points out that it is difficult  
to give a fair estimate of Palquera's influence upon his  
contemporaries and upon later generations. However, the fact  
that so many of his works were preserved while a great many  
other writings of the thirteenth century were lost is a  
significant indication. Furthermore, there are many citations  
from and allusions to his works in other writers, and the  
medieval scholastics translated much of his philosophy into  
Latin.<sup>20</sup>

II

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE SEPHER HAMDEBAKESH

The structure of the book is somewhat unusual, being cast into only two distinct divisions, instead of the conventional chapters, which one should expect to find in a book of such great length. The first part is called the **דברי האגרת הראשונים**, ( these words are not used but we infer them from the heading to the second part) The second part is called **דברי האגרת האחרונים**. (p.90) In the second part, Palquera tells us, he will have no more to do with poetry and songs, but will devote himself seriously to the search for God. (p.87) Thus the style of the second part is not based upon poetry, rhymed prose and epigrams to the extent which characterizes the first part. The book is cast into the form of a dialogue between a young seeker and various classes of individuals from all of the major occupations and intellectual pursuits of life. He seeks to discover from them what constitutes man's highest aim in life, and in what manner this can be achieved. He holds converse in turn with a rich man, an athlete, an artisan, a physician, *it is modern* a Hassid, a grammarian, a poet, an orthodox man, (believer) and a philosopher. At the advice of the philosopher, he studies all of the preparatory sciences, namely Arithmetic, Geometry, Optics, Astronomy, Music, Logic, Physics, (Natural Science) and none of these furnish an answer to his question. They were all necessary, he discovers, as steps or disciplines in the quest after ultimate truth; they pointed out the way but they failed of themselves to bring true knowledge to man.

Then he seeks out a metaphysician (theologian) and investigates with him the foundation of all things. After studying with the metaphysician for three years, the latter counsels him at his departure to avoid earthly things and to achieve union with God through the exercise of intellect or reason. It may be noted here that the subject matter of the Sepher Hammebakesh is presented in a more concise form in Palquera's "Reshit Hokmah," and is here only recast into a more elaborate form.

The book opens with a statement as to the time it was written and the state of mind which prompted the author to compose it. He says he conceived the idea of writing it in the year 1263 in the month of Cheshwan. He goes on to tell us that up until now he had wasted his time in the writing of silly and fruitless poetry, but from now on he will devote his energies to the earnest pursuit of knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Moritz David points out that in reality Palquera had begun this study of the sciences much earlier than he would have us believe, since he had by this time already written his Reshit Hokmah and his Sepher Ha-Mealot dealing with the various sciences.<sup>22</sup>

Palquera then goes on to describe the nature of the book and upon what principles he proposes to construct it. It will be based upon the principles of the Torah, upon poetry, ("in order that they may remain in the heart many days and be remembered" p.8) upon the works of the intellectual, and "the proverbs of the wise and their

*of the intellectual, and "the proverbs of the wise and their*  
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~~wise~~ sayings." He also tells us that he will intersperse *p. 1*  
throughout the book many of the sinful poems which he had  
written during his youth, "to serve as a confession for what  
has already transpired in sinful songs of youth, and as a  
repentance for what has taken place in sinful pleasures of  
youth." And it will include controversial matters "to seek  
out the truth and things that are upright," and "to make  
straight the way of man and his path, and to open the eyes of  
the blind that they may behold the pleasantness of God and  
perceive his sanctuary." (p.9)

Then follows a series of ethical observations  
in general, describing the character of the wise and perfect  
man. In all of these reflections one can trace the influence  
upon Palquera's thinking of the Aristotelian theory of the  
middle path or "golden mean" in ethical conduct. Thus he  
says concerning the seeker: "and he flees from extremes and  
stands in the middle path." (p.10) This is followed by a *p. 13*  
description of his own preoccupation with poetry during his  
youth. Half of the lines he had written he threw away,  
and half of them he wrote out, "in order that they may be  
delightful when the heart busies itself in matters of wisdom."  
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*vision* We have already had occasion to observe that the book contains  
on almost every page of the first part poems from Palquera's  
own collection. Here he gives us also a list of the books he  
had composed prior to the Mebakesh, seven in all. <sup>23</sup>

In this same paragraph we are given an insight  
into the physical and spiritual conditions of Jewry in his day:  
"The hour is crowded and squeezed, and the hand of the nation"



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~~of the nation~~ overwhelms us. ✓ How many disasters testify  
over against us! Every man beholds poverty as time passes and  
becomes a wanderer in the land seeking his food, and hardship  
lurks on every side, and from every direction comes violence  
and affliction." The following paragraph gives us an interest-  
ing clue into the character of Palquera, his earnestness, his  
profound piety, (despite his rationalistic tendency) and his  
modesty. He prays to God to sustain him in this work, and he  
begs the reader to be indulgent with any shortcomings. "And  
I ask of him who studies this booklet that if he find in it a  
mistake which may be hidden from me, he shall not regard it  
with malice but with sympathy, and that he give me the benefit  
of the doubt."

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All this has been by way of introductory  
observations. Palquera goes on to tell us that the work will  
be cast into the form of a parable which shall have a profound  
message for those who are able to interpret it and grasp its  
significance. (p.13) The main character in this parable will  
be a youthful seeker. The seeker is described as eager for  
knowledge and wisdom, always fleeing from extremes and  
following the middle path. Especially significant is the  
statement that he accepts nothing on faith, "unless his  
intelligence ratifies it." The seeker sets out to investi-  
gate the ~~ways~~ of men, to find the way to ultimate perfection,  
"that he may merit approach to his Creator, and see wherein  
he has any value, and how man and his form were created."

His first interview is with a man of wealth.  
After a somewhat lengthy description of the self-indulgence,

the wanton pursuit of pleasure which characterizes the rich in his day, (Palquera alludes to them by numerous quotations from Proverbs, Lamentations, Leviticus) the seeker asks the rich man: "Why is all your effort devoted to accumulate wealth, and all your thoughts to acquire power? And why do you weary the pure and upright soul? (p.15) He advises him to give up his material pursuits and to devote himself to intellectual effort. "And you shall meditate day and night in God's Torah. For then you will prosper in your ways, and your goings will be made wise. After you have acquired physical things, seek and try to achieve the perfection of the intellectual soul."

This provokes the rich man, who berates the seeker for his foolishness, and preaches to him on the value of material possessions and the misfortune of poverty.

Palquera makes use here of imagery from the Song of Songs; thus he speaks of the <sup>24</sup>תפוחים נתינת ריח, "the love-apples give forth fragrance." He also puts into the mouth of the rich man poems written by him regarding the miseries attendant upon <sup>25</sup>poverty. Throughout the long speech of the rich man we get glimpses into the terrible intellectual and spiritual conditions which prevail. The seeker then rebukes the rich man for his materialistic attitude. "And what more, after all, does a man need in order to be happy but to eat to his satisfaction, to drink without getting intoxicated, and to dress well in cold weather." (p.20) Here we get another description of the conditions of the Jews. "Should the miserable Jew be happy whose portion is ~~among~~ <sup>among</sup> cursed people? And should his wealth today be like the sands of the sea, tomorrow he will walk naked and despoiled. How can one born of Jacob obtain

justice and a square deal, when his enemies are his judge and his lawyer?"

The seeker relates a dream to the rich man which deals with the miseries which may result from the possession of too much wealth. The analysis of the dream herein related by its interpreter is in line with the most modern theories of the subconscious finding expression in dreams. Dreaming of walking barefoot is the result of wicked deeds; to dream that one is hungry and thirsty is the result of worrying about one's money and property, etc. As a result of the seeker's interview with the rich man, he concludes that nothing can be learned from the latter regarding man's highest aim in life. "It is impossible that there should be found among the qualities of the rich the qualities of righteousness and integrity, for the desire of the rich blinds their eyes to the truth, and their ears become callous to instruction." (p.26)

The next conversation of the seeker is with an athlete, with no greater success at the outcome. The athlete asserts the chief purpose of man to be physical prowess and bodily strength. All of the seeker's arguments prove futile, all of his exhortations to cultivate the intellectual and the spiritual fall on deaf ears. "And to what avail is the health of the body when the soul is sick, and to what purpose is the strength of the body when the spirit is weak and is on the road to destruction?" (p.31)



The seeker then turns to the investigation of the practical pursuits of man, conversing first with a representative of the practical arts, a ראש בקל' אמנות. He advises him as follows: "Since God has bestowed upon you wisdom and an understanding heart, it is not sufficient that you simply work and consume therewith all the days of your life. But devote special time to contemplate the works of the Creator and His creations, and be diligent in the study of His laws and teachings." (p.34) The artisan replies that through practical activity man achieves his highest aim and comes to know God, relating a parable which bears out this contention. The seeker then propounds to him a series of six questions regarding the exact nature of his work calculated to undermine his self-confidence. (p. 37ff) Incidentally, the artisan gives expression to the widespread belief in Astrology current in his day, pointing out the influence of the various stars over man's talents and aptitudes.

With the physician the seeker fares no better. This physician to whom he addresses himself is described as a man who had completely mastered the knowledge and technique of his art, and who was famous for his ability to cure diseases and to prognosticate future ailments. After hearing of the miraculous powers of this man, the seeker is hopeful that at last he may find the answer to his question regarding man's highest aim in life. "And the seeker said to himself, 'surely he (the physician) is gifted with prophecy. And if it is indeed within the power of this man to know all this for certain, then this is surely the most truthful human

science, and I'll apply myself to it assiduously." " (p.41)

The seeker accompanies the physician on several visits and watches him perform almost miraculous cures. Then he puts to him several very adroit questions regarding the practice of medicine for which he receives answers which do not satisfy him. The physician quotes a number of authorities to substantiate his statements,<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, Galen, al-Razi, Hippocrates, Pythagoras.

The seeker tells the physician of having heard that Galen was lacking in the true knowledge of the secrets of nature, and that in the field of medicine he was no authority.<sup>27</sup>

After obtaining from him a list of reliable<sup>28</sup> medical books, the seeker propounds to the physician twelve questions pertaining to the medical art, the answers to which throw an interesting light on the medical knowledge and theories which formed the basis of this science in Palquera's time. Here also we find a number of statements which reveal Palquera's attitude toward the physicians of the time, their deceitful practices, their chicanery, etc. "The best of doctors belong to hell." "The aim of this occupation is to cure disease, but the doctors use it as a means to great profit." "Therefore one bystander who saw these tricks of the doctor said, 'nothing of the arts of magic were left to man but the art of healing.'" The seeker expresses his disappointment with the physician by reflecting that just as the physician does not know the way of life in the womb, so is he unable to comprehend the work of the Creator who is omniscient.

He then gains the attention of a pious man (Hassid) in order to understand "the more precious qualities." (p.53) We are given a detailed description of the flawless character of the hassid, whose conduct follows the middle path, fleeing from extremes, walking in the way of the upright, and learning deeds of perfection. The seeker tells him that he admires his piety and his assiduous devotion to study, but that he finds him lacking in the greatest quality, which is the quality of intellect and wisdom. (p.55) The hassid is provoked at this, and maintains that perfection of character and the study of the Torah are the only requisites. He then goes on to enumerate the various types of character, laying emphasis throughout on the necessity of following the middle path, and elaborating the various ways by which perfect character can be achieved, such as modesty, independence, the overcoming of evil inclinations, etc. The seeker asks him eight questions regarding the soul, to some of which the hassid fails to give him a satisfactory reply, (p.62) He then recommends to him a number of ethical books for study, the Torah, (especially Proverbs) the rabbinic literature, the **ספר חר השנינים**, and the **שם רמב"ם** of Aristotle. In answer to a question put to him by the seeker, he enumerates four causes which explain man's behavior: (1) organic structure, (2) environmental factors, (3) education, (4) influence of the stars.

From the practical occupations of man the seeker now turns his attention to the various mental occupations and pursuits. "And when the seeker was through with the distinguished in arts which are bound up with bodies, and considered them insufficient for the attainment of the true degrees of spiritual comprehension, he turned his attention to the men who are occupied with the intellect, hoping there to discover the true success of man. For whatever he investigated in the preceding achievements, he found that it disappears with the destruction of the body, and that the beast and the animal have the same portion." (p.69)

31 The work of the grammarian interests him first. He berates the grammarian for his meticulous preoccupation with the details of grammatical construction: "Speech of lips is in itself a shortcoming; and what good is the tool if no work is done therewith? (p.71) He further advises him: "Do not choose beautiful expression for their own sake. Know that it is your duty, since you are versed in the art of language, to endeavor to get at the bottom of things. For the tongue is the same as the tool of the artisan, and with it you can reflect upon the works of God, which are of marvellous wisdom, if you make the attempt." ( p.71) He then propounds to the grammarian six questions pertaining to grammatical rules. At his request the grammarian gives him  
32 a list of reliable authors from whom to study. These include Jonah ibn Janah, Saadia, and David Kimhi.

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The next interview is with a poet.

As is the case with the previous dialogues, the seeker praises the poet for his accomplishments, and advises him to perfect his intelligence by occupying himself in the "true sciences" and forsaking the vain indulgence in love poems. The poet resents this advice, and proceeds to expatiate upon value of poetry in human affairs. "He (the poet) praises the deeds of the philanthropist and disparages those of the misanthrope. He reproaches time because it mistreats the upright of heart, and puts mischief in his way." (p.78)

The poet reminds the seeker that poetry has been the means of expressing the loftiest sentiments in tradition, and alludes to the **שירי האזינו**, (Deuteronomy 32) the book of Psalms, the Song Of Songs. He then relates a parable which proves the influence which poetry and song can wield in the transformation of human character. (pp.79-82) He then answers four questions by the seeker in which he defines the art of poetry, gives us the nature of its construction, and shows how, through the use of imagery, it influences the emotions of men and sets before them the highest ideals of conduct. Through the last question particularly the seeker puts the poet at a decided disadvantage by asking him why poetry is said to create illusions in the minds of men. The poet then enumerates the different types of poetry: (1) prophetic, in which he includes the **שירי משה** (Ex. 15) and the **שירי דוד**, (Deut. 32) This is the highest stage; (2) divinely inspired poems, namely, Psalms, Proverbs, Song Of Songs; (3) poems in praise of God. Below these three types come the songs in praise of men.



u But, says the poet, these "should not come upon the tongue of a man of reason except in case of emergency." (p.84) Among the poets of the third type (poems in praise of God) he mentions Solomon ibn Gabirol, Huda Halevi, Moses ibn Ezra, Abraham ibn Ezra, Isaac ibn Gayyat, Moses ben Kimhi, Judah ibn Gayyat, Joseph ibn Abitar.<sup>34</sup> "Much of their poetry, however, is not worth reading." (p.84)

Palquera concludes the first part of the book with a long discourse on the value of perfecting the intellect and acquiring wisdom: "and by seeking the truth you may kill the body, but you will thereby save the soul." (p.86) It is here that he tells us he will have no more to do with poetry. He then gives voice to a long prayer to God, describing the miserable conditions of the country in which he lives and the persecutions which befall his fellow-Jews, and asking God to help his soul to overcome the distresses under which it is laboring so that he might finish the work which he has undertaken. (p.87ff) This brings us to the second part of the book, the **דברי קאגרת האחרונים** (p.90)

Thus far the seeker has been unable to satisfy his curiosity regarding the highest aim to which man can devote himself. "And it came to pass when the seeker had concluded his inquiry into the various interests of man whose aims he had investigated, he beheld that they did not reach the desired success, that is, the success of truth, for he did not mark them to be of the highest type. He discerned that all of their deeds were only preparations and steps through which

to ascend to the true success--which is knowledge. Then he inquired and searched and asked eagerly: 'in what knowledge can this success be found? Whence does it come and where is its place? And in which science is its nature made clear? '" (p.90)

35 His first dispute is with a traditionalist or believer. The seeker relates to him the disillusionment he has experienced in his preceding interviews, and the believer assures him that the real purpose of man is "to study the Torah and to meditate therein day and night." (p.91) He then indicates the various beliefs or dogmas which are implied by acceptance of the Torah, the unity of God, Creatio ex nihilo, divine revelation through Moses and the prophets, immortality of the soul, reward and punishment. (p.92) The seeker then tries to discover the believer's reactions to the spirit of rational investigation by asking him several questions concerning certain heretical views such as polytheism, the eternity  
36 of matter, and the destruction of the soul. The traditionalist replies that man's reason alone is incapable of arriving at these ultimate truths, but that he must rely upon the literal statements of the Torah, for through them the truth is divinely revealed. Furthermore, if man's reason were sufficient, then he would cease to believe in the efficacy of prophecy. (p.93) The believer relates a parable in which he tries to show that just as it is impossible for one to empty the water of a river by draining it with a sieve, so it is vain for the rationalist to suppose that he can arrive at the

final truths regarding creation or eternity of matter, pre-existence, and immortality by the use of reason alone.

"Then the man realized that a revelation from God had come to him, to turn him from his erroneous path and to set him on the straight way, and to prevent him from contemplating any longer on such matters." (p.94)

The seeker, however, is still dissatisfied, and employs another method of persuading the believer of the inadequacy of his point of view regarding tradition. He points out that the statements in the Torah cannot be regarded in their literal form as absolute truths revealed by God to man, because of the contradictions inherent in them. Thus, he says, why the difference between the two sets of the Ten Commandments in Exodus and in Deuteronomy? Furthermore, how are we to account for the marriage of Amram to his aunt (Ex. 6:20) and of Jacob to two sisters (Gen.29) when the Torah later on expressly forbids this? The believer is somewhat non-plussed by this, but continues, nevertheless, to affirm his belief in literal statements of the Torah. "It is known that the man who relies upon his Creator and believes in his Torah completely, necessarily believes also in the reward of a future life and has confidence that he will merit such a life from his Creator. Hence, he lives in joy all his life. He is not afraid of death inasmuch as according to his opinion his soul will never die. But the thinker and those who are overmeticulous in such matters are in doubt as to future reward. And no matter if he be rich, he cannot enjoy his wealth and lives a



life of trouble, for he knows that he will have no survival after death. Thus he is constantly afraid and worried of death, as he does not believe that his soul will persist after death." (p.95)

The seeker then pursues his interrogation of the believer, dwelling upon the interpretation of Biblical passages, in order to prove that the rabbinic interpretations of the Bible do not satisfy the demands of common sense or reason, while the philosophical or allegorical interpretations do not offend man's reason. <sup>37</sup> The rabbinic interpretations, in order to retain as much as possible the literal signification of the text, indulge in all sorts of futile sophistry or pilpulism, which only confuse the mind of man even more regarding the truths which are inherent in the text. We can get at the real meaning and truth of the Biblical passages, says the seeker, only by giving them an allegorical interpretation. The seeker and the believer dispute for some time over the real meaning of several statements in the Bible, which leads the former to characterize the latter as follows: "you have found a pomegranate whose pairing you have eaten but whose real contents you have thrown away." (p.97) When they are about to take leave of one another, the believer says to the seeker, "You speak severely to me and say confusing things to which my ear cannot listen. And they are like the words of dreamers which are vain and meaningless." (p.98) His parting advice is to delve in the Torah and to devote himself solely to it, and not to lean upon his own understanding.

(p. 99)

no. A Rabbinic scholar who conservatively interpreted Philo

-27- The dialogue continues with a sage or to understand

philosopher. The philosopher also stresses the importance of belief in the Torah as man's highest aim, but points out that a true understanding of the principles of the Torah and the truths contained therein can be achieved only by a thorough knowledge of the preparatory sciences. He then proceeds to distinguish between knowledge derived by faith and knowledge derived by use of the intellect. Faith takes precedence over intellectual activity, yet the knowledge which is derived by means of faith must be verified and corroborated by the knowledge gained through the study of the sciences. This prevents the possibility of hypocrisy, a fault which characterizes many of the believers.

At the seeker's request the sage gives him a rational explanation of several Biblical verses, but is compelled to confess that there are some statements in the Torah which cannot be easily explained in this manner, and therefore require the exercise of faith on the part of man. In such cases faith must take precedence over reason. In this connection he quotes Maimonides' "Moreh Nebuchim, " describing it as a "precious and profitable book, and it is a way by which to comprehend truth, and it clears up many doubts for him who understands it. And he who delves in it is not able to penetrate to the depth of its meaning and view unless he has previously occupied himself with the sciences." (p.101) However," says the sage, " you must know that there are things hidden in the Torah which even Maimonides could not penetrate, much less the layman."

At the seeker's request, the philosopher furnishes him with a list of reliable commentaries to the Torah. He mentions first of all the **תורה בכתב** itself, the **תורה שבכל פה**, the Hilkoth Rav Alfasi, the "Mishneh Torah" of Maimonides, his Commentary on the Mishna, and also the texts of the Mishna and Gemorrah themselves. <sup>38</sup> His parting advice is as follows: "Make the study of the Torah the main thing, and the rest secondary. Still, you shall not believe anything unless your intelligence testifies to it or to its Creator." (p. 103)

This brings us to the dialogues between the seeker and the representatives of the various preparatory sciences. Having come to realize, as a result of his previous interviews, the necessity of knowing the sciences in order to truly understand the Torah, the seeker pursues his inquiry into the realm of the sciences, beginning with the mathematical sciences, **חכמת הלימודים**. The mathematical sciences Palquera defines as those sciences "which delve into essences that are stripped from matter." (p.104) These are five in number: (1) Arithmetic, **חכמת החשבון** (2) Geometry, **חכמת המשבולות**, (3) Optics, **חכמת העראות** (4) Astronomy, **חכמת הכוכבים**, (5) Music, **חכמת הנגון**. Geometry is defined as dealing with "the line and bodily <sup>surface</sup> extension." Optics deals with, "line, <sup>surface</sup> extension and body as perceived by vision." Astronomy concerns itself with "quantity, movements of rotating bodies, composition, forms, magnitude, and distance (of the stars) from one another." Music has to do with

*but are  
local  
in matter*

*Tunes*

"melodies, their relations and interblendings."

The seeker begins with the science of arithmetic, and engages in conversation a student of the Pythagorean school. <sup>39</sup> The latter explains to him the importance of knowing Arithmetic as the only way to attain a comprehension of the unity of God and the knowledge of his creations. Thus the number 1 is identified with God, the cause of all existence. 2 is associated with mind, originating from the Creator. 3 with soul, consisting of three species: animal, vegetative and rational. 4 with matter, consisting of four species: natural sublunar, artificial sublunar, all sublunar, first sublunar. 5 with Nature. There are five natures, the nature of the sphere (31131) and of the four elements. 6 with body. 7 with the position of the sphere--having seven orbits like the seven rotating stars. 8 with the elements within the sphere. 9 with the geni or classes, (11111) born out of the nine species. (11111) The things coming into existence out of the elements are:

- (1) Inanimate nature, consisting of three species,
  - (a) leaden--neither melted nor burned, as verdigris,
  - (b) stones melted but not burned, as gold and silver,
  - (c) stones melted and burned, as sulphur;
- (2) Vegetative nature, consisting of three species,
  - (a) plant, as tree,
  - (b) seed, as grain,
  - (c) independent growth, as grass;

(3) Living nature, consisting of three species, each giving birth to their kind,

- (a) that which gives birth directly to its kind,
- (b) that born of an egg,
- (c) that born of moulting.

All of this bears out, says the arithmetician, the truth of the statement that "numbers are fitting to the forms of being." <sup>40</sup> From the fact of number one he goes on to prove the existence and the unity of God. Furthermore, arithmetic provides proof for the fact that wholes must produce wholes, while defectives can only produce defective. He points out also a number of interesting deductions into which we need not go here.

Next follows the seeker's dialogue with a geometrician, belonging to the school of Euclid. The latter defines Geometry as dealing with "dimensions stripped of matter." The topics of this science are enumerated: (1) length--the line having a point without quotient; (2) plane--length and width; (3) body--length, width and depth. The first two, the line and the plane, have existence only in the imagination. Regarding the aim of this branch of science we quote the words of the geometrician. "Its aim is to proceed from the perceptive to the rational, and from the natural compound of a body to the spiritual force; and from the material substance to the abstract; and the manner of observing the abstract and holding fast to it; and to discover perfections which are not found in the



2  
world of bodies, but in the forms pure of matter which are invisible to the eye and which space cannot encompass, but which hover from place to place and are the cause of the beginning of time. " (p. 110)

After a series of three questions and answers in regard to the various problems of **Geometry**, the seeker and the geometrician part ways, and the former turns his attention to a student of Optics. Optics is defined as employing the same basic elements which Geometry employs, the line, the plane and the body, but the subject of its investigation is entirely different. Geometry concerns itself only with measuring surfaces of objects and dimensions of bodies, while Optics calculates the exact distance between objects in space, thus doing away with the perceptual errors of the naked eye. This science, we are told, is of invaluable aid in astronomical studies. Through the aid of Optics the size of the sun, the moon, and the various stars have been measured, and their distance from the earth has been determined. Thus the earth is thirty-nine times the size of the moon, and thirty-seven times the size of Venus. The sun is one hundred and sixty times as large as the earth, Jupiter ninety-five times as large, Mars one and one eighth, Saturn ninety-one, and the sun is six thousand, six hundred and forty-four times the size of the moon. All this has been made possible by the invention of the Astrolabe. <sup>41</sup> Aside from the astronomical measurement of the size of the sun as compared to the earth, additional proof for the fact that it is much larger than the

earth is adduced from the phenomenon of the eclipse. (p.114)  
Among the four questions which the seeker asks the student of Optics, the first is particularly interesting. The latter defines the basis of vision in terms of material essences or sparks emanating from the eye, adding that this is the Platonic theory. He observes, however, that the physicists discredit this theory, which fails to take into account the medium of the air.  
<sup>42</sup>

The next interview, with an astronomer, is of especial significance, because it clearly shows us how the neo-Platonic theory of the emanation of the spheres, based upon the Ptolemaic system of planetary spheres with the earth as the center, was taken into Jewish thought from the Mohammedan theologians.  
<sup>43</sup> This neo-Platonic theory of emanations was held by Maimonides, and after him, as we see here, by Palquera. Each sphere was conceived of as giving life to another sphere. Each of them was endowed with a soul, representing a gradation of souls from lower to higher and finally to God. The astronomer describes them to the seeker as follows: the spheres form concentric circles around the earth, one on top of another. First of all are the spheres of the elements, water, air and fire. Then comes the sphere of the moon. Above this are those of Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the planets. Lastly, there is a sphere which revolves daily and pulls all the spheres along with it.

It is not to be supposed that this is a purely mechanical arrangement. Each of the spheres is

endowed with life. Each is a separate emanation from the preceding, dependent upon it and interacting with it. Residing within each is a special intelligence which influences the earth and man in a specific way. Thus from Jupiter emanates a spiritual force which produces diligence in man and the search after great qualities; from Mars the reconciliation of opposite natures, from the Sun the growth of bodies and the origin of life, from Venus comes goodness, order and beauty, from mercury scientific aspirations and prophecy, and finally the moon controls breathing. (pp.118-119)

7 32 Astronomy not only concerns itself, however, with the spheres of the stars and the planets, but also with the earth itself, the amount of its population, and the habitation of its regions. We are then given an explanation of the value of the study of astronomy. "In order that the strange and pure soul which shines with the light of wisdom shall crave to ascend to the world of the spheres and to attain to the stage of perfection which is the stage of the angels; and in order that it may be easier for it to depart from places of nature and from bodily pleasures and death be easy for it, so that it shall not suffer on account of its separation from the things to which it was accustomed in this world, and that it know with full assurance that it is achieving a wonderful thing." (p.119)

This is followed by a minutely detailed geographical description of the earth as it was known to the scientists of the Middle Ages. It is interesting to observe



that in the Middle Ages the scientific studies had not yet become specialized to any great degree, and thus Geography was still considered within the province of astronomy. The various seas, islands, and countries are then enumerated and described as to their respective sizes, distances, locations, and natures.

The science of Music next claims the attention of the seeker. (p.123) The musician recounts the important part which music played in the past in religious worship, and dwells upon its psychological value for man, its effect upon his moral conscience and its ability to soothe those who are suffering from pain. He gives us a classification of the various types of music: (1) practical music, having to do with the various melodies created by instruments like the harp and the violin, (2) theoretical music, which teaches melody in general, abstracted from specific instruments and concrete expression.

The science of theoretical music takes up the various tunes, their comparative value, their combinations into distinct melodies, etc. Sound is described as produced by the beating of one body upon another, so that the air escaping between them sets up vibrations which enter the ear and are registered as sound. The science of music is of particular value to man because the soul is sensitive to harmonious musical sounds, and particularly to the melodies made by the spheres, and thus music helps the soul to free

itself from its enslavement to earthly matters and to ascend to the spheres. This reference by the musician to the melodies produced by the spheres undoubtedly shows the influence of the mystical theories of music held by the Pythagoreans, which regarded the rings around the earth as revolving in musical relation to one another. The seeker asks the musician four questions which are of no special significance.

So far the dialogues have involved representatives of the mathematical sciences. We now come to the science which ranked next in importance to medieval thinkers, the science of Logic, **חכמת הדיבור**. (p.126) Logic, we learn, concerns itself with distinguishing the real from the erroneous in matters of thought and speech, with the distinction between matter and the form principles. (particulars and universals). The various objects are assigned to definite categories. These categories bear the same relation to thought as rules of grammar to everyday speech. Thinking must proceed upon the rules of Logic, "It is impossible for a man of thought to be free from resorting to it." (p. 127) Nine books have been published on Logic, the first one being an introduction to the other eight:

Introduction--explains five words:

- (a) Genus--denoting things which forms differ but which are included under one category,
- (b) Species--denoting things of similar forms, such as "man," but which are separated by accidental qualities,

- (c) Property--denoting characteristic peculiar to a particular species, such as "laughter of man,"
- (d) Accident--referring to characteristics which appear and disappear within the species, such as "redness of flesh,"
- (e) Separation--denoting elements wherein a species is differentiated from its genus, such as "speech of man" and roaring of lion."

The eight books are:

- (1) Category--enumerating the ten upper geni which embrace all existence: substance, quantity, quality, combination, space, time, position, acquisition, development, transition,
- (2) Book of Explanation--telling how composition of transient matter goes on positively and negatively,
- (3) Analogy--how syllogisms are developed from first premises,
- (4) An explanation of unconditioned analogies,
- (5) An explanation of helpful analogies for those who cannot comprehend unconditioned analogies,
- (6) Dangers of sophistry and false analogies.
- (7) Book of figurative matters,
- (8) Explanation of the "poetic sayings and their benefits."

Then follows a series of six questions and answers dealing with various obscure difficulties involved in the study of Logic. One cannot help marvelling, in passing,

at the tremendous scientific erudition, the intellectual versatility of Palquera, not only in the case of Logic but the throughout the arts and sciences with which we have been dealing.

Finally, among the preparatory sciences, the seeker begins a discussion with a physicist, a "sage in science which delves into the qualities of natural phenomena," 45  
ה'כס"ה ט"ו (p.133) The physicist points out, first of all, the necessity of a knowledge of the mathematical sciences and of Logic before attempting the study of Physics. The ten geni ( ה'כס"ה ) which form the basis of Logic are also the principles from which Physics proceeds. Physics deals with " natural bodies and their accidents." How typical this is of the general definitions of Physics throughout Arabic and Jewish philosophy is shown by the following definitions. Thus Bahya ibn Pakuda defines it as "the science of the nature of bodies and their accidents." Similarly, al-Mukammas refers to it as "the science which investigates the bodies of things and the secrets of their nature." Maimonides gives a similar definition, making a 46  
distinction between the works of nature and the works of art. All of these philosophers, including Palquera, derive their conception of Physics from the physical writings of Aristotle, who defines Physics as "the science which deals with things 47  
which are inseparable from bodies but not immovable." He says elsewhere, "The physicist deals with all the active properties or passive affectations belonging to a body of a

given sort and the corresponding matter."<sup>48</sup> We may note here also that Palquera mentions medicine as one of the<sup>49</sup> branches of the science of Physics.

Nature, says the physicist, is a force, part of the universal and spherical soul, which permeates the elements, inanimate bodies, plants and living beings. This force or soul gives rise to the various phenomena of nature, rain, wind, snow, hail, etc. The various differentiated forms or particular souls, such as the soul of man, assume shape under certain conditions of combination or balancing of the elements. The most highly developed of these particular forms is the soul of man, which has two functions, the practical and the intellectual. The intellectual soul has three ascending degrees of perfection: the physical or potential intellect, the intellect by acquisition or meditation, the abstract intellect which is self-sufficient and survives the destruction of the body. This is the divine state toward which the soul must aspire in order to obtain the knowledge of God, and to ensure continued existence of the soul after death.

Following this is an exposition of the<sup>50</sup> topics with which Physics deals, eight of them in all:

- (1) Knowledge of things that are true of all natural existence, such as matter, form, place, etc. (Physics)
- (2) Knowledge of the heavens, the spheres, stars, etc., (De Caelo)
- (3) Knowledge of the essence of the substance of the elements, and how they give rise to inanimate nature, plants and living beings, (De Generatione



et Corruptione)

- (4) Knowledge of beings which arise in the air, atmospheric phenomena; light, darkness, heat, cold, wind, clouds, rain, rainbow, etc., (Meteorologica)
- (5) Knowledge of inanimate nature; stones, metals, salts, (De Mineralibus)
- (6) Knowledge of plants: sowing, reaping, planting, etc., (De Plantis)
- (7) Knowledge of living things, how they are situated in the womb, etc., (Historia Animalium)
- (8) Knowledge of the elements in man which do not die when the body dies--spiritual substance. (De Anima)

A parable is related by the physicist to the seeker in connection with his belief in the survival of the soul, and his contention that this fact can be proved through a thorough knowledge of the physical sciences.

1172 "Know," he says, "that most of the scholars that are versed in this science believe in the survival of the soul. And this is one of the things that are universally accepted and there are proofs for it from science." (p.137)

The usual questions and answers follow, into which we need not go in detail. Some of the physicist's answers are significant, however, especially his theory of vision, (to which we have already referred on p.32) and his denial of the Aristotelian theory of the eternity of matter. His parting advice to the seeker is of especial importance, since he discourages the study of the sciences for their own

sake, but maintains that the ultimate aim of all scientific study is the perfection of the soul that it may survive the body. "Endeavor while still alive to perfect your soul and to develop goodness of <sup>deeds</sup> and to bring the <sup>splendor</sup> beauty of her <sup>splendor</sup> into reality. Endeavor to know thyself and thy Creator. And know that your body is one of the perishing things and that it is being consumed daily, and that it is to your soul <sup>as</sup> ~~what~~ the house you dwell in and the clothes you wear are ~~to your body~~. Therefore, let not your endeavor be altogether in the building of this house and in the beautifying of this dress. For every house will be destroyed and every dress will fade. Therefore, let your toil be concentrated on the attainment of the soul that it never perish." ( p.144)

In the ensuing paragraph Palquera dwells upon the limitations of these preparatory sciences with which he has been dealing. While the knowledge of them brings man close to the ultimate goal, they are yet only stepping-stones to that state of intellectual perfection which can comprehend final truth. And herein lies the function of the highest science of 11, Metaphysics, <sup>חכמת אלהים</sup> <sup>51</sup>, which has been reserved for the last. After the seeker relates to him his previous experiences, the metaphysician says, "Know that you will never achieve the desired goal with these men. However, all their ideas are steps by which to arrive at it. It is true and incontrovertible that the success of man is the comprehension of his Creator and attachment to Him. And this can be achieved only through a knowledge of His creations and an

apprehension of His unity, and the recognition of the fact that He is the cause of creation. And the science which deals with this is the science of Metaphysics." (p.145)

The study of Metaphysics has three main divisions or fields of inquiry:

- (1) The study of the knowledge of matters which embrace all being, such as individuality and plurality, agreement and difference, potentiality and actuality, cause and effect;
- (2) The study of the roots and beginnings of the individual sciences, and the contradictions inherent in them;
- (3) Investigation into beings that are not bodies or in bodies, their relative degrees of perfection, the manner by which they arise from deficiency to ultimate perfection, which is God, the first cause, the Self-contained and Self-dependent; the study of his attributes, such as Unity, Existence, Eternity, Omniscience, etc.

The metaphysician refuses to comply with the seeker's request that he discuss the subject with him, saying, "it is commanded not to reveal the secrets of this science." He recommends to him a book on the subject called <sup>53</sup> מה שאחר הטבע, "What Is Behind Nature." As the reason for his refusal to discuss Metaphysics with the seeker he gives the fact that the layman, being unable to comprehend it, usually looks upon it with suspicion and contempt. <sup>54</sup> His parting advice to the seeker is to occupy

himself with the study of Metaphysics: "My final words to you are that all of the things of this earthly world be regarded as insignificant and vain compared to the comprehension of the Creator and attachment to Him." (p.147)

Palquera concludes the book with a poem in which he gives a concise summary of its contents in the form of advice to the reader:

*be headed*  
"To be rich, be strong and wise;  
*11/11/11*  
To be a doctor be always pious.  
And if a grammarian, you will rule over many;  
And master Mathematics, which is good and profound.  
You should also know Geometry and Astronomy;  
Also Poetry and Logic and their influence,  
Nature and Metaphysics too.  
But above all be upright and perfect.

"Let this be a sign for you regarding the investigations of this book, men blessed with attainments with whom the seeker had intercourse." Then follows another poem of a similar nature in which he praises Aristotle as the supreme authority in Logic, Physics and Metaphysics. His final words are: "The Mebakesh is finished and complete, thanks to God eternal!"

### III

#### A DISCUSSION OF THE IDEAS OF THE BOOK

"God and the soul, these will I know  
And these are all" --St. Augustine

These words serve as a fitting index to the attitude which characterized serious-minded men throughout the Middle Ages. The chief problem they faced was to retain an abiding faith in God without at the same time doing violence to the dictates of reason and investigation. Thus the most thoughtful among the Church fathers believed that essentially the spirit and the mind are one, that God reveals Himself constantly in nature and in man. They were dominated by the conviction that faith and philosophy are not mutually antagonistic, but that both lead ultimately to the same truth. Religion, to be a force in life, must do justice to the intellectual as well as the emotional side of man's nature, that he who would truly know God must first seek the truth.

Reason, however, must always do deference to faith. For the scholastics the authority of tradition was as cogent and commanding as the dicta of human knowledge. Where the results of rational investigation contradicted the dictates of tradition in matter of religious belief, then an attitude of faith must supersede one of skepticism or denial.



In Judaism, too, the problem of faith and reason in religion came to play an important role. Even before the Christian era, Judaism had come into contact with Greek culture and Greek schools of thought, which influenced the development of early Christianity as well as that of Judaism. Thus we find Philo already devoting himself to the task of corroborating revealed religion with the results of rational speculation, especially creating for this purpose a method of scientific interpretation of the Bible. Saadia, too, centuries before Maimonides, made the attempt to subject the dogmas of Judaism to the cold light of reason. Thus we see in Judaism the development of a trend toward reflecting about religion, toward the harmonization of religious belief with philosophical speculation, toward the creation of a philosophy of religion within Judaism.

This rationalistic trend within Judaism was given a tremendous impetus in the Middle Ages by the rediscovery of the writings of the Greeks and especially those of Aristotle through the Arabian philosophers. After the Arabian conquest of Syria, (sixth century) the works of Aristotle and the later Greek commentators were translated into Arabic from the Syrian versions, under the encouragement of the rulers of Bagdad. These Syrian versions were somewhat eclectic, containing elements of neo-Platonism; therefore it was not the pure Aristotle which passed on into Arabic philosophy and thence into Judaism, but the essence of

Aristotelianism interpreted through later phases of Greek and Oriental thought. Many of the Greek mathematical and medical treatises (Palquera's familiarity with which we have already seen in chapter II) were translated into Arabic from the Syrian versions. El-Farabi (950) and Avicenna (980-1036) were the outstanding figures in the Arabic philosophy of Bagdad. With the death of Avicenna, Arabic philosophy declined in the East, only to revive again in Mohammedan Spain. There its great representative was Averroes, who was regarded as the Aristotelian commentator par excellence.

The influence of Aristotle upon Jewish philosophical thought varied with the different Jewish thinkers. Thus we find that Ibn Gabirol, who is regarded as the first Jewish representative of Arabian philosophy in Spain, combined the Aristotelian principles with a neo-Platonic conception of the Universe. Judah Ha-Levi, in his "Kuzari" attacks the Aristotelian theory of the eternity of matter, (as did Maimonides and Palquera later) and rebels against the cold speculative conception of the unity of God. "The study of the philosophy of religion," he says, "is very detrimental to the true faith." Abraham ibn Daud, a strong Aristotelian, believed, on the contrary, that the study of philosophy strengthened faith. His book "Emunah Ramah" (published 1160) is said to be the first attempt at a compromise between the Peripatetic philosophy of the Arabs with Judaism.

Maimonides, the great spokesman of the philosophy of religion in Judaism, of whom Palquera was a devoted adherent, incorporated much of the Aristotelian thought into his "Guide For The Perplexed." He set himself especially to the task of harmonizing Aristotle's moral philosophy with revelation. Palquera was a faithful follower of the ideas of Maimonides, as we shall have occasion to point out specifically as we go along. We have already seen in chapter II to what extent he was indebted for his vast scientific knowledge to the Jewish and Arabian scientists before him, to Avicenna, Averroes, Alfarabi, Isaac Israeli, and others, and to the early Greek thinkers Galen, Hippocrates, and Euclid.

It is not difficult to understand why Jewish thinkers availed themselves so eagerly of the new knowledge of Aristotle and the Greek scientists which had come to them through the Arabian philosophers. It was a current belief among the Jews of the Middle Ages that the wisdom of the Greeks had its original source with the Jews in a parallel revelation to the Torah. During the exile, they claimed, these original Jewish works were lost, but were submitted by means of translation first to the Chaldeans and the Persians, and then to the Greeks and Romans. This notion was current as early as 220 B.C. among the Jews of Alexandria. Thus Pythagoras was supposed to have studied under King Solomon; Socrates derived his philosophy from Amithophel and Asaph the Psalmist; Plato was a student of

Jeremiah; and Aristotle was a pupil of Simon the Just. Arabs as well as Jews entertained this view. Thus, Maimonides says that the Jews have lost hold of this metaphysical knowledge because "barbarians have deprived us of our possessions, put an end to our science and literature, killed our wise men, and thus we have become ignorant." 55

What we have said thus far may have seemed irrelevant to the subject matter of this chapter, yet it was only for the purpose of helping us toward a clearer appreciation of the ideas Palquera expresses in the Sepher Hammebakesh with which we are about to deal. Imbued, like his forerunner Maimonides, with this theory of the pristine supremacy of the Jews in the fields of science and philosophy, he believed it his sacred duty to restore to Judaism these lost treasures of science, to take up the defense of philosophy which Maimonides had so nobly carried on, to demonstrate once more that the truly religious life must be based upon a harmonization of intellectual knowledge with the knowledge derived by faith.

In his "Treatise Of The Dream" he tells us that our ancestors, living in Palestine and being so near in time to the prophets from whom they received traditional truth direct, did not have to study the works of the philosophers. We in the diaspora, with minds dulled by oppression, must study the works of the genuine philosophers and learn their methods of demonstration in order to support what we already know by tradition. Whenever the views of the philosophers contradict the Torah, they should be rejected;

otherwise they should be accepted. this has been the practice of pious men in Israel since the close of the Talmud, especially Maimonides, who refuted doctrines antagonistic to the Torah.<sup>56</sup> He goes on further to say: "In our day anyone who wishes to add some secular knowledge to the knowledge he has already gained from the study of the Torah must try to understand Aristotle. He should, however, never lose sight of the Torah, for it comes before philosophy."<sup>57</sup>

This statement from Palquera's own lips suffices to show us the veneration in which he held Aristotle, and his conviction that at bottom the views of Aristotle do not controvert the truths implied by the Torah. As we go on with our analysis we shall see this love for Aristotle also in the pages of the Mebakesh, as well as his belief in the mutual agreement of the Aristotelian philosophy with the truths of the Torah. The main idea which he conveys to us, after we have waded through the labyrinthine maze of dialogue, arguments pro and con, of moral exhortation and scientific exposition which characterize this encyclopedic work of his, is this: the final goal of all of man's activities, the ultimate aim of all his thinking is to live the good life which comes from the true knowledge of God, who is the source of all truth and the cause of all existence. Both man's intellect and his character must work together towards the achievement of this end. Of all of the preoccupations of the intellect, metaphysics is the highest, since it deals with God. It now remains our task to deal specifically with



the main ideas of the book, indicating in the case of each its relation to the whole purpose of the book.

First of all, let us examine the manner in which Palquera's belief in the necessity of applying the knowledge gained by the use of the intellect to matters of tradition are reflected in the book. We find this idea expressed repeatedly in the dialogues between the seeker and the believer and the philosopher respectively. The believer exhorts the seeker to occupy himself completely in the study of the Torah, and (quoting Pirke Aboth) to "delve into it for everything is in it." "Grow old and hoary with it, and do not depart from it, for you haven't a better wisdom than she; and do not rely upon your own understanding." (p.99) In another place he says, "And I tell you that many of the thinkers weary their souls to find the reality of things and to get at their purpose, but their toil is in vain. And they are like him of whom the rabbis said, 'he dived into deep waters and brought up a potsherd in his hand.'" (p.93)

The attitude voiced here by the believer is the attitude of the anti-Philosophists whom Palquera is trying to combat. Palquera's own attitude toward the blind acceptance of tradition is expressed by the questions which the seeker addresses to the believer as to how he would answer certain heretical opinions regarding the unity of God, creation ex nihilo, immortality, etc. "I have heard people say," says the seeker, "that he who knows a thing by tradition is

like him who walks in the blackness of the night." (p. 92)

And again the seer clearly enunciates Falquera's attitude:

"It becomes clear to me that you have no interest in disclosing things which are obscure. All your knowledge is mere psycho-phancy, and your beliefs mere sham." (p.98)

To accept what is handed down through tradition on face-value, says Falquera, is to put ourselves on a level with animal life, because the exercise of reason is what distinguishes man from the beast. "He who trusts in everything (implicitly) is considered a dumb stone. He is like the beast, comparable to an ox eating straw." (p.13) However, he is careful not to minimize the importance of studying the Torah. Thus his philosopher tells us: "Guard your soul lest you forget the mandates of the Torah. For the belief in the Torah is the main thing, since it comes from God." (p.103) And again, "Make the study of the Torah primary, and the rest secondary. "But, he hastens to add, "you shall not believe in anything unless your intelligence ratifies it." (p. 103)

Thus, while not diminishing the need for studying the Torah, Falquera emphasizes the necessity of interpreting it by means of knowledge gained through the use of reason. In another of his writings he presents two ways of arriving at truth: (1) a study of the Torah and its main ideas, such as Unity of God, Creatio ex nihilo, God's providence over individuals among men and over species among

creatures, Reward and punishment, Immortality; (2) a study of the doctrines of the philosophers. <sup>58</sup> This proves conclusively that Palquera does not deny the truth of the fundamental principles laid down by the Torah, but seeks to substantiate them by means of philosophy.

This leads us directly into the subject of his method of Biblical interpretation, another of the important ideas in the Mebakesh. The Jewish philosophers of religion generally looked upon the Bible as a textbook of science and Metaphysics, symbolically written. Abraham and Sarah are symbolic of matter and spirit. The twelve sons of Jacob are the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The Urim and Tumim on the breastplate are the astrolabe. Palquera's own views are expressed in the conversation of the seeker with the sage and the believer respectively. The sage tells the seeker that a knowledge of the sciences is imperative for a true interpretation of the words of the Bible. "And he who seeks human perfection must busy himself with these sciences after he has occupied himself in the Torah, for then he will know that whatever is written in Genesis is truth to him who understands it. And there are proofs for it from common sense" (p.100) By the use of knowledge gained through studying the sciences, one can discern what is said symbolically and what is meant literally.

While the "Torah speaks in the language of man" (he quotes the rabbinic phrase) yet the statements of the Torah must not be taken literally unless they represent the believer's inmost convictions, "for this is nothing but sheer

hypocrisy." "Thus," says the sage, "faith is that which makes a man trust one who tells him something, and to rely upon what he tells him. And it is possible that he may tell him a thing which he himself does not believe, and by telling him the opposite of what is in his heart, be a liar." And for this reason many of the believers are in error." (p.99, 100)

The attitude which the anti-Philosophists held toward the allegorical method of scriptural interpretation is again reflected in the believer's rebuke of the seeker, when the latter had ventured to suggest the necessity for such an interpretation: "Speak to me no more about this, for to my mind he who stresses such things is a heretic....." "Furthermore, I wish to tell you something. Anyone who indulges in such matters increases pain, and will not escape trouble and worry throughout his life. Therefore, the believer in the Torah as it is literally understood is always joyous and happy....." "It is known that the man who relies upon his Creator and believes implicitly in His Torah necessarily believes also in the reward of a future life. He is not afraid of death, since he knows that his soul will never die....." "But the thinker and the overmeticulous in these matters are in doubt as to future reward, etc." (p.95)

In this way Palquera shows us how the opponents of philosophy misunderstood the motives of the philosophical allegorists, accusing them of destroying the very basis of all faith by undermining the principles of the

Torah. That is why he tells us over and over again in the book that the uninstructed are incapable of understanding these things and should therefore refrain from criticism or expressing their contempt. They should study the sciences, especially metaphysics, and then all this will become clear to them. Maimonides also, before him, expressed the same opinion:

"He who approaches metaphysical problems without due preparation is like a man who starts out on a journey and falls into a pit. He had better remain at home." <sup>59</sup> How deeply Palquera is indebted to Maimonides for his method of Biblical interpretation may be seen from the lavish praise he bestows upon the Moreh Nebuchim through the mouth of the sage. (p.101)

"Maimonides has composed in this connection a book called 'Moreh Nebuchim,' And it is a precious and profitable book, and a way by which to comprehend truth. And he clears up many doubts for him who is able to penetrate to the depth of his meaning." (p.101)

We now come to a consideration of Palquera's views about the soul and about human behavior as related to the ultimate aim of human endeavor. We have already seen how he bases man's final perfection upon two things, nobility of character and the attainment of the highest possible intellectuality. Maimonides gives expression to a similar view in his "Moreh Nebuchim," <sup>60</sup> which in turn is a modification of <sup>61</sup> Aristotle's views. Palquera analyzes human character into three distinct classes: (1) brute strength, which finds satisfaction in fighting and in the pursuit of physical



pleasures, (2) spirited strength, which prompts man to seek honor and fame, (3) Godly nature, which is preoccupied with the quest after wisdom and intellectual perfection. Men naturally fall into these three classes according as they are governed by one or the other of the three functions of the soul, the appetitive, (lowest) the spirited, (intermediate) and the cognitive, (highest) In his "Treatise Of The Dream," (ch.11) he states these three functions of the soul specifically, and that right behavior results when the highest, or cognitive soul controls the two lower souls. It is this that keeps man in the middle path, the "golden mean" of Aristotle.

Man must constantly endeavor to perfect the cognitive or intellectual soul in order to free it from the imperfections of matter, from bodily impurities. "In order that the strange and pure soul which shines with the light of wisdom may crave to ascend to the world of the spheres and attain the stage of perfection, which is the stage of the angels. And in order that it might be easy for it to depart from its natural habitation and from the bodily pleasures which surround it, and so that it may not suffer because of its separation from the things to which it was accustomed in this world." (p.119)

We are tempted here to trace this idea of the soul to the neo-Platonic theory of emanation. The only true activity of the soul is intellectual. In the intelligible world the soul has no body, but in this lower world it takes on a body. When the individual soul is moved

by an intellectual desire, and turns toward the source from which it originated, it remains with the Whole in the intelligible world. But when it does not do this, when it flees from the intelligible, then it grows solitary and weak and troubled, and looks toward the individual. It becomes entangled in the bonds of the body, and goes farther and farther away from the universal soul of which it was originally a part. Through mixing too much in bodily affairs and no longer contemplating what the soul ought to contemplate, it becomes impure, intemperate, deformed and sinful, addicted to matter. Therefore, in order to restore the soul to its pristine purity, that it may ascend to the realm of the intelligible, and become part of the universal soul, it is necessary for it to free itself from matter by shunning bodily pleasures and physical satisfactions. It is not improbable that Palquera was influenced in his conception of the soul by these neo-Platonic ideas, especially since we have seen that the Aristotelianism which he knew was mixed with some elements of neo-Platonism.

When we examine Aristotle's views concerning the soul, however, we see much that is parallel to them in Palquera. According to Aristotle, each individual organism possesses a soul. The soul of the plant organism has four functions: nutritive, sensitive, oretic and locomotive. Man as an organism differs from the plant in that he possesses these four, plus a fifth, the rational soul. (Like Palquera's cognitive soul) Reason or intellect differentiates

man from other natural organisms and approximates him to a supernatural substance, God. The intellect is the only power of the soul which has no bodily organ and which is therefore immortal, divine. Furthermore, it is the only part of the soul which enters from without and is alone divine because it communicates with no other bodily activity. We have seen how Palquera also stresses the intellectual function of the soul as the highest, and the one, which, if perfected and purged from bodily accumulations, can bring man to God.

The influence of Aristotle is especially to be seen, however, when we study the ethical ideas in the book. Perfection, says Palquera, lies in the middle path between two extremes, the "too little" and the "too much." It is not always possible to find the exact middle path or "mean." Thus we are easily liable to overeat or to lose control of our tempers at a moment's provocation. Since this is so, we should try to keep as close to the middle as we possibly can, striving to be moderate in all of our actions. We ought to discipline ourselves to seek the opposite of that which we like instinctively, for this will create a balance in our behavior. (pp.57-59) Furthermore, the conditions of well-being are relative. The "too little" and the "too much" vary in accordance with the occasion, the time and the place. (p.10) The things which are instrumental toward virtue are subject to change, depending upon the individual, the time and the season. Consequently,

man must constantly watch how his actions succeed at a given time and place. (pp.62-63)

What we have here is a rewording of Aristotle's theory of the golden mean in human conduct. Aristotle locates the good in human happiness. Happiness is an activity of the soul, requiring as conditions moderate bodily and external goods of fortune. Virtue he defines as:

- (1) Moral virtue, acquired by the habit of performing actions in the ~~man~~; desires are not to be excluded but moderated,
- (2) Intellectual virtue,
  - (a) Prudence of the practical intellect,
  - (b) Wisdom of the speculative intellect.

Let us carry the comparison further.

In the Mebakesh the seeker tells the Hassid that since he has acquired the creative capacity he should acquire intellect, for this is the goal. Perfection in deeds must be accompanied by perfection of intellect. (p.55) And in another place he tells us that man rules over the beast by virtue of intelligence and wisdom. (p.32) This is very much like Aristotle's classification of the "wisdom of the speculative intellect." as the highest form of virtue. The speculative life of wisdom is the happiest and the most divine, says Aristotle, while the practical life of prudence and moral virtue is secondary and human. Compare this with Palquera's

statement: "Being upright in your deeds, and having no defect in your doings, then hasten to perfect your intelligence, for then you will be perfect and none will compare with you."

(p.55)

Not everyone is congenitally capable, however, of pursuing the right line of conduct. "Just as things chosen by children are not chosen by adults, so the things chosen by the wicked are not chosen by the righteous. Every man chooses a way of life which complies with his nature; therefore, goodness is second nature to the righteous, while badness is second nature to the wicked....." "Every man is influenced by that which has a parallel in his own being, and despises a man of opposite tendency. He will invariably associate with a man of his own nature." (p.27)

It is only through the exercise of will-power, through the formation of desirable habits by constant practice and education, that man can learn to follow the right path of conduct, escaping from extremes and keeping to the middle path. Like Maimonides, Palquera seems to believe in the freedom of the human will. The free man he defines as the man who has insight into the good and the will-power to pursue it. The beast and the slave are those who have insight, but are lacking in will-power. In the field of moral selection, the law of causality does not operate as rigidly as it does in nature,



Palquera was decidedly not an ascetic or a misanthrope in matters of normal human desires and conduct. This is obvious from his ethical teachings, which he draws from both Judaism and the Aristotelian system. He constantly insists that man should not deny himself the things he enjoys, but to be moderate and discriminate in the enjoyment of them. Bodily strength, material possessions, the joy of creative physical and mental activity, are all necessary and desirable for human well-being, depending upon their use, and the time and place. Thus he says: "However, wealth is desirable, since it enables one to do good to others. But if that should not be the case, if the philanthropic spirit is not present, what is the use of material interests?" (p.22)

Finally, Palquera's admiration and dependence upon Aristotle's ethical views is to be seen from his recommendation of Aristotle's ethical works, "אפ'ר" 62 After telling the seeker that "virtue is related to the wisdom of behavior as dealt with in Aristotle's Ethics," the Hassid gives an outline of the contents of this work, enumerating the criteria of conduct which ought to govern the various phases of human relationships. (p.65) The Hassid also recommends the book of Proverbs as a reliable guide to moral conduct. That Palquera himself was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Proverbs and knew them by heart is evident from his copious quotations on almost every page of the book.

We have seen thus far how Palquera defines the ultimate aim of human endeavor as the pursuit of truth combined with the development of man's moral character. We have seen, too, how his conception of the soul is related to this main idea of both intellectual and moral perfection, and his insistence upon the supplementing of moral uprightness with intellectual pursuit. We must now concern ourselves with the specific means through which this development of the intellect is to take place, that is, with the sciences. In the following, therefore, we shall deal first with his classification of the various sciences, and then with his attitude toward the value and purpose of the sciences, especially toward that of the highest science of all, Metaphysics. (or Theology)

The Sepher Hammebakesh does not give us a systematic or explicit classification of the sciences. This Palquera does in his "Reshit Hokmah." Our discussion here, therefore, will be based upon whatever we have been able to infer from the fragmentary suggestions in the Mebakesh, supplemented by our study of Harry S. Wolfson's  
63  
article on the subject. Wolfson points out that it is not always easy to determine whether a given classification is Aristotelian or Platonic. By a comparison between Aristotle's classification and that of Palquera, we shall see, however, that the latter's is unmistakably Aristotelian, though differing from it in a number of essential points. The

chief factors which brand Palquera's classification as Aristotelian are his inclusion of Mathematics and his enumeration of both Logic and Metaphysics.

The Aristotelian classification was introduced into Arabic philosophy through the translation of Johannes Philoponus' commentary on Porphyry's "Isagoge."<sup>64</sup> He classifies the sciences as follows:

I.Theoretical;

- (a) Physics,
- (b) Mathematics,
- (c) Metaphysics,

II.Practical;

- (a) Politics,
- (b) Economics,
- (c) Ethics,

III.Productive--ars mechana.

The outstanding characteristics which determine whether any given classification is Aristotelian are: (1) the inclusion of Logic, (2) subdivision of certain sciences into specific branches, (3) new religious or practical sciences introduced, (4) rearrangement of parts of the classification, (5) substitution of some specific branch for a general science, as for example, Astronomy for Mathematics.

From the following characteristics of Palquera's classification, we see most if not all of these determining factors reflected. First of all, he mentions Physics, Mathematics and Logic together. Under Logic he

mentions also Rhetoric and Poetics. Mathematics he further subdivides into five divisions: Arithmetic, Geometry, Optics, Astronomy and Music. This is the quadrivium into which ~~Ammonius~~ Hermiae had divided Mathematics, plus the addition of Optics. Under the mathematical sciences Palquera also includes the theory of weight, perfection and technique. Furthermore, each of the quadrivium, with the exception of Astronomy, he again subdivides into theoretical and practical. Astronomy he divides into mathematical Astronomy, ( חכמת החזיון ) and astrology. ( חכמת הנסיון ) Only mathematical Astronomy properly belongs to Mathematics.

Under "technique" he includes many branches belonging to the mathematical sciences, as well as to the various practical arts and crafts. Thus he includes Algebra, the theory of equations, the art of making metrical, astronomical, musical and optical instruments; also the making of arms, architecture, sculpture and painting. These last three he describes as the working of צורות וגופות, bodies and forms.

Following Physics and Mathematics he places Metaphysics as the highest science of all. Both in the Sepher Hammebakesh, as we have pointed out in chapter II, and in his "Reshit Hokmah," he mentions Aristotle's three definitions of Metaphysics. In the Mebakesh he mentions also the practical arts. ( חכמת המעשיות ) Undoubtedly he includes these under his practical subdivision of the mathematical sciences into "technique." Like Isaac Israeli, he probably also includes Medicine under

## Physics.

Of greater interest to us, however, is the attitude which Palquera manifests in the Mebakesh toward these various sciences, his conception of their value and purpose, as well as that of the practical occupations of man. This attitude furnishes us the key to his whole philosophical outlook, to what he conceives to be the final goal of human endeavor and the aim of all thinking. We have seen that intellectual perfection must supplement moral character in the pursuit of the highest truth, the comprehension of God, that the truths which we get from tradition must be verified and substantiated by the knowledge gained through diligent study. "He who accepts a thing on faith is like him who walks in the blackness of the night." Palquera constantly maintains, like Maimonides, that through the application of knowledge, we shall ultimately arrive at the same truths which tradition has vouchsafed to us as divine revelation, (the dicta of the Torah) and that thereby we shall escape the possibility of a dichotomy between our religious beliefs and our inmost convictions, a condition to which the man of ordinary faith is only too prone.

First of all, let us see what Palquera says regarding the occupations which are not specifically sciences, such as preoccupation with wealth, the practice of medicine, the working in practical arts, and the study of Grammar. With regard to the gathering of wealth and

material possessions, we have already seen from the seeker's dialogue with the rich man the fact that the accumulation of excessive wealth and property only adds to the degradation of the soul, that it enslaves the intellectual soul to bodily affairs and hinders its achievement of immortality. Therefore the rich man is by his very nature incapable of moral and intellectual perfection. "It is impossible that there should be found among the qualities of the rich the qualities of righteousness and integrity, for the desires of the rich blind their eyes to the truth, and their ears become callous to instruction." (p.26) One more quotation. "The seeker said in his heart, 'now that the intention of the rich man has been made clear to me, and realizing that there is nothing in his prosperity, I will now turn to the investigation of the strong, and see wherein lies the goal of their strength.'" (p.28)

With the latter the reaction of the seeker is the same. "To what avail is the health of the body when the spirit is weak and goeth toward destruction?" (p.32) Thus he advises the athlete: "Seeing that your body is of a charming and robust constitution, without any defect but whole, and seeing that God gave you power and vigor, I warn you to take care to perfect your soul, to heal her diseases with words of wisdom, to see that the meditations of your heart be in understanding and that your eyes behold uprightness." (p.29)



As for the artisan, in answer to his statement that "no wisdom can compare with work, because through work man acquires every possession....."and therein God bestows his blessing," the seeker replies, "Since God has bestowed upon you an understanding heart, it is not enough that you simply work and consume therewith all the days of your life. But devote special time to contemplate the works of the Creator and His creations, and be diligent in the study of His laws and teachings." (p.34)

The physician too does not reach the desired goal. "Said the seeker to himself: 'of this art it might be said, just as you do not know the way of life in the full belly, (womb) so are you unable to know the works of the Creator who is omniscient.'"<sup>(1.53)</sup> We have given several other quotations in chapter II (p.19) showing Palquera's attitude regarding the value of preoccupation with medicine, his contempt for the blind cocksureness and the arrogance of the average physician.

Thus the practical pursuits of men are in themselves valuable only if they lead to the pursuit of wisdom and the development of the intellectual soul. "And when the seeker was through with the distinguished in arts that are bound up with bodies, and considered them insufficient for the attainment of the true rational qualities and of spirituality, he turned to the men who

are occupied with the intellect, peradventure there to find man's true success. For whatever he investigated in the preceding occupations, he found that it disappears with the destruction of the body, and that the beast and the animal have the same portion." (p.69) The dialogues which then follow with the pious man, the grammarian, the poet and the believer respectively indicate the same point of view, as we have already <sup>shown</sup> when dealing with them in Chapter II. To quote here from them would be merely repetitious.

It is with the preparatory sciences first, with Mathematics, Logic and Physics, and then finally with Metaphysics, that the true development of the intellect is to proceed. The knowledge of the preparatory sciences is prerequisite for an understanding of Metaphysics, the right understanding of which alone in turn can bring man to the desired objective, the knowledge of God and His ways. "If your heart desires to know things solidly, after you have busied yourself in Torah, set your mind to busy yourself with the sciences, and begin with the sciences which are preludes to the sciences of Physics and Metaphysics. Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and obtain <sup>a</sup> knowledge of God." "But," he adds, "you must watch scrupulously and guard yours<sup>elf</sup>, lest you forget the mandates of the Torah, and lest they be turned away from your heart. And you

must not accept the judgments of the thinkers, be they of major or minor import, which contradict the statements of the Torah. For the belief in the Torah is the main thing, for it comes from God, the exalted and the blessed." (p.102) Thus, the knowledge obtained from science, when applied to religious belief, must be calculated to confirm these beliefs and not to prove antagonistic to them.

However, the sciences of Logic, Mathematics and Physics themselves do not represent the highest stage of intellectual development. The student who contents himself with a knowledge of these sciences alone is still unprepared for an adequate rational evaluation of religious truth, for the correct figurative interpretation of the statements of the Bible, and, therefore, the true knowledge of God. "After these things, the seeker concluded that all of the men with whom he had debated did not reach the desired goal, since they were unable to answer his questions. And he perceived that some of them had heard about the King, but had not entered inside the court and did not see the King. Some of them were standing in the court, and some of them were even in the gate of the King. And some of them had been smitten with blindness and could not find the door." (p.145)

*Blindness*

The "gate of the King", to use Palquera's words, is Metaphysics. This is the only true science and the highest science, to which the other sciences are but necessary steps or preparations. "Know that you

will never reach the desired goal with these men. However, all their ideas are steps by which to arrive at it. It is true and established that the true success of man is the comprehension of his Creator and his attachment to Him. This is impossible without the knowledge of His creations, the apprehension of His unity, and the recognition of the fact that He is the cause of all creation. And the science which deals with this is the science of Metaphysics." (p.145) And in another place he says: "Most of your studies shall be in the metaphysical sciences, for they are the goal. All the things of this earthly world are insignificant and vain compared to the comprehension of the Creator and attachment to Him." (p.147)

Finally, a comparison between Aristotle's conception of the purpose of the sciences, and that of Palquera, is relevant here. Aristotle conceived of each science as having a aim or end which he called its good. It has a utilitarian purpose all of its own. Metaphysics, however, says Aristotle, has no utilitarian value, but is valuable for its own sake, for the mere sake of knowing. For Palquera, as well as the majority of Jewish philosophers who preceded him, the final aim of any science and particularly that of Metaphysics, is not pure knowledge for its own sake, but the knowledge of God and obedience to His laws and commandments. Intellectual perfection, combined with uprightness of character, can alone lead man to the knowledge of God, which in turn is the only sure guide to

right human conduct. This is the final aim of all human endeavor, and the goal of all of man's earthly activities and aspirations. In the words of Abraham Ibn Daud, "Like the arrival at a journey's end is one's attainment of perfection in the knowledge of God."<sup>65</sup>



NOTES

- 1...Shem Tob Ben Joseph Palquera, A Thinker And Poet Of The Thirteenth Century; Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series, Vol. I, 1910-11, p.152
- 2...Moritz David, in the Introduction to his edition of Palquera's "Reshit Hokmah," (Berlin, 1902) gives 1225-1290 as his dates. He derives this from the statement in the Sepher Hammekabesh in which Palquera says that he wrote the book in his thirty-eighth year, in the month of Cheshwan, 1263. By subtraction this gives us 1225 as the date of his birth.
- 3...Moritz David also tells us in note 2 of the above that Palquera was still living in 1290, when he wrote a defense of the "Moreh Nebuchim." This is preserved in the סנהדרין of Abba Mari Don Astruc, (Pressburg ed.1838) pp.182-185. Here it is called סכתב על דבר המורה. In this letter Palquera says that Maimonides' real aim in writing the "Moreh Nebuchim" was to refute those heretics who openly denied belief in the Torah, to save men from being influenced by philosophic speculation hostile to the Torah. It was also written, he says, to counteract the current belief in anthropomorphism. The antagonism to the book is due both to an inability to understand it, and to motives of jealousy. "Why go into deep waters if you do not know how to swim?"
- 4...This he tells us in his "Reshit Hokmah." *page 2*

5...In the Sepher Hammebakesh (p.12) he tells us of the general poverty which the Jews of his time suffered.

*read with time*  
"Every man beholds poverty as time passes, and becomes a wanderer in the land, seeking his food. Hardship comes from every side, and from every direction violence and affliction."

6...The following poem in the Sepher Hammebakesh (p.49) shows his attitude toward the physician:

"Time says to the fool, 'be a doctor. Kill man  
And take his money. You have an advantage over the  
Angels of death, for they kill men gratis.'"

For further quotations see p.19 of this thesis.

7...Sepher Hammebakesh, p.10, bottom.

8...Shem Tob Ben Joseph Palquera, A Thinker And Poet Of The Thirteenth Century, Henry Malter, J.Q.R., New Series, (Vol. I, 1910-11) p. 165.

9...Sepher Hammebakesh, pp.7,8.

10...Shem Tob Ben Joseph Palquera, A Thinker And Poet Of The Thirteenth Century, Henry Malter, J.Q.R. New Series, (Vol.I, 1910-11) p.170 .

11...ibid, p.170 .

12...Moritz David (Reshit Hokmah, Introduction, Berlin ed.1902) points out that this title, which appears in the Sepher Hammebakesh to be the titles of three different works, is in reality the title of a single work.

- 2
- 13..Although it was the French scholar Munk who first identified the "Me-kor Hayyim" with the "Fons Vitae" of Avicbron, to Palquera ultimately belongs the credit for identifying Gabirol with Avicbron, who for a long time previously was claimed by both the Arabs and the Christians.
- 14..The loss of such books as the שפר המבקש and the פירוש has been explained as probably due to the fact of their being suppressed by the anti-Philosophists because of their rationalistic tendencies.
- 15..Recently reedited from a manuscript in the British Museum by Henry Malter. See the Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series, Vol.I, 1910-11, p.451 ff.
- 16..See note 3.
- 17..Sepher Hammebakesh, Warsaw ed., 1924, p.11.
- 18..P. 76. Thus the seeker says to the poet: "It is not proper to waste away your days with the vanities of the singers, whose mouths speak vain things, whose mouths  *tongues* speak lies, who call good days evil and evil days good, who build their song upon a false foundation and truth is obscured in their words, who bite with their tongues and scheme things of iniquity, and also support the follies of the imagination. And they gather around themselves shallow men."
- Text
19. P. 87 top.
- 20..Shem Tob Ben Joseph Palquera, A Thinker And Poet Of The Thirteenth Century, Henry Malter, J.Q.R. New Series, (Vol.I, 1910-11) p.179.

*despise*

- 21..P.7. "To forsake the love poems enjoyed by knights who  
*are astray*  
*desert*  
*desire*  
ride about, and to cut off the songs of those who wander  
about, for this is vanity and deception; and to search out  
everything that is true, established, desirable and  
pleasant." And again he says, (p.8) "Therefore I have  
decided to cast behind me the pleasures of the day which  
are unalterably decreed for destruction, and I will not  
follow my usual sinful pursuits, but will direct my steps  
in the righteous path."
- 22..Reshit Hokmah, (Berlin ed., 1902) Introduction, note 5.
- 23..See p.8 of this thesis.
- 24..Song Of Songs, 7:14
- 25..The following poem is typical: "It is true that the poor  
man dies by the sword, because he has no strength. The  
sword, however, will kill him in honor, while the poverty  
kills him in shame." (p. 17)
- 26..See Index of authors.
- 27..Galen as a philosopher was not held in very high regard  
by the Jewish philosophers, especially Maimonides, having  
been eclipsed in importance by Aristotle.
- 28..See indices of authors and books.
- 29..See Index of books.
- 30..It is interesting to observe that, with the exception of  
the part astrology plays in medieval psychology, this theory  
of human behavior is quite modern in its psychological  
implications.

31..Palquera's attitude toward the pedantic grammarian is reflected in the following poem:

"The fool would have acquired understanding,  
And would have been counted among the perfect,  
If he had\* pursued wisdom.  
But he consumes his days in Grammar,  
(To find out) how the verb is formed from the root."  
(p.69)

32..See indices of authors and books. Concerning Saadia's commentaries the grammarian says: "There are also in them other views that were the views of the thinkers. And the latest thinkers have disposed of these views." (p.74)

33..Palquera's contemptuous description reveals the prestige which the clever poets of the time enjoyed: "With the charm of his lips he captivates souls, and with his pleasant words he lures princes of the earth. They pay him for the fruits of his sayings, and praise him in the gates. The savor of his oil is good, his name drips oil. Therefore young ladies love him. In his songs he elevates on high the princes of the people and their court, and he humiliates base men and those who act as such." (p.75)

elken

For other quotations see p.22 of this thesis.

34..See Index of authors.

35..Palquera's "Iggeret Ha-Vikkuach" contains also a dialogue between a philosopher and a pietist.



- 36..An Aristotelian idea, which Maimonides says Aristotle himself admitted he was incapable of proving, (Moreh Nebuchim II, ch.15) basing this claim on Aristotle's Physics, VIII, 1. Indeed, Maimonides confesses he would have rejected the Biblical account of creation if Aristotle had succeeded in proving the eternity of matter.
- 37..This was one of the crucial issues in the whole controversy between the Maimunists and the anti-Maimunists, in which Palquera took so active a part.
- 38..See Index of books.
- 39..For Pythagoras see Index of authors. Even if Palquera had not told us that the arithmetician was of the Pythagorean school, we might infer it from the similarity between his explanation of Mathematics and the mystical theory held by the Pythagoreans of numbers being identified with things.
- 40..Undoubtedly quoted from some Pythagorean writing.
- 41..Astrolabe. An instrument used for stellar, solar and lunar altitude-taking. There were two kinds, the spherical and the planespheric. Developed by Eratosthenes, Tycho and Hipparchus.
- 42..On p.141 we find the theory of the physicist. According to him, sight takes place because of impressions made by the stimuli coming from the object upon the fluid of the eye. This comes closer to the modern theories of vision.
- 43.. We have seen above, in the case of arithmetic, how the views of the Jewish scientists were influenced by the mystical neo-Platonic ideas. In Chapter III we shall again see this influence upon Palquera's idea of the soul. *l*

- 44.. The first six of these are the six books of Aristotle's "Organon;" (1) Categoriae, (2) De Interpretatione, (3) Analytica Priora, (4) Analytica Posteriora, (5) Topica, (6) De Sophistici Elenchi. The last two mentioned are the "Rhetorica" and the "Poetica," which are supplementary. These eight books are also mentioned by Maimonides, Alfara<sup>bi</sup>, Judah ibn Matkah, Moses de Rieti, and Judah ibn Bulat.
- 45.. See also Palquera's "Reshit Hokmah," p.48ff.
- 46... These definitions taken from Walter, "The Classification Of Sciences In Medieval Jewish Philosophy, H.U.C. Jubilee Volume, pp. 295ff.
- 47... Metaphysics VI, 1, 1026a, 13-14. See *ibid*, note 46.
- 48... De Anima I, 1, 403b, 10-12. See *ibid*, note 46.
- 49... Reshit Hokmah, pp.48-53.
- 50... There are two ways of referring to the physical writings of Aristotle: (1) reference to the titles or a description of the contents, (2) an independent list of topics not based upon Aristotle's writings. Sometimes these two methods are combined. What we have here is a description of their contents undoubtedly. The eight physical writings of Aristotle are: (1) Physica, (2) De Caelo, (3) De Generatione et Corruptione, (4) Meteorologica, (5) De Mineralibus, (6) De Plantis, (7) Historia Animalium, (8) De Anima.
- 51... Or, Theology. Palquera apparently makes no distinction between Metaphysics and theology. None of the medieval

Jewish philosophers clearly distinguish between these two terms. For the most part, they conceived them to be identical in scope.

52...See also "Reshit Hokmah," p.53. These three definitions of Metaphysics correspond to Aristotle's three ways of defining Metaphysics, which are restated, in part, by other Jewish philosophers, including Maimonides. The first corresponds to Aristotle's description of it as the science which deals with "being qua being--both what it is, and the attributes which belong to it qua being." The second, to his description of it as including the principles of Mathematics, Logic and Physics. The third, to his description of it as the science which deals with "something which is eternal and immovable and separable.  
(from body)

53...See Index of books.

54...This gives us an interesting insight into the hostility which metaphysical speculation encountered in Palquera's time. Maimonides, in his "Guide," devotes a whole chapter to the reasons why Metaphysics cannot be made popular. He gives five reasons why it is undesirable "to instruct the multitude in pure Metaphysics." (Guide, I, 34)

55...Guide, II, 11.

56...Quoted from Henry Adler, "Shem Tob Ben Joseph Palquera, His Treatise Of The Dream," J.Q.R. New Series (Vol.I, 1910-11) p.464.

57...ibid, p.465.

- 58...Treatise Of The Dream, Part II, Ch. 2.
- 59...Guide For The Perplexed, I, 34.
- 60...Guide II, 27; III, 54.
- 61...Ethics I, 8ff.
- 62...See Index of books.
- 63...The Classification Of Sciences In Medieval Jewish  
Philosophy, H.U.C. Jubilee Volume, pp. 263-315.
- 64...See Grabman: Die Geschichte der Scholastischen Methode,  
II, p. 30.
- 65...Emunah Ramah II, Introduction, p. 45.

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- 2. Hesh Gortman*  
*or really* *6/14*  
*1912X*
- Abitur, Joseph ben Isaac ben Steins Ibn. Talmudist and liturgical poet, who, according to statements made by Moses Ibn Ezra, and according to one of Abitur's own acrostic poems, was born in Merida about the beginning of the tenth century. Died in Damascus about 970. *much later*
- Alfarabi, Abu Nasr Mohammed. Arabian philosopher; born in Farab, Turkistan, about 870; died in Damascus about 950. His philosophical writings exerted great influence upon Jewish literature. Author of many essays on Aristotle's works. Praised by Taimonides as a distinguished scholar and a master of Logic.
- Alfasi, Isaac ben Jacob. Eminent Talmudist; born in 1013 in Kalat ibn Hamed, a village near Fez, in North Africa; died at Lucena, 1103.
- Amram, Isaac ben. Amram ben Isaac ben Shalbib. Ambassador of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castille, in the eleventh century. A Jewish diplomat given the name of Ibn Shalbib by the Arabs. Reputed to be a skillful physician.
- Al-Razi, Abu Bekr Muhammed b. Zechariah. An Arabian physician at the beginning of the tenth century.
- Aristotle. Great Greek philosopher. 384-322 B.C. Born at Stagira, hence called "the Stagirite." Author of voluminous works on Logic, Natural Science, Ethics and Metaphysics.

**Averroes**, Abul Walid Muhammed ibn Ahmed ibn Roshd. Arabian philosopher of the twelfth century; born at Cordova in 1126; died in 1198. Although a prolific writer on Philosophy and Medicine, his chief importance is as a commentator upon the works of Aristotle.

Expounded by Shem Tob Ben Joseph Falquera, who inserts lengthy extracts from Averroes in his books, the "Moreh Ha-Moreh," the "Hanhagath ha-Guf weha-Nephesh," and the "Sefer ha-Ma'alot."

**Avicenna**. Physician and philosopher of note; born at Bokhara, in 980; died in 1037. His works, which were brought to Spain about 100 years after their publication, exerted great influence upon Jewish thought in the Middle Ages. His chief medical publication is the "Canon," a complete system of medicine, which was used as a guide in European universities for five centuries. Falquera, who regards Psychology as an introduction to Metaphysics, is a true adherent of Avicenna's Psychology. "Have cognizance of yourself and you have cognizance of your maker. Falquera says of him: "Avicenna's works are exact, but incomprehensible to those unfamiliar with Logic." Maimonides says of him; "The works of Avicenna, although distinguished by tolerable accuracy as well as by subtlety of speculation, are nevertheless inferior to those of Abu Nasr Alfarabi; they are useful, however, and deserve to be studied."



Euclid. Greek geometer; flourished in the fourth century B.C. He is mentioned, perhaps for the first time in Hebrew literature, by Rabbi Abraham bar Hiyya (d.1136)

Galen. Greek physician and philosopher. Born at Pergamus, Mysia, about 131; died about 200. Eclipsed by those of Aristotle, Galen's philosophical works were not held in high esteem by the Jews. Maimonides cites them only when they are in accordance with his own views, as for instance, with regard to the impossibility of proving the eternity of matter (Moreh Nebuchim II, 15) Once he severely criticizes Galen, declaring that outside the field of Medicine he is no authority. (Pirke Moshe XXV) Palquera also shows slight respect for Galen's philosophy, declaring that in his later years the great physician wrote a work betraying ignorance of Physics. (Sefher Hammebakesh, p.33) See p.19 of this thesis.

Halevi, Judah. Spanish philosopher and Hebrew poet; born at Toledo, southern Castille, in the last quarter of the eleventh century; died in the Orient after 1140.

Ha-Nagid, Samuel. (Samuel Ha-Levi Joseph Ibn Nagdela) Spanish statesman, grammarian, poet and Talmudist; born at Cordova, 933; died at Granada, 1055.

Hayyuj, Judah b. David. (Abu Zechariah Yahya ibn Daud) Spanish-Hebrew grammarian; born in Fez, Morocco, about 950. Exact date of death unknown. Known as the father of scientific Hebrew Grammar.

Hippocrates. Greek physician; born in Cos, 460 B.C.; died at Larissa in Thessaly about 360 B.C. Had great influence and reputation in Middle Ages among learned Moslems and Jews, which increased as his works became better known by translation. Maimonides calls him ראש הרופאים, head of the physicians. Called "Abukrat" in Arabic. His medical principles exerted a deep influence upon the treatment of diseases among the Jews.

Ibn Ezra, Abraham. Scholar and writer; born in 1092 or 1093; died Jan. 28, 1167. Wrote Biblical commentaries and exegesis, a book on religious philosophy, called "Yesod Moreh," works on Mathematics, Astronomy and Astrology. Also wrote poetry.

*Isaac Ibn Ezra*  
Ibn Ezra, Moses. Spanish philosopher, linguist, poet; born at Granada about 1070; died after 1138; relative of Abraham Ibn Ezra and pupil of Isaac Ibn Gayyat.

Ibn Gabirol, Solomon ben Judah. Known also as Avicbron. Spanish poet, philosopher, moralist; born in Malaga about 1021; died in Valencia about 1058. Called by Graetz the "Jewish Plato," and by Steinschneider, "the most original philosophical writer among the Jews and Arabs."

Ibn Gayyat, Isaac. Spanish rabbi, Biblical commentator, philosopher and liturgical poet; born at Lucena in 1038; died at Cordova in 1089.

Ibn Gayyat, Judah ben Isaac. Spanish Talmudist and Hebrew poet of the twelfth century. As a poet he was held in great esteem by Judah Halevi, who composed four poems in his honor.

Ibn Janah, Jonah. Greatest Hebrew philologist of the Middle Ages; born at Cordova between 985 and 990; died at Saragossa in the first half of the eleventh century. Also became a skillful physician.

Israeli, Isaac ben Solomon. African physician and philosopher; born in Egypt before 832; died in Kairowan, Tunis, 932. Studied Natural History, Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy. Reputed to be one who knew all the seven sciences. Contemporary of Saadia Gaon. Wrote a work on the elements, "Sepher Ha-Yesodot," a medical and philosophical work which he treats according to the ideas of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen.

Kimhi, David. (ReDaK) French grammarian; born in Narbonne, 1160; died there 1235. Youngest son of Joseph Kimhi and brother of Moses Kimhi. Well versed in the whole range of Hebrew literature. Author of Biblical commentaries and works on exegesis. *Grammar*

Kimhi, Moses ben Joseph. (ReMaK) Commentator and grammarian; older brother and teacher of David Kimhi. Presumably lived together with his father and brother in Narbonne, and must have died about 1190.

Maimonides, Moses ben. (Rambam) Talmudist, philosopher, astronomer, physician; born at Cordova March 30, 1135; died at Cairo Dec.13, 1204. Unreservedly construed theology as Metaphysics.

Plato. Great Athenian philosopher; born in 427 B.C., and lived to the age of eighty. His literary activity extends over the first half of the fourth century.

Ptolemy. Celebrated mathematician, astronomer and geographer. A native of Egypt. Place of birth uncertain.

Pythagoras. Real personality surrounded by myth and legend. Born in Samos, probably in the last half of the sixth century B.C. Developed the mystical side of the Greek religion. Pythagoreans were preeminent in their application to the problems of science particularly of Music, Mathematics, Medicine, and astronomy,----and of philosophy.

852  
Saadia ben Joseph. (Sa'id al-Fayyumi) Gaon of Sura and founder of scientific activity of Judaism; born in Dilaz, upper Egypt, 892; died at Sura, 942. After Philo, the first great writer in post-Biblical Judaism.

INDEX OF BOOKS

Commentary On The Mishna, by Maimonides. Finished in 1168, in Arabic, under the title of "Siraj." (Illumination) Its object is (1) to facilitate the study of the Talmud, which had become difficult through its diffused discussions, through the interpolated explanations of the Geonim, and through the commentaries of his predecessors, which were not always pertinent to the subject; (2) to determine the right practice (Halacha) from the confusion of diverse arguments; (3) to define his position by short but comprehensive explanation of words and things.

Ethica, אֶתִיקָא, by Aristotle. Aristotle was known to the Jews of the Middle Ages as an ethical writer. This is the "Ethical Letter" found among the ethical epistles of the physician Ali ibn Rodhwan. (contained in al-Harizi's translation in "Debarim Attikim," edited by Benjacob) Palquera reproduces this "Letter of Aristotle" in the Sepher Hammebakesh.

Maachoth Rav Alfasi, הלכות רב אלפאסי, (Also called "Sepher Ha-Halachot.") by Rabbi Isaac b. Rabbi Jacob Alfasi. A shortened form of the Talmud in the language of the Mishna and Gemarah (Hebrew and Aramaic). In three volumes, (1) Berachot and Moed, (2) Noshim, including Hulin, (3) Mezikin, and part of Kodoshin.

Mah She-achar Ha-Tevah, מה שאחר הטבע, "What Comes After Nature." A commentary on Aristotle's "Metaphysics;" by Averroes. This was translated under the same title by Kalonymous b. Kalonymous in 1314. This may be what Palquera has reference to on p. 147 of the Sepher Hamnebakesh. Other translations were made by Kalonymous of Averroes' commentaries on the "Organon," (הגיון) the "Physics," (הטבע) and the treatises "De Caelo," "De Generatione et Corruptione," "Meteorologica," "The Soul," and "The Letter On Union."

Mibchar Hapnininim, מבוחר הפנינים, "The Choice of Pearls." Said to have been written by Rabbi Solomon b. Gabriel in Arabic, and translated into Hebrew by Rabbi Judah bar Saul ibn Tibbon. And some ascribe it to Rabbi Yeddaya Hapnini. If so, it was composed in Hebrew and not in Arabic, with which the latter was unacquainted. It contains short ethical teachings from the works of the previous philosophers regarding the conduct of man and the development of good qualities.

Mishneh Torah, משנה תורה, of Maimonides. "Religious Code," completed in the year 1180. An encyclopedic collection of Talmudic material, classifying all details under their appropriate headings, and showing how the Talmud is based on the Bible.

new dig. by Maimonides!



Moreh Nebuchim, **סורה נבוכים**, "Guide For The Perplexed," of Maimonides. A religious and philosophical work completed about 1190. Of importance not only for Judaism, but for the history of Philosophy in the Middle Ages generally.

Sepher Harrikmah, **פרקמה**, by Jonah ibn Janah. Written in Arabic and translated into Hebrew by Rabbi Judah ibn Tibbon. A book of Hebrew Grammar, divided into chapters.

Sepher Hashoroshim, **פרק השורשים**, by Jonah ibn Janah (also called Jonah baal Hakkenofaim) A book of all the Hebrew roots in Arabic.

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