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THE PROBLEM OF THEODICY

IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAIMONIDES

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DIGEST OF THESIS

Beginning with the Leibnizian definition of theodicy, the thesis traces some of the development of the term, and its biblical origins upon which Maimonides bases a good deal of his own justification of God. The presence of evil in the world is attributed by Maimonides, to a very great extent, to the negative nature of matter and, more specifically, to the corporeality of man.

A fundamental principle of the Maimonidean philosophy is the reality of Divine Providence which orders all things for the best according to the plans and purposes of God. But the limitations of human intelligence prevent man from ever seeing the full unfolding of that plan. However, to the extent that men posses intellectual powers, capable of development and influential in the exercise of free-will, it is possible to come to some form of understanding of, and even to cooperate with the unending process of creation.

The object of trials and suffering is a manifold one, ranging from publicizing God's justice to a finer appreciation of the improving human situation. The exact workings of such justice and methods of Divine retribution, by themselves asserted to be a reality, escape human comprehension. The resolution of the dilemma that is posed on the one hand by an unquestionably just God and, on the other hand, by the frequent outward manifestations of evil, must be sought along

rational lines, for it is only in the absence of philosophic wisdom that man questions God, and is left perplexed by the incomprehensible turns of his fate.

The case of Job provides a good illustration. In the absence of wisdom he complains, but when he fully realizes his limitations and consequently understands the wholly-otherness of God, the issue is resolved and his faith in God only strengthened.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION OF PROBLEM

"Evil is a radiation of the human consciousness at certain transitional stages. The physical world itself is not really an illusion, but only its evil, which, however, admittedly constitutes our picture of the physical world". (1)

The term "theodicy" is derived from two Greek words: θεός (God) and δικη (Justice), which literally means "the (or a) justification or vindication of God".

In this distinctive sense Leibniz was first to use the term. In 1697 he intended to employ it as the title of a proposed book, and thirteen years later the book entitled "Essais de Theodicée sur la Bouté de Dieu, la Liberté de l'Homme, et l'Origine du Mal" duly appeared (2).

The full impact of the problem of theodicy, the thoroughly provoking question of "Si deus bonus, unde malum?", can only be fully appreciated when God is recognized as wholly good, and evil as truly evil (3). Indeed the questions of a teleology or a theodicy of the universe are the final questions and the most fascinating for philosophy, and especially for

modern philosophy; but they are also the most tantalising. They are just those where philosophy most conspicuously breaks down, whether as an avenue to reality or as a guide to life (4).

In the matter of theodicy, philosophy points out two questions. In the first place it poses the question of suffering and, secondly, it deals with evil as sin (5). But in addition to a philosophical theodicy, there is a religious theodicy. In the former, evil is explained - or an attempt is made to explain it - in the light of the divine goodness; in the second, evil is not explained in any way but is to be overcome (6). The English writer, P.T. Forsyth, maintains that a religious theodicy is not "an answer to a riddle but a victory in battle". (7). William Fulton, writing in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Morals, cites in agreement the following description of theodicy in D.C. Macintosh's Theology as an Empirical Science: "While this world is far from being as yet the best possible world, nevertheless in view of its general constitution it may be regarded as the best possible kind of world in which to have man begin his development, and... the evils which exist in the world furnish us good reason for abandoning belief in a God who is both good enough and great enough to meet every religious need" (8)

Philosophy on this issue, however, remains a close ally to theology, for it does help to deal with evil, As

Prof. Cohon writes "In its struggle with evil, religion sometimes resorts to the philosphic way of dealing with the problem, because an analysis of the nature of evil, of its origin and of its operations tends to remove much of its poignancy if not its reality". (9)

The pill of suffering is a bitter one and hard to swallow. The chronicle of man is also an accounting of his trials and pains. From the days of primitive man to this very day human beings have not been exempt from physical suffering or from mental anguish. And frequently the sufferer feels that his lot is an undeserved one. Royce pointed out "that, in our moral world, the righteous can suffer without individually deserving their suffering, just because their lives have no independent being, but are linked with all life". (10) Any observer of the human situation has no choice but to admit that vicarious suffering is, indeed, a reality of life.

By the time of Leibniz the history of the dilemma of God permitting evil has achieved considerable length. Leibniz himself confronted the issue by considering the thought of some who tried to solve the dilemma. It was, by and large, an approach that posited God as omniscient and, therefore, capable of foreseeing evil, and possessing omnipotence, in position to prevent its occurence. The Socinians, Conrad Vorstius

and Thomas Bonartes found one way out of this dilemma by denying that God has knowledge of details or of future events. Another way out was sought by those who maintained that God does not have to account for His acts, He acts "simply at His will and pleasure" (11). Both these "solutions" are emphatically denied by Leibniz, whose philosophy on the issue of theodicy may be termed "teleological optimism" for, avoiding the empirical world, he postulates - on the grounds of sufficient reasn and the idea of divine perfection - that this is the best of all possible worlds; for, were a better world possible, God would have chosen it. God is absolutely powerful, wise and good; and His goodness moved Him to create and produce all possible good, His wisdom led Him by a moral necessity to the choice of the best, His power enabled Him to execute His great design. (12)

Leibniz, in the course of his justification of God, wrote: "I show how it is possible for everything to depend upon God, for Him to cooperate in all the actions of creatures ... and nevertheless not to be the author of sin... I explain how evil has a source other than the will of God, and that one is right, therefore, to say of moral evil that God wills it not, but simply permits it". (13) He classifies evil into three groups. Evil can be metaphysical evil, consisting of mere imperfection, and because of the nature of matter it is necessary. The other two groups of evil, namely, physical evil which con-

sists in suffering and moral evil in sin, are not necessary, but they are possible. (14) God himself never actually wills evil to come into the world. But it can be, and it is a means to an end. By preventing greater evils or helping to obtain a greater good; by showing how one's ways can be mended, or as an example, evil has a function that ultimately "serves to make us savour good the more; sometimes,too, it contributes to a greater perfection in him who suffers it, as the seed that one sows is subject to a kind of corruption before it can germinate". (15)

The men of true faith, Leibniz felt, must conclude that evil is never more than apparent. The true Christian can not ascribe to God the creation of evil. "And it is not to be doubted that this faith and this confidence in God, who gives us insight into His infinite goodness and prepares us for His love, in spite of the appearance of harshness that may repel us, are an admirable exercise for the virtues of Christian theology..." (16)

The critics of this optimistic position had little difficulty in raising some poignant questions. To say that our world is the best possible one becomes a paradox. A Catholic writer asks: "If by a better world is signified a world in which there is less of physical and moral evil, nothing is plainer than that no impossibility is involved.in

such conception. And granted that such a world is intrinsically possible, how is it that omnipotence cannot bring it into being?" (17) Moreover, according to the Leibnizian concept evil is taken to be instrumental and ultimately a means of good. Even moral evil could not be prevented by God without the subversion of the freedom of man which makes morality possible. This doctrine, as can be seen, rests primarily on metaphysical considerations, and another critic describes Leibniz's Theodicée as a piece of "superficiality incarnate" and as a "cold literary exercise, whose cheerful substance even hell-fire does not warm" (18). And while such statements may be going too far in attacking a work of a good deal of integrity, they nonetheless point to the inadequacy of Leibniz's solution for the modern age, and perhaps even for his contemporary society.

From the eighteenth century, when theodicy achieved independence in becoming a unique branch both in theology and philosophy, the path back to the twelfth century and to a consideration of Maimonides' attempts to deal with the problem must first be detoured to the ancient world, and seen there in the light of a critical approach that became critical only very gradually. For in a world of poly-demonism good and evil limited each other, and were themselves limited by the natural order. This uncritical approach held equally good in the case of polytheism when the gods themselves were subject to fate and the world was never completely under their domination.

It is different in the case of monotheism which posed the problem quite clearly, but not in every instance. In Persian religion, for example, a dualism in the nature of the divinity was put forward, and of the two opposing forces (good and evil) the good was promised to carry the final victory. Furthermore, unlike the early biblical views, some religions like Stoicism and Brahmanism limited the extent of the problem by minimizing evil or by reducing evil to mere illusion. (19)

In turning now to a consideration of theodicy in Judaism it must first be recognized that "in the religious thinking of Israel the feeling of God's omnipotence increased as time went on". (20) Yet as this development continued, and was accompanied by growing faith in the unity of God (monotheism), there also arose the belief in the goodness, the justice and the wisdom of God. The disharmony between such a God and the encountered evils in the world was, at first, hardly noticed. Yet such a religious system and the existence and the success of the wicked were in the kind of incompatibility that was recognised as such. Nonetheless "this fact was simply negated by the repeated asseveration that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked". (21).

Our chief source for early Jewish views on the problem of good and evil is the Bible. Moreover, it is important

to bear in mind, that text must be read without resorting to later commentaries or even to the Targum, whose approach is a good deal more critical and reflective. And what does emerge is the fact that the Bible, while recognizing the reality of evil, does not define its nature. Evil is recognised as serving a disciplinary function, and capable of being overcome through a choice between good and evil. And by affirming God's authorship of both good and evil (22) the problem is only heightened and not conclusively solved. Throughout the Bible the problem is approached from the practical, rather than from a metaphysical standpoint. The overall orientation of the Bible is an optimistic one. (23) In the long run only can God's working be seen, and seen for what it really is: a movement toward righteousness and perfect felicity. (24) The principle of "one for all and all for one", the notion of collective suffering took some time in giving way to individual responsibility, but by the time of Jeremiah the evil that comes upon people was to be ascribed to their own shortcomings. Job is not the prototype of man, but a unique person who tries to understand his destiny in terms of a unique situation.

The problem as it is dealt with in post-biblical and medieval philosophy is clearly formulated in the Talmud in the well-known statement: ל. , ו ס ו ק ל. ו ם ו ג ו ל ו ם (25). The phrasing has remained a standard one in Jewish thinking. It takes cognizance of observable

reality, it affirms the fact that the wicked do in fact prosper and many of the righteous have to undergo privation. While there are certain naive solutions offered in the discussion of the problem on the basis of the second commandment (26) resulting in statements like: צדיק ורע לו , צדיק בן רשע ורשע בן צדיק and רשע בן צדיק, the problem is not put aside lightly. Theodicy became the problem if not for religion as a whole, certainly for the religious person.

By the time Maimonides came to deal with the problem all its implications had to be grappled with, and he took to the task with a freshness of approach and an analytical point of view. All the deficiencies in the world, not only evil, for which freedom of the will is responsible (as will be shown later), apparent imperfections of nature, sickness, death, hunger and suffering leave the perfection of God untouched, because they derive from the defective state of matter alone, and are no positive evil at all, but are only the absence of perfection, as darkness is the want of light. (27) Besides the world should not be considered from the point of view of the purposes and desires of man, who complains so much about its defects; for man is in no way the ultimate goal of the Universe. (28) He also calls attention to the fact that the whole problem of evil grows out of the anthropocentric view of the world. (29)

The importance of the subject of theodicy for Maimonides is clearly stated in the Introduction to the third part of the מורה נבוכים, where he writes: לפי הענין הנכבד והיקר הגדול, אשר קיוו יתע שהכל תלוי בו ודאוג שהכל נשען עליו. (30)

Much of the development of Maimonides' philosophy can be traced to Aristotle and subsequent commentators, and especially to Aristotle's Metaphysics. Yet, in common with most of the Jewish metaphysicians, Maimonides is primarily concerned with the theological aspects of Metaphysics. (31) He defines theology as being divided into two parts. "One of them is the study of every being which is not matter nor a force in matter, that is to say, of whatever appertains to God, may his name be exalted, and also, according to the philosophers, to angels; for they deny that angels are corporeal, and they call them transcendent intelligences, that is, separated from matter. The other part of theology studies the remote causes of the subject matter of the other sciences, and is called both divine science and metaphysics". (32)

Coupled with viewing the universal scene through the theological lenses were also the eyes and the heart of the human philosopher. He saw that there is, seemingly, no system in human affairs. Indeed it is possible to see that יש

קלת המסורים קתיים רעים מכעיסים וקלת
(33) אנשים רעים בהויים לובים ונדבים.

The dilemma became all the more intense in that Maimonides acknowledged not only this inequality in what appears as unmerited suffering, but that he, at the same time, upheld the perfection of God. מושכל מלשון חוא בלאסבק, שהשם צדיק
(34) שיתעלה לו כל משלמיות, וירוחקו מעליו התסרונית.

The solution that many found to this dilemma consisted in branding man as a born sinner and thus remove from God the onus of injustice. Maimonides rejects this solution emphatically when he says "... no man comes into the world with either innate virtue or innate vice..." (35). He makes this even clearer when he contends that "it is as impossible that man should be born virtuous or vicious by nature as it is impossible that he should be born master of any particular art or profession by nature". (36). This does not, however, mean that man is pure or virtuous for the remainder of his life. Through the choices that he makes in the course of his life he can control his character. And among the many diseases that confront men, there is also a particular kind of mental disease that can corrupt the moral fibre. These "men of diseased minds contract a desire and liking for wicked dispositions (as diseased bodies long for harmful foods)" (37). It is in this fashion that man becomes liable to punishment and not through anything innate. And, as will be shown later, it is in this manner that God's perfection never suffers detriment of any sort.

The age-old question: what constitutes the good?, receives a surprisingly relativistic answer from Maimonides. He points out that what we call "the good" is that which agrees with the object of our seeking. הטוב אשר יאמר האדם (38). But it does not follow at all that evil is that to which we have aversion. On the contrary, it has an outward manifestation all its own, and surveying the several occurences of it, Maimonides classifies evils into three distinct groups (39).

The first grouping is based on the concept of the changeability and destructability of matter. Man, who is composed of matter to a very great extent, is, therefore, subject to mutation and injury. By his very nature, man is susceptible to natural evils such as disease, pain, accidents and death. The second class of evils is more numerous than the first, and these evils are those that are inflicted upon man by his fellow-creatures. Though not frequent among individuals, this is certainly the case in times of war among nations, and against this kind of evil the individual has little protection. The third and largest class of evils are self-inflicted. Indulgence, greed, ignorance and the strivings after unnecessary things take a heavy toll in energy, health and the ability to see things in proportion. Subsequent suffering can only be classed as self-inflicted suffering.

That man could escape his self-inflicted suffering can be seen from Maimonides' analysis of the constitution of causality. "There are four essentials to causality: matter, form, agent and purpose... man (therefore) belongs to the natural order, his matter is life, his form is the rational faculty, his purpose is the attainment of ideas, and his agent is the one who gave him his form or his rational faculty, because by "agent" we mean the creator of form in matter, and this is God, blessed be He, even according to the philosophers". (40) However, what emerges as the positive principle (though negative in character) of evil is matter, a notion that re-appears in the philosophy of Ibn Gabirol and in the Cabbalah (41) as well as among Western philosophers.

In the following chapters attention will be directed at Maimonides' concept of Providence, his analysis of trials and suffering, as well as the significance of Job, and conclude with his suggestions for a solution to the problem of theodicy.

CHAPTER II

PROVIDENCE AND FREE WILL

Man's moral and spiritual nature is predicated on his freedom in Judaism. Bible and Rabbinic literature alike proclaim man's ability and even duty to choose between ever-present alternatives. And side by side with the freedom of man God, too, is free in the exercise of His will. The task of man is to bring the course of his will into harmony with that of his Creator. This is summed up in Deuteronomy with the words: "I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live". (1) The tradition of the Bible is furthered and corrected to some extent in the Apocrypha. The Book of Enoch states:

"Sin has not been sent upon the earth,
But man of himself has created it". (2)

And Ben Sirah taught:

"Say not: 'From God is my transgression',
For that which He hateth made He not". (3)

As philosophic speculation grew in Judaism, under Hellenistic influence, the problem of the relationship between man as an undetermined agent and Divine providance was presented in all its acuteness (4). Philo posits freedom as the essence of man's being and yet man has something divine in him.

The Essenes, on the other hand, denied man all freedom and held that fate ruled all human destiny; while the Pharisees attempted a synthesis which is summed up by: הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים.

Jewish thinkers in the Middle Ages came to the problem also by way of philosophic reasoning. "Their reflections were stimulated by the controversies in Christianity on this subject and especially by the divisions which arose in Islam between the advocates of freedom and the upholders of determinism... Libertinism and fatalism thus constituted the Scylla and Charibdis of the spiritual life". (5) Maimonides begins to grapple with the problem by surveying the views of the "philosophers" on God's providence. Two alternatives arise inevitably when we consider the apparent injustice in the realm of human suffering. Either God is ignorant of the particulars in life and does not perceive them, or He does perceive and know them. In the latter event three possibilities become apparent. First, it can be maintained that God's management of human affairs leaves nothing more to be desired. Second, God has too many stumbling-blocks in His way and is powerless to overcome them successfully. Third, God could manage human affairs quite well, but He does not care to do so because He is capricious or considers men unworthy of His care.

By and large philosophers reject the view that God is powerless, or that He is not concerned with human affairs. If they did not, the implications of God's weakness and evil disposition would be only too clear. Therefore, there remain only two possibilities. Either God is ignorant of human affairs or He knows them and manages them well (6).

These views came to Maimonides mostly from the work of Alexander of Aphrodisias, a treatise On Providence (7). His criticism of these views is quite comprehensive. In the first place they generalize (contrary to their principles) on the basis of selected individual instances. Furthermore, they maintain that perception can only come through the senses, and not by means of reason, and thus deprive God of knowledge of earthy things. Carried to their conclusion, the philosophers' opinion also contradicts some basic tenets of the Bible. Namely, that God has no pre-science, nor does He have knowledge of individuals, but only of species (8). It remains for Maimonides to demonstrate in Chapter 17 of the Moreh that God has knowledge of individual beings.

Among the several theories of Providence Maimonides first turns to that of Epicurus for a more thorough examination. He understands this theory to mean that עיין המשגחה כללה דבר מן הדברים בכל לה המציאות.

It denies Providence for anything in the universe. There is no being that rules and governs; all parts of the universe owe their origin to chance and accident. Maimonides is content to disprove this theory with Aristotle's argument, who is cited to have shown that there is a ruling and governing מסדר ומנהיג being (9).

Aristotle's own theory is summed up by Maimonides in the following way: קנין הדברים יש בתוך השגחה והם בהנהגת מנהיג וסדר מסדיר וקנין נעדר ואונע על המקרה. God controls the spheres (10) and all that is in them, and this accounts for permanence in the universe. All other beings derive their existence from the spheres, but do so as species and not as individual members. To the extent that individual beings in each species have some of the materia prima (11), subject to relative development in individuals of a species, the individual does come to that extent under the influence of Providence. Thus individuals have temporary existence and there is preservation of the species. However, all other movements that are made by individuals are the result of accident and not subject to Providence (12).

The Moslem Asharites developed a theory of Providence that attracted the attention of Maimonides. The Asharites were an orthodox school of the Mutakallinum, disciples of

al-Ashari of al-Basra (880 - 940) and according to Maimonides had no influence on Jewish thought (13). Their position was as follows: אין בכל המציאות דבר מאליו כלל, לא בלא ולא בדבר, אבל הכל בדין וכונה ומשפט. And it follows that he who rules must know that which is under his dominion. They had to assume, in order to be consistent, that all is predetermined, and man is totally void of free-will. Everything that happens is due to the will of God, and they imply that the actions of God have no final cause (14).

Yet another theory of Providence is discussed by Maimonides before dealing with the Jewish concept. It is that of the Mu'tazilah, a separatist movement founded by Wasil ibn 'Ata in the eighth century, whose two basic principles are freedom of the will and the absolute unity of God which repudiates the attributes (15). לאדם יכולת ... פעולות. מפני כולם נעשים אלה מתבונה. And because all of God's acts are due to wisdom there is no injustice found in Him, nor does He punish the good. Maimonides objects to this theory on the grounds that it is absurd and contradictory to maintain that God does no wrong but that it is not wrong to punish the innocent. Similarly, their position viz. on the one hand God knows everything, and on the other man has free will, is contradictory (16).

The Jewish view on Providence is generalized as follows: בענין תורת משה רבינו ע"ה וכל מי שמשקר אומרים, הוא שאדם בעל יכולת במעשיו. The biblical concept, according to Maimonides, is two-fold. First, man acts by his own nature, choice and will; there is no separate faculty created for this purpose. Indeed it is the Will of God that man should have free will and choice within the limits of his own capacity. Second, no manner of wrong can be ascribed to God. Both good and evil, individual and collective, are the result of justice, administered according to strict principles. From the slightest to the greatest calamity God's justice is at work, "only we are ignorant of that judgement" (אלא שאנחנו יכולים לומר: הדין המוכל) In the varying human affairs, then, everything depends on the merits of man.

Turning to the Talmud, Maimonides finds the same notion continued. In B.T. Sabbath (55a) it is clearly stated: אין מיתה בלא חטא ואין יסורין בלא עון and in Mishna Sotah (1:7): במדה שאדם מודד בה מודדים לו. The idea of God, according to the Tannaim and the Amoraim, necessarily implies the idea of justice. The new element that the Talmud adds to the teachings of the Torah is the concept of יסורין של אהבה. Accordingly, it is possible for one free of sin to be afflicted, but it is solely for

the sake of a greater reward in the future. Maimonides indicates that this view is identical to the one held by the Mu'tazilah and lacks scriptural support, for the latter is concerned only with relations between man amd man. Even the sages of the Talmud are strangers to this concept, and its inclusion among the doctrines of Judaism is due to the Moslem influence exerted upon the Gaonim (17).

Maimonides' own concept is not based on demonstrative proof (ראיה), but rather on the interpretation of the spirit of the Torah and the teachings of the prophets (כוונת תורת השם וספרי הנביאים). The Aristotelian doctrine limiting divine Providence to the spheres, and having only indirect effects on sub-human affairs is modified, but not rejected totally, in a way that establishes a rather sharp dividing line between man on the one hand, who comes as an individual under the direct influence of divine Providence; and, on the other hand, the rest of the species found in the universe, the individuals of which are bereft of divine Providence, and operate according to chance.

Rather than class species, events and individuals into one "sublunary class" as does Aristotle, Maimonides establishes a system of proportionate divine influence. From the Prophets he adduces, furthermore, the concept that

God's direct influence is in relation to human beings only. In addition he discerns among men varying degrees of intellectual attainment and potential. Thus the following proposition is espoused: Divine Providence operates in connection with, and in proportion to, Divine intellectual influence.

Excluding the non-human group presented something of a problem to Maimonides. However, the Aristotelian classification of species into mineral, vegetative, animal (appetative) and intellectual, coupled with the statements of Habakkuk (18) which clearly indicate that animals have no divine protection or direct rule over them - enable Maimonides to uphold his position that at best God's providence only extends to animal species, but never to individuals. Should this seem unjust, and should one wonder why man alone is endowed with intelligence, Maimonides has three possible answers: "It was the will of God; it is the decree of His wisdom; or it is in accordance with the laws of nature". Yet another justification for this division rests on the argument that were there no difference between men and animals the social order would be disturbed, and the moral and intellectual virtues of man would be shattered (19).

The following syllogism may be constructed on the basis of Maimonides' concept of Providence.

with reference to individuals
Major premise: Divine Providence/is proportional to the person's intellectual development.

Minor premise: Only individual beings can attain a share of divine intellect.

Therefore it follows: Divine Providence acts only on individual beings who have activated their intellectual capacity (20).

Divine Providence to men acts in varying proportions. לא תמיכה ... ההשגחה האלוהית בבני אדם כלם בשוה.

Unlike Halevi, Maimonides does not make a qualitative differentiation among intelligences. The intellect is of the same kind, but different men have varying proportions of it. It follows from this that the greater the human perfection attained by man, the greater is his benefit that is derived from divine Providence. Conversely, the "ignorant and disobedient" person, lacking in intellectual attributes, will also lack in providential divine influence, and they thus become reduced to the level of the non-rational beings (who do not come under divine Providence as individuals).(21) The expression of נפש, soul, is interpreted to mean not the breath of life which the body requires, but that quality of the soul, i.e. that intelligence which comprehends as much of the Creator as is in its power (22).

The relationship of God to His created things would not be complete without its corollary, namely that of man to

God, and the extent to which man is a free agent. However, before this can be analyzed it is deemed necessary to consider the Knowledge of God. One of the objections to the reality of a divine Providence (or even its need) is the argument that God has no Knowledge of the world, or that even if He has, He does not care. Maimonides maintains first, that God's Knowledge is one, yet embraces many different kinds of objects. Second, it applies to things not yet in existence. Third, it comprehends the infinite. Fourth, it does not change; and fifth, that God's Knowledge does not determine the outcome of eventualities (23). "God fully knows His unchangeable essence, and, therefore, has a Knowledge of all that results from any of his acts. If we were to try to understand in what manner this is done, it would be the same as if we tried to be the same as God, and to make our knowledge identical with His knowledge" (24).

The very term "Knowledge" is one of three terms that are used homonymously by "philosophers and ordinary people" that have one kind of meaning when employed in connection with God and quite another when they are ascribed to men. In addition to "Knowledge" (ידיעה) they are "management" (השגחה) (see discussion above) and "intention" (כוונה) (25).

This homonimity of the term "Knowledge" has misled people, for they overlook that while "the words are the same

when speaking of God's Knowledge and that of man, the things designated by them are different" (26). Many schools of philosophy assert at various times that God can have no Knowledge of a non-existing thing or of infinite things; that He can have no knowledge of transient things, but knows only that which is constant and unchangeable; some go even so far as to hold that He does not know even things that remain constant, for then His knowledge would include a plurality. "The cause of error of all these schools is their belief that God's knowledge is like ours". Nothing is further from the truth than this case: "His knowledge is not the same kind as ours, but totally different from it and admitting of no analogy" (27).

The limitations of the human mind are heavily underscored. "It is not in the power of man to comprehend or fathom the knowledge of the Creator (i.e. the manner in which He knows things)... it must be admitted that we have not the power of understanding how the Holy One, Blessed be He, knows all creatures and their doings... and this fact (that man, in spite of this, has freedom of action) is not ascertained by revelation only, but also by clear scientific demonstrations" (28). It is only out of sheer ignorance that one can say "God does not know". לפי זה יובן קצת מאד, כ"ל מה שאמרו בו הסכלים מהאחרי השלת השם, מפני היות ידיעתו שונה מידיעת בני אדם המושרשים בטבעות בלתי מסוגרים.

And this seeming lack of system is aggravated by the fact that what arrangement there is in human affairs, is not in accordance with the desire of every human being. (29) It is important to bear in mind that "God does not know things by a knowledge distinct from Himself as men do; ... but He and His knowledge are one" (30).

Another limitation takes the form of a discipline. Man is not to question the object of God. We ask neither what is the purpose of God's existence, nor that of His will. לשיטתו למאמין שפה המציאות כלו מכוון מאתנו יתעלה לפי רצונו ולא נבקש לו עלה ולא תכלית אלהית כלל, כמו שלא נבקש תכלית מציאותו יתי כן לא נבקש תכלית רצונו (31). Maimonides points out that the Universe was not brought into existence for the sake of man. הוכיח שלפי למאמין במציאות כולם שהם מפני מציאות הנבדלים, אבל יהיו ש"כ שאר הנמצאות כולם מכוונות זולתן לא מפני בגד אחר. That is to say, every being exists for its own sake only, and not for the sake of some other thing. Stated even more explicitly יאמר כל מה שיתואר לפי רצונו אמנם שאינו למען רצונו לא לענין זה. Anything that is described as "the work of God" is for the sake of God's will and for no other reason (32).

Yet man has a will too. And it is a free will that, contrary to the deterministic view, forms one of the most important principles in the philosophy of Maimonides. Indeed, free-will is held by him to be the pillar of the law and of the commandments. Deut. 30:15 and 11:26 are cited "signifying that the power of doing good or evil is in your hands, and that any of the actions which are within the reach of man, he has free agency to choose between good and evil" (33). Free-will is part of creation. The verse in Genesis: "Behold, man of himself knoweth good and evil" (34) set man up as a unique being among creation in that man knows by himself, by his own knowledge and reflection, what is good and what is evil. Moreover, there is not any one to prevent him from carrying out any of the alternatives (35). Free-will is granted to every man. "If he desire to incline towards the good way, and to become a righteous man, he has the power to do so" (36). Maimonides is fully aware that there are many passages in the Bible that apparently oppose this principle of free-will (37), yet to agree with them would be tantamount to ascribe injustice to God. "Far be it from us to attribute such manifest injustice to the Diety! In reality, it is an unquestionable fact that man's actions are all dependent on his own free will, without any absolute or irresistable necessity to control him. This free-will renders him capable of obedience or disobedience

and makes it possible to hold him accountable to the commands of the law" (38). The suggestion that man is controlled in his actions by external forces is emphatically rejected. "Know that man's actions depend solely on his own free-will: he either does right or wrong according to his own determination, without being controlled by fate or pre-destination" (39). Determinism, simply has no place in the philosophy of Maimonides. There could be no stronger assertion than the following: "Give no room in your minds to that which is asserted that.... a man, from his birth, should be either a righteous man or a wicked man... it is man himself, who, by his own knowledge, inclines towards the way which he likes best" (40). The verse from Lamentations is cited as proof: "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good" (41).

It is interesting to note that Leibniz follows very closely in the footsteps of Maimonides on this issue. "It is untrue", he writes, "that the event happens whatever one may do: it will happen because one does what leads thereto; and if the event is written beforehand, the cause that will make it happen is written also. Thus the connexion of effects and causes so far from establishing the doctrine of a necessity detrimental to conduct, serves to overthrow it" (42).

Maimonides does not go so far as to deny any determined causality either. It is an error, however, to see the

spheres regulate the fate of an individual. אין ספק שגלגלי
אומרים שתכלית גדלו מגלגלים הנתלית בגוף
מדיני אדם או אנשים רבים, ע"כ משל, היה לפי
שקר לפי דעתיהן הפלוסופי. Nonetheless, the spheres
may have a general kind of influence on mankind as a whole (43).
As to the meaning of the rabbinical maxim: 'Everything is in the power of providence', Maimonides supplies a naturalistic interpretation. "They (the rabbis) mean the natural course of events, which are not influenced by the will of man: as, for instance, whether he is to be tall or short of stature, whether the season is to be rainy or dry, whether the air is to be clear or hazy; and all other events which have no connection with the actions or purposes of man" (44).

It still remains to reconcile the omniscience of God and His omnipotence with the fact that all men are not righteous, or that all of the actions of man are not good. Maimonides holds that God knows that among a given group of people there will be both righteous and evil men, but the wicked can not say that "it was already decreed" because God spoke "in general terms that there would be wicked men in Israel, in the same way as it is also said in general terms that 'the poor shall never cease out of the land' (45)". (46).

The compatibility of Creator and free-will becomes a matter of Divine intention. Just as natural phenomena have characteristics that were accorded to them by the inclination

of the Creator, so "was it also His pleasure that a man should be possessed of free will, that all his actions should be left to himself, and that there should not be anything so compel or involuntarily to attract him, but that he, by himself, and by the knowledge imparted to him by God, should be able to do all that a man can do" (47).

In the last analysis the issue must center around the questions that would arise if there were no free-will. If man's actions were determined by God, Maimonides asks "How could He have commanded us through the prophets: Do this, and avoid that; mend your ways, and go not after your wickedness; if man was from his birth doomed, or, if he is involuntarily drawn by his nature to one alternative which he has no power to resist? What standpoint would there have been for the whole of the divine law? And by what justice, or by what right, could He punish the wicked man or reward the righteous?" (48). On the other hand, it remains nonetheless questionable for Maimonides whether man can really do all that he desires.

CHAPTER III

TRIALS AND SUFFERING

It has been shown that Maimonides conceives of man to be under the influence of divine Providence while at the same time he is a free agent responsible for his own actions. The difficulty is obvious: how does it come about that man acting in accordance with his choice and guided by his intelligence nevertheless is afflicted with suffering? In addressing himself to this difficulty, Maimonides first considers the notion that trials and tests may be employed by God as a means of publicity. He noted that in connection with biblical trials the term ידע - "to know" - is frequently used. He takes this to mean not merely as Knowledge on the part of the individual or group who are subject to the trial, but as Knowledge conveyed through example to mankind in general. Through the trial the worth of the tried individual or group is manifested to all who come in contact with an account of it. The notion that God sends trials to find out something He did not know previously is emphatically rejected (1).

Some biblical examples are examined in the light of this utilitarian theory, which, in fact, seem to bear out the Maimonidean concept. The first example is that of the manna which provided sustenance to the people, though at the same

time they were lacking in fresh foods. Two alternatives are possible: either the manna shows that faith in God will result in His providing sustainance for man; or that God wished Israel to become accustomed (לנסותך) to some hardship before entering Canaan. The theory is "Transition from trouble to ease gives more pleasure than continued ease" (2).

Another example is found in the fact that the Israelites had to wander for forty years in the wilderness before they were permitted to enter Canaan. The theory here is that "Ease destroys bravery, whilst trouble and care for food create strength". The wanderings of the Jews gave them the stamina that nation-builders must possess, and was lacking totally in the newly freed slaves (3).

The Akkeda story illustrates two vital principles. One is that it shows how Abraham ~~xxxxxxxx~~ hastensto offer his son, not because he is afraid for his own safety, or that God would make him poor, but in the end he does offer Isaac solely on the grounds that it is man's duty to love and to fear God, even without hope of reward or fear of punishment; and thus the story shows the extent and limit of the fear of God. The other principle that the story illustrates has far-reaching consequences on the issue of prophecy. This is the first instance in the Bible where a man believed in the truth of

that which came to him from God as an inspiration, or rather as a vision and a dream. And in this manner the truth of prophecy is given testimony for all time (4).

Trials also teach religious truths that mere theories could not adequately impress in the human consciousness. In the Book of Job (which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter) Bildad expresses the idea that punishment is often an excuse for a future reward. This view is not shared by the majority of Jewish tradition, and Maimonides speaks out against this notion in no uncertain terms, maintaining that the very reverse of this principle is true. Punishment is the result of some neglect or shortcoming and, at the same time, he makes a distinction between punishment and trials. The object of the trials in the Bible is not to indicate feats of God's justice, but rather to drive home a lesson about conduct or belief. The trial itself is a נסיון לדעת אמונו ויראתו (5). (Prof. Bacher writing on this matter states: "Die mit dem Begriffe der Versuchung verbundenen Schwierigkeiten werden gehoben, wenn man die betreffended Stellen nach folgenden Regel erklärt. Überall, wo die Torah von der Versuchung eines Einzelnen oder des Volkes spricht, ist nicht die einzelne Handlung, mit welcher die Versuchung bewerkstelligt wird, der Zweck derselben; ihr Zweck ist vielmehr, dass durch sie die Menschen im Allgemeinen erkennen, was sie thun und was sie glauben sollen" (6).

Evil, as Maimonides sees it, is the result of man's doing. Man is mistaken not only to think that creation exists for his sake alone; he is equally wrong to suppose that the evil that befalls him is due to some imperfection in the universe. Rather, רוב הרעות הנופלות באנשים הם מעצמם, כל אחד מהם בפני עצמו, ומתסרונות תינו נעשק ונבקש דוד, ומהרעות נעשה אותם בעצמנו בהם מתענין נכאב ונתפסהו לשון, תלולה לו ממנו. (7)

At the same time when some men are suffering from plagues or ~~other~~ diseases, while others escape them, their bodily constitution has nothing to do with it. Rather it depends on their degree of perfection. יאמר כשיש לאדם אחד מן האבות ובאמריכים ונופל קצתם בהם, אינו לפי בחותם הגופיים והבנויתיהם הטבעיות, הוא שאמרו כי לא בכח יגבר איש, אלא הוא לפי השלמות והתסרון, כל קרבים אל השם או רחוקים ממנו. (8)

Even the man who is aware of his wrong-doing (and thus liable to punishment), and would willingly atone for his shortcomings, cannot do so for, Maimonides maintains, "Atonement can never be complete unless afflictions come upon (the offender)" (9). This is qualified by explaining that such rule applies only in cases where God's name has not been profaned, but if a man offends against God he will not get atonement, regardless of the afflictions that come upon him, until his death.

It may justly be asked what determines happiness or ruin. The answer lies in the degree of obedience to the Law. "Whenever we fulfill all the Commandments of the law, all the divine happiness of this world will reach us; and, whenever we trespass against the same, the evil things recorded in the law shall befall us" (10).

The methods of punishment may take one of three forms. First, when the sinner is punished in this world, on his body or through the property he owns. Second, when he is punished in the world to come, and escapes all harm in this life. Third, he may be subject to punishment in both worlds (11). The chastisement in this life is various; sometimes it is bodily, as illness; sometimes it is pecuniary, as poverty; sometimes it is both at once. And in the same manner that undertakings (whose performance is ordinarily in man's power) are frustrated in order to punish him - as, for example, a man's hands may become lame so that he can do no work, which was the case with Jeroboam, son of Nebat; or that a man loses his eyesight, which was the case of the Sodomites assembled before the door of Lot's house - so likewise the opportunity and the inclination for repentance may be withheld from the sinner as a meet punishment for his crimes. Accordingly, he perseveres in his impertinence until he perishes in his wickedness (12).

Maimonides is aware that the human mind constantly questions the actions of God, notably when afflicted by some pain or loss. He, therefore, counsels "not to endeavor to penetrate the motives of Divine Justice, or the profundity of Divine Wisdom, and to decide why precisely such a punishment, and no other, has been inflicted" (13). Such speculation would be both presumptuous and unprofitable, similar to attempting to decide "why different species of animals vary in their conformation; or why the hare is not a lion. It is sufficient for us to know that the attributes of God are justice and mercy..." (14).

There is, however, one instance in the Bible that seemingly places a bad light on God's justice. It is the well-known case of the hardened heart of Pharaoh (15). The rabbis themselves felt that it raised some difficulties in the path of their doctrine of salvation (16). Maimonides, too, wonders why Pharaoh's heart was hardened. And could he be punished for not doing an act that God-inflicted hard-heartedness clearly prevented? One answer is that such men as Pharaoh "were not punished because they refused to do that which... was become impossible for them; but their hardness of heart, and consequent misfortunes were the punishment incurred by their previous crimes" (17). Pharaoh first sinned with his free-will, but such was the extent of his guilt that "justice required" that he should be unable to make penitence, in

order that he may be punished (18). Maimonides also cites the example of Sihon, the Canaanites and the Israelites in the time Elijah, whose sins caused God to withhold repentance from them. But ab origine God did not decree that they should act in this or that particular way (19).

The greatest punishment consists in that man is prevented from becoming penitent. He is not granted the power that may redeem him from certain destruction.

"Make the heart of this people fat,
And make their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they, seeing with their eyes,
And hearing with their ears,
And understanding with their heart
Return, and be healed". (20)

This passage clearly expresses the idea that God can deliberately exclude the possibility of re-generation as a means of punishment (21). "At the time when an individual, or when the inhabitants of a country happen to sin... it is but just to punish him for it" (22).

Another punishment which attains to gigantic proportions is "the retribution than which there can be no greater (and) consists in this: that the soul is cut off and does not attain unto Heavenly life... it is that destruction from which

there is no recovery, and that ruin which admits of no reparation" (23). At the same time the reward of the righteous is the attainment of bliss and the enjoyment of felicity (24).

Bliss and felicity abound in the עולם הבא. Maimonides enumerates the various misdeeds and crimes that deprive man from partaking of it. Grounds for exclusion may be doctrinal (i.e. heretical), ethical, moral or criminal. Specifically mentioned are the following categories: those

a). who deny the Torah.

b). who deny the resurrection of the dead and the coming of the Messiah (25).

c). who have become apostates.

d). who cause others to sin.

e). who depart from the accepted practices of the congregation.

f). who commit sins presumptiously and in public.

g). who inform against their neighbors.

h). who use the congregation as a means of furthering their self-interest.

i). who shed blood.

j). who slander their fellow-men.

k). who violate the Abrahamic covenant (26).

The Apicursim forfeit their right to the world-to-come, notably those who deny the truth of prophecy (and especially

that of Moses) and those who deny that God has knowledge of the actions of men (27). In addition there are two kinds of sinners who are doomed through their transgressions: those who transgress only one commandment, but persistently and presumptuously (regardless of the weight of the commandment); and, those who transgress the entire body of the law (especially if there is general apostacy, as at a time of religious persecution) (28).

Atheism or modifying monotheism (מינות) leads to similar damnation. The following doctrinal heresies are classed:

a). denial of the existence of God and Providence.

b). belief that Providence consists of two or more dieties.

c). ascribing corporeality to God.

d). denial of God's primacy, and

e). the worship of any being besides God, or the positing of such being as an intercessor (29).

Yet the power of atonement, unless it is specifically denied to the sinner, can redeem man even at the last hour of his life. Only if the sinner dies without repentance, does he forego his share in the world-to-come. "But if he turn from his wickedness, and die a penitent, then such a man has a share

in the blessings of the world-to-come, for there is nothing which cannot be atoned for by repentance" (30).

Sin for Maimonides is the internal sense of deficiency due to the inadequacy of human consciousness of God. On the above doctrinal issues, it may be said, that sin has no objective existence in the sense of being a conscious act on the part of a distinct personality. For when the individual, through repentance, does acquire a consciousness of God, his former shortcomings are forgiven. It is almost tantamount to the Hegelian concept of sin being a necessary stage in the transition from ignorance to virtue. The very quality of the soul, as analyzed by Maimonides, indicates that man is somehow destined to undergo an endless process of purification which will ultimately reveal within the consciousness the reality of God. The human soul is unique. Maimonides states that "the quality of the soul is not composed of the elements (i.e. fire, air, water and earth), so that it ever could be decomposed into them... but it proceeds from the Lord, from Heaven; therefore, when the matter, which is composed of the elements, become decomposed, and when the breath of life also perishes (for the "breath of life" as opposed to נפש is part of the body), that quality is nevertheless not destroyed, because it does not in its functions stand in need of the breath of life... and it lasts for ever and ever" (31).

Finally, Maimonides does not fail to take into account the principle of retribution. Having shown that man has a will that is free to choose between alternatives, it follows that he "is judged according to his actions; if he doesthat which is good, good is done unto him; and if he do that which is evil, evil is done unto him" (32). This principle, moreover, is not limited to the earthly life alone, for, in common with Jewish tradition, Maimonides believes that in the future all men will have to give an account of their doings.

The first part of the introduction to Perek Chelek is devoted to a consideration of the hereafter (33). Following the traditional teaching, Maimonides holds that the resurrection of the dead applies to the righteous only, and and justifies this opinion by the statement in the Midrash: "God's power of causing rain to fall is both for the righteous and the wicked, but the resurrection of the dead is only for the righteous". It is impossible for the evil-doers to live after death. For "the wicked are called dead even during their lives, but the good are called living even after their death" (34).

Maimonides enumerates five eschatologies. The first is the traditional belief that the Gan Eden is reserved for the righteous with the conventional notions of heaven and hell.

The second is the belief which expects the flowering of bliss in the days of the Messiah, who will live as long as God, and during this time all the righteous shall live like kings, but the bliss will be denied to the wicked. The third view holds that future bliss will consist in the resurrection of the good for eternity, while the wicked shall not be granted awakening. The fourth position regards the reward of the righteous as consisting in the attainment of all worldly goods, such as wealth, long life, good health and fertility, while the wicked experience the opposite of these conditions "such as we have at this time of our exile". The fifth opinion is a synthesis of the other four which claims that the righteous will experience the advent of the Messiah, the resurrection of the dead, entry into Paradise and the material enjoyment of goods to the end of time.

The above ideas are gleaned from literal interpretations of the Bible as well as from rabbinic teachings, and Maimonides attacks them sharply on the grounds that they are the result of an irrational approach. The novel idea advanced by Maimonides is that Heaven and Hell do not refer to the hereafter, but to this side of the grave, to a good social order. Gan Eden is a place of great fertility (on earth) for the righteous, and Gehenna entails suffering for the wicked. The Messianic era will mean a restoration to the land of Israel, where an ideal king or Messiah will rule with wisdom,

justice and piety. This is the correct meaning of the statement: "All Israel have a portion in the world to come" (35).

In the Hilchot Teshuva Maimonides defines his conception of the hereafter even more clearly. By Olam Haba, he understands the bliss which is stored up for the righteous. It is life devoid of death, and good unmixed with evil. The merit of the righteous entitles him to this state, while the penalty of the wicked consists in forfeiting this life by being "cut off" so that they perish like beasts. In the future world, moreover, there are no bodies, but only the souls of the righteous, incorporeal like the angels (36).

The exact method whereby distinction can be made between righteous and wicked is the secret of God. The human mind cannot fathom Divine justice. What becomes evident is that where evil deeds outnumber good ones, death and destruction are the consequence. This rule applies to individuals as well as to communities, countries and the entire world. At the same time Maimonides contends that "the balancing of merits and failings" does not take place on the basis of numbers, but rather it is a qualitative judgement. It is God alone who "knows how to estimate the good deeds against the wicked ones" (37).

CHAPTER IV

THE LESSON OF JOB

The "strange and wonderful" (1) Book of Job treats the problem of theodicy more honestly and fully than any other part of the Bible. The story conceives of a man whose integrity is beyond doubting, and is nevertheless afflicted by almost unbearable suffering. God gives Satan permission to test Job's faith, and the ensuing trials become the object of discussion and controversy among Job and his friends. The friends of Job had a universal concept: God can do no wrong. Job's position was that the evil that he fell him was real, and came with the knowledge of God, yet God is just. At first this would appear to be tantamount to saying that blind faith alone can justify the actions of God. But Job's attitude does not lead to blind faith. He insists on remaining a unique person in a unique situation.

The temptation of Job, however, was a twofold one: either to adopt a blind faith, and through affirming God to deny himself; or to take a skeptical attitude and deny God while affirming himself. Job does neither. Instead he contends with God, and even when he repents, he does not repent of the contention, but of his temptation to do away with God. In the end both God and Job are vindicated, and it is only natural that Maimonides should find in the book valuable material for his exposition of the problem of theodicy.

Apart from considerations as to the literal truthfulness of the Book of Job, as opposed to the notion that it is a work of fiction (and Maimonides sides with the latter view), the basic problem is summed up in one sentence in the twenty-second chapter of the Moreh (Part III): היות האיוב התם השלם הישר המאשין הירא מאלוה מן החטאים יתולו בו רעות גדולות ותכופות באמונו ובניו ואהבו אליו אלוה תמיד.

The purpose of the Book of Job as Maimonides conceived it is expressed by Bacher as follows: "Das Buch Hiob hat den Zweck, diesen Grundartikel des Glaubens festzustellen und durch den Hinweis auf die den Naturdingen zu entnemenden Beweise den Irrthum zu beseitigen, als ob Gottes Wissen, Gottes Absicht, Leitung und Vorsehung den unseren gleichen, Wer dies erkannt hat, so lehrt das Buch Hiob, wirdt leicht jedes Missgeschick ertragen, in ihm wird durch die Missgeschicke nicht der Zweifel an Gottes Wissen und Vorsehung, sondern vielmehr die Liebe zu Gott zunehmen, wie das in dem Bekentnisse Hiobs (2) ausgesprochen ist" (3).

Job and his friends were of the opinion that God Himself was the direct cause of what happened, and that Satan was not the intermediate cause. To Maimonides this justifies a curious feature of the book, namely that wisdom is not ascribed to Job. Intellectually "steht er nicht auf der

höchste Stufe" (4), the terms חכם, מבין and משכיל are never used in connection with the protagonist (5). It may be added that were Job truly wise the entire work would have been superfluous, for he would have understood his fate instead of being perplexed by it.

The analysis of the book serves another useful purpose for Maimonides. It enables him to identify the various characters in the biblical account with members of the various schools of philosophy most influential in his own days. Job is the spokesman for the Aristotelian school, and so is Eliphas; the Mu'tazilites are represented by Bildad, and the Asharites by Zophar (6).

The views of Eliphas, furthermore, reflected that of the Scriptures as well. Eliphas holds that Job's fate was in accordance with strict justice. In spite of Job's apparent innocence and uprightness, there had to be some guilt in him to deserve the punishment. At the same time, he admits that man does not necessarily know all of his punishable shortcomings, nor the way in which his punishment is meted out (7).

Another popular view, and one not too different from that of Eliphas, and corresponding to the school of the Mu'tazilah, is expressed by Bildad the Shuhite:

"If thou wert pure and upright;
Surely now He would awake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy
righteousness prosperous.
And though thy beginning was small,
Yet thy end should greatly increase.
For inquire, I pray thee, of the
former generation,
And apply thyself to that which their
fathers have searched out -
For we are but of yesterday and know
nothing..." (8).

The position of Eliphas is modified by looking at punishment not so much as the result of shortcomings, but as an a priori condition for reward. In the future world Job's earthly suffering will prove to be a source of much good and bliss (9).

The views of the Asharite school find their counterpart in the position of Zofar the Naamathite.

"But oh that God would speak.
And open His lips against thee;
And that He would tell thee the
secrets of wisdom,
That sound wisdom is manifold!
Know therefore that God exacteth of
thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

Canst thou find out the deep things
of God?
Canst thou attain unto the purpose of
the Almighty?
It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?
Deeper than the nether-world; what canst
thou know?" (10).

Accordingly, the Will of God fully determines the course of human events, and consequently the actions of God defy explanation in terms of justice or wisdom (11).

Unlike Job and his three friends, Elihu cautiously introduces a new concept into the consideration of God's justice and human suffering. From the treatment Elihu's words receive, it is safe to assume that Maimonides' own point of view is contained in them. Indeed, there are several new and bold innovations in Elihu's views.

"Behold, I answer thee: In this thou art
not right,
That God is too great for man...
For God speaketh in one way,
Yea in two, though man perceiveth it not.
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men,
In slumberings upon the bed;
That men may put away their purpose..." (12).

Through the metaphor of the angel, expression is given to the concept of prayer and intercession.

"If there be for him an angel,
An intercessor, one among a thousand,
To vouch for man's uprightness;
Then He is gracious unto him and saith:
'Deliver him from going down to the pit,
I have found a ransom'...
He prayeth unto God, and He is
favorable unto him;
So that he seeth His face with joy;
And he restoreth unto man his
righteousness" (13).

There is a connection between intercession and deliverance, but not a necessary one. Furthermore, by directing attention to natural phenomena (14), it becomes quite evident to all thinking persons that the organic realm is a highly complex and organised one, quite beyond the ability of human productivity. Yet human beings also create and produce, but on a totally different level. At this stage the analogy (or rather the lack of it) assumes its true proportions. If man is not to be compared to God as far as creativity is concerned, how much less can there be any sort of parallel between God's rule and management, and human rule and management. Maimonides stresses this point time and

again, and once more the reminder comes: "We should not fall into the error of imagining His knowledge to be similar to ours, or His intention, providence and rule similar to ours" (15). Such is the lesson of the Book of Job. To take full cognisance of the phenomena of nature and faith and, by implication of a benevolent but unknowable Divine Providence, human suffering will become bearable, doubts concerning God will be removed and "our fate will increase our love of God". Like the pious, who, according to the Talmud, עושין מצות והדרה ונשמתן מיסורין (16) so shall men become upon possessing a clear understanding (17).

The problem of the authorship of evil is raised by the Book of Job as well. "Now it fell upon a day, that the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came also among them" (18). With a sudden start (ויבוא גם השטן בתוכם) Maimonides interprets this verse as indicating that there is a real difference between Satan and the sons of God, in that the former is inferior to the latter and has, therefore, no power over the soul (19). Satan "is in relation to the beings above and has no place among them". Job is handed over to him, and from the time that he is given into the charge of the adversary, all of Job's troubles stem from Satan and not directly from God (20).

According to the Talmud, Satan is identified with death, and also with the Evil Inclination. Maimonides goes

further, and sees the word שטן as a derivative of √שטה "to turn away", implying the notion of turning, and moving away from a thing; and Satan "merely turns us away from the way of truth, and leads us astray in the path of error" (21). But, inasmuch as man possesses a soul that is capable of receiving Divine Intelligence and over which Satan is denied to have any power, man can refuse, as Job indeed does, to follow him.

It still remains to vindicate Job. The rabbis felt that Job denied Divine Providence and complained against God.

> "It is all one - therefore I say:
> He destroyeth the innocent and the wicked...
> Wherefore do the wicked live,
> Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?...
> One dieth in his full strength,
> Being wholly at ease and quiet;
> His pails are full of milk,
> And the marrow of his bones is moistened.
> And another dieth in bitterness of soul,
> And hath never tasted of good.
> They lie down alike in the dust,
> And the worm covereth them" (22).

Such words were, in fact, blasphemous (23) and they could only excuse Job on the grounds that

that is to say, he was too pained to be able to watch his words.

Maimonides disagrees with the rabbis' views, and sees in the complaints of Job a lesson of a different sort. Namely, as has been pointed out earlier, Job complains in the absence of wisdom. As soon as he understands God in a true fashion, he ceases to blame God and is praised by God Himself (24): "For ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath" (25).

CHAPTER V

SOLUTIONS AND SUMMARY

It is not possible to resolve the problem of theodicy for all times. A dogmatic assertion about the goodness of God, or the necessity to suffer can do little more than shelve the issue until the time of suffering actually arrives. At best it is feasible that the individual resolves the problem for himself. Religion can, and does, provide certain suggestions. A philosophy of religion can, and in the case of Judaism does, offer an analysis and a synthesis; but beyond that the individual must draw his own conclusions and formulate his own conceptions of God's justice.

Inasmuch as Leibniz was cited at the beginning of this analysis it may be proper to see where his optimism concerning God's justice leads. He writes that God "being inclined to produce as much good as possible, and having all the knowledge and all the power necessary for that, it is impossible that in him there be fault, or guilt, or sin; and when he permits sin, it is wisdom, it is virtue" (1). In the long run the evidence of a great deal of evil does not deny the goodness of the total. "... In supposing that the number of the damned exceeds that of the saved... one might admit that there is more evil than good in respect of the human kind known to us. But... that neither precludes the existence of incomparably more good than evil, both moral and physical,

in rational creatures in general, nor prevents the city of God, which contains all creatures, from being the most perfect state". (2). Leibniz finds support for his optimism in the philosophy of Maimonides which he understands to mean that a view of the universe in toto is necessary prerequisite to a full understanding of evil. "Maimonides, writes Leibniz, "is right in saying that if one took into account the littleness of man in relation to the universe, one would comprehend clearly that the predominance of evil, even though it prevailed among men, need not on that account occur among the angels, nor among heavenly bodies, nor among the elements and inanimate compounds, nor among many kinds of animals" (3). This does indeed vindicate God in the larger view, but it is an optimism that can hardly expect many human adherents.

It is a basic tenet of Judaism that God can not be known fully by mortal man. One may suggest that were such knowledge of God possible the existing evils, through becoming relative evils, would become bearable and perhaps seen as no evils at all. Such possibility, however, is excluded by Maimonides. Moses implored the Lord, 'Show me, I beseech Thee, Thy glory'. But he was told that the granting of his petition was impossible, as his intellect was still influenced by matter; and 'Man cannot see Me and live', was the Divine reply (4).

As long as man has corporeality he cannot be saved from concomitant evils. His tendency to sin becomes, one may

say, his human credential. It can be asked whether a world that is free of sin would, in fact, be a better world. According to Leibniz such Utopian world, void of sin and unhappiness would be "very inferior to ours in goodness. I cannot show you this", he confesses, "in detail. For can I know and can I present to you infinities and compare them together? But you must judge me ab effectu, since God has chosen this world as it is. We know, moreover, that often an evil brings forth a good whereto one would not have attained without that evil"(5).

There is much to be said for the process in the course of which human perfection may be attained. Sir Henry Jones contends on this ground that ours is the best possible world, when he says: "If the moral process, the practical life that is spent in achieving spiritual excellence has... unconditional worth and is the best, then the world which provides room for that process is itself the best world. It is better then the so-called perfect world... that is perfect in the static sense" (6).

The danger of a static universe was fully realized by Maimonides. Though the human mind is capable of imagining it, the creative nature of God contradicts such notion. And we do not ascribe to God the power of doing the impossible, because any "such impossible thing cannot change shape or

property", it could, on the other hand, possess simultaneously two opposite qualities, and a host of contradictions rise up. Nonetheless, Maimonides is justly wondering about the difference between things culled purely from the imagination, and things that can be validly conceived intellectually. It remains a problem whether we can adequately distinguish the possible from the impossible (7).

Far from being static, the constitution of man admits of a real personality change, and herein lies one of the solutions to the problem of God's justice. As a result of penitence, through entreaties, charity and the resolution to mend one's ways, Maimonides can see the possibility of a total regeneration. It is conceivable to arrive at that stage where one may say: "I am quite another person, and not the same man who committed those actions"(8).

God Himself has provided man with the tools that can save him from evil, or, at worst, to ease the evil that may befall him. The Law is the means of redemption, and this redeeming power of the Law is possibly its chief justification. "If no reason could be found for the statutes (חוקים), if they produced no advantages and removed no evil, why then should he who believes in them and follows them, be wise, reasonable...? But the truth is... that everyone of the six hundred and thirteen precepts serves to inculcate some truth,

to remove some erroneous opinion, to establish proper relations in society, to diminish evil, to train in good manners, or to warn against bad habits" (9). The Torah in this respect is a means to a better end. Somewhat dogmatically Maimonides assets that "If we fulfill (the Torah)... and if we constantly meditate on its wisdom, He will remove from us all the things which may prevent us from fulfilling the ordinances of the same, such as illness, war, famine or the like... And... if we intentionally depart from (the Torah) and employ ourselves in the pursuit of the vanities of time... He, the judge of truth, will then deprive those who forsake the Law, of all the blessings of this world, which rendered them so presumptuous as to revolt" (10).

It is, Maimonides feels, only consistent with Divine Justice that having given commands to man in order to instruct and to admonish him, God should reward or punish his conduct. However, "the attribute of God, and the manner how His prescience and universal knowledge are exercised, will ever remain incomprehensible to us, being altogether beyond the reach and grasp of our reason" (11). In the same vein Maimonides states another standing metaphysical axiom: "Human reason cannot conceive the Divine Essence, on account of the infinite and complete perfection of God, and man's finite powers". For the inability of human reason to understand the Essence of God

the analogy of the human eye and the sun is given. "The inability of our eyes to gaze on the light of the sun... is not caused by any defect in the solar rays, but by the intrinsic weakness of our sight" (12). By definition man cannot know God, and therefore cannot fully understand His workings.

In a different direction, the champion of determinism could argue this way: "Did the Diety know beforehand that such a one is to be wicked or virtuous, or did he not know it?" If one replies: "He knew it", the consequence is that the individual, according to the determinist theory, was predestined or compelled to be what God knew he would become, or otherwise the Divine knowledge would be imperfect. If, on the other hand, the reply is: "God did not know beforehand", such an answer is inconsistent with the absolute perfection of God, incongruous in itself, and destructive to the fundamental principles of faith. To solve this problem Maimonides quotes the following axiom of metaphysics: "God does not know by means of knowledge, or exist by means of life" - that is to say, His knowing and His being are inseparable from His essence. "God's being and knowing are not two distinct things as is the case with man... thus human and Divine knowledge are completely different" (13).

Anyone who supposes himself to be an exception to the limitations of the human mind is in possession of a sick mind, deluding himself. The remedy for such diseased minds

and the remedy for those who, almost by compulsion, transgress is a simple one. "They must apply to the wise, who are spiritual physicians, and who will cure their infirmities by inculcating in their mind such dispositions as will lead them back to the good way" (14). And the good way is the "Middle Way", it is the reasonable position, the place in which perspective is gained. If anything, it is from this reasonable position alone that man is capable of gaining that kind of knowledge about God that ultimately leads to the love of God. For "man can love the Holy One, Blessed be He, only by the knowledge which he has of Him; so that his love will be proportionate to his knowledge: if the latter be slight, the former, too will be slight; and if the latter be great, the former will likewise be great" (15).

God becomes justified if God becomes known. And men have longed to be justified themselves from time immemorial If not in the present, certainly in the time to come. With the Messiah's coming the righteous will surely be vindicated. However, in their expectation of the Messiah men often tend to lull themselves into a false sense of security. Maimonides himself was fully aware of this universal yearning, yet in the course of a letter of comfort and inspiration he warns the persecuted Jews of Morocco: "I have no patience with people who console themselves with the thought that the Messiah will soon appear and lead them to Jerusalem. They who remain in the country, expecting the Messiah, are causing others to transgress

the Law... A sincere wish to observe the Jewish law has no relation to the appearance of the Messiah" (16).

Of the eventual coming of the Messiah, Maimonides is assured and assuring. And indeed it will be a time of vindication and justification. It is with the assurance of the deeply faithful and with the moving pen of the poet that he writes: "Our sufferings have been prolonged, doubtless, for a purpose known unto the Lord. On Him, O my Brethren, your reliance must be placed. Let your hearts be filled with glowing hope, and strengthen one another in the belief that the redeemer will come and not delay... There will rise a man of the direct descent of David, who will gather our outcasts, roll away our shame and put an end to our exile" (17).

Finally, the solution that must again be mentioned is the life that man is granted in the wake of his earthly life. Maimonides is careful to explain that the world-to-come is not dependent in any way upon the destruction of this one. It is, rather, called "the world-to-come because life is allotted to man subsequent to the life of this world... which is but the first stage of human existence" (18). And the soul that becomes perfect, through attaining knowledge of God, unites with its source after death (צדיקים באין להם מנוחה) (19), and partakes of bliss eternal.

A summary of the philosophy of Maimonides in connection with the problem of theodicy must begin with the statement that God created evil indirectly, by creating corporeality, which is always connected with negatives. Yet corporeality is not wholly evil, for without certain forms of evil, such as death, much of life itself would suffer. If an attempt were made to combine material body with an escape of accidents to matter, opposites would be combined, an impossible conception in the rational mind. Evil is, therefore, relative and a negative fact.

The moral shortcomings of man are again due to bodily limitations. But man, who is endowed with higher intellectual powers, is capable of overcoming them, for Maimonides places evil into the human realm, and removes it from the cosmic sphere. Social evils similarly derive their origin from the physical order, but the individual must recognize that the evils that grow out of personal faults are inflicted upon him because of his own actions.

Evil is not part of the universal texture, therefore, Maimonides eliminates it as a condition of reality, though he recognizes the reality of its outward manifestations and maintains that the ultimate aim of the moral and spiritual life is to join battle with evil and conquer it.

"Opposition to the world becomes a characteristic mood of the religious spirit, an opposition to things as they are in the interest of things as they ought to be" (20).

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3. Ibid. p.289.

4. The Justification of God, by P.T. Forsyth (London, Independent Press Ltd., 1948), p.134.

5. Ibid. p.134-5.

6. Theodicy, by Wm. Fulton, op.cit. p.291.

7. Forsyth, op.cit. p.220.

8. Theodicy, by Wm. Fulton, op.cit. p.291.

9. Judaism a Way of Life, by Samuel S. Cohon (Cincinnati, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1948)pp.49-50.

10. The World and the Individual, by Josiah Royce, (vol.2,p.405)

11. Theodicy, by G.W. Leibniz (translated by E.M. Huggard) (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1952) p.58

12. Die Philosophische Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, edited by C.J. Gerhart, 7 vols., Berling 1875-90, vol.6, pp.107, 167 and 253 f.

13. Theodicy, by G.W. Leibniz, p.61.

14. Ibid. p.136.

15. Ibid. pp.136 f.

16. Ibid. p.99.

17. Principles of Natural Theology, by G.H. Joyce, S.J. (New York, Longmans, Green & Co. 1951) p.578.

18. Pragmatism, by William James (New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1907) p.p. 23,27.

19. Theodicy, by Wm. Fulton,op.cit., p.289

20. Theodicy, by Max Weiner, in The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia, (New York, the Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia Inc., 1943, vol.10, pp.241-242) p.241.

21. Ibid. p.241.

22. Isaiah 45 : 6-7.

23. The Biblical optimism is one of faith in God, whereas Leibniz expresses optimism in considering the world "the best possible".

24. Judaism a Way of Life, by S.S. Cohon, pp.53-56

25. B.T. Berachot 7a.

26. Exodus 20 : 5-6.

27. It is interesting to compare Maimonides' position to that of Plotinus for whom,too, matter is pure negativity, and it is the evil, for it is also the negation of the good. Evil is not something positively existent, rather it is want, a lack of the good; in short, non-being. For theodicy this gave a good argument: if evil is not, it need not be justified,and it follows then that all is good. (See A History of Philosophy by W. Windelband: New York, The Macmillan Co., 1901, p.246 ff.) And while Maimonides did not draw the same conclusion, the starting point for both is Platonic and significantly for Maimonides, not Aristotelian.

28. Theodicy, by Max Weiner, op.cit., pp.241-2

29. Judaism a Way of Life, by S.S. Cohon, p.59, (and see also Moreh N'vuchim III, ch.12)

30. מורה נבוכים by Moshe ben Maimon (בהעתקת הרב ר' שמואל אבן תיבון) (New York, Om Publishing Co., 1946) Part III, p.1b - hereafter referred to as Moreh III.

31. Essence and Existence in Maimonides, by A. Altman (In the Bulletin of John Ryland's Library, vol.35), p.314

32. Treatise on Logic (מלות ההגיון) by M. Maimonides (in Vol.8 of the American Academy for Jewish Research Proceedings) ch.14, p.63

33. Moreh III, ch.16, p.22a.

34. Ibid., ch.19.

35. שמנה פרקים (The Eight Chapters) by M. Maimonides (in The Hebrew Review, edited by M.J. Raphall, London, 1835, vol.I, hereafter referred to as "8 Chapters"),ch.4

36. Ibid., ch.7

37. ספר המדע in יד החזקה by M. Maimonides (translated by E. Soloweyczik, London, Thos. Williams Nicholson,1863 hereafter referred to as "Sefer Ha Madda") Book 2;II/1

38. Moreh III, ch.13, p.19a.

39. The classification of evils is to be found in Moreh III, ch.12

40. Treatise on Logic by M. Maimonides, op.cit., ch.9, p.50

41. Judaism a Way of Life, by S.S. Cohon, p.59

CHAPTER II - PROVIDENCE AND FREE WILL

1. Deut. 30:15 ff; also 11:26-28. Compare also Gen. 18:20; Lev. 26; Job 34:11; Prov. 19:3

2. Enoch 98:4

3. Ben Sirah 15:11

4. Man and his Destiny, by Samuel S. Cohon (mimeographed for use in Theology classes of the HUC - JIR, Cincinnati, 1954), Vol.1, pp.30-37

5. Ibid, p.39

6. Moreh III, ch.16

7. See: Philosophical Terms in the Moreh Nebukim by Israel Efros, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1924) p.7

8. Moreh III, ch.16

9. Ibid, ch.17, p.23a.

10. The term "spheres" (גלגלים) denotes a system of constellations, thought to be nine in number. Maimonides wishes to reduce this number to 5, i.e. the sphere of the fixed stars, that of the five planets, the sun, the moon and the all-embracing sphere. These spheres correspond to various kinds of cosmic influences. (Philosophical Terms..., by I. Efros, p.19)

11. חומר corresponds to ὕλη in Aristotelian philosophy, a principle of being that attains to some degree of reality. (Philosophical Terms..., by I. Efros, p.53)

12. Moreh III, ch. 17

13. Philosophical Terms..., by I. Efros, p.13

14. Moreh III, ch. 17

15. Philosophical Terms..., by I. Efros, p.77. For the Jewish counterpart, see views of Eliphas in chapter on Job.

16. Moreh III, ch.17

17. Ibid, ch.17

18. Hab. 1:14,15

19. Moreh III, ch.17

20. Ibid, ch. 18

21. Ibid., ch. 18. Concerning Maimonides' theory of Providence, the Catholic philosopher G.H. Joyce writes: "Insofar as the theory (of Maimonides) entirely withdraws many events from the immediate providence of God, it is manifestly false. God's providential plan is... all-embracing". (Principles of Natural Theology, p.563)

22. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, VIII/3

23. Moreh III, ch.20.

24. Ibid. ch.21

25. Ibid. ch.20

26. Ibid. ch.20

27. Ibid. ch.20

28. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, V/5

29. Moreh III, ch.19

30. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, V/5

31. Moreh III, ch.13

32. Ibid. ch.13

33. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, V/3

34. Gen. 3:22

35. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, V/1

36. Ibid. Book 5, V/1

37. Ibid. Book 5, VI/1

38. "8 Chapters", ch.7

39. Ibid. ch.8

40. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, V/2

41. Lam. 3:38

42. Theodicy by G.W. Leibniz (op.cit.), p.57

43. Moreh III, ch.14

44. "8 Chapters", ch.7

45. Deut. 15:11

46. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, VI/5

47. Ibid., Book 5, V/4

48. Ibid., Book 5, V/4

CHAPTER III - TRIALS AND SUFFERING

1. Moreh III, ch.24
2. Ibid., ch.24
3. Ibid., ch.24
4. Ibid., ch.24
5. Ibid., ch.24
6. Die Bibelexegese Moses Maimûni's by Wilhelm Bacher (in the Jahresbericht der Landes-Rabbinerschule, zu Budapest, 1896) p.92
7. Moreh III, ch.12
8. Ibid., ch.18
9. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, 1/3
10. Ibid. Book 5, IX/1
11. Ibid. Book 5, VI/1 and "8 Chapters", ch.8
12. "8 Chapters", ch.8
13. Ibid., ch.8
14. Ibid., ch.8
15. Exodus 10:1 ff.
16. Exodus Rabba, 18.
17. "8 Chapters", ch.8
18. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, VI/3
19. Ibid., Book 5, VI/4
20. Isa. 6:10
21. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, VI/3
22. Ibid., Book 5, VI/1
23. Ibid., Book 5, VIII/5 and VIII/1
24. Ibid., Book 5, VIII/1

25. Though Maimonides is his letter to various Jewish communities exhorts the people not to depend on the Messiah's coming at any particular or known time. Indeed it is open to question whether this category would have found inclusion in the Moreh at all.

26. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, III/6

27. Ibid. Book 5, III/8

28. Ibid. Book 5, III/9

29. Ibid. Book 5, III/7

30. Ibid. Book 5, III/14

31. Ibid. Book 1, IV/9

32. Ibid. Book 5, V/4

33. Perek Chelek by M.Maimonides, (translation by J. Abelson in Jewish Quarterly Review, Old Series, Vol.19) pp.26 ff.; see also Man and his Destiny by S.S. Cohon, vol.2, pp.65-69

34. B.T. Berachot, 18a

35. Mishna Sanhedrin 10:1

36. Hilchot Teshuvah 8-10

37. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, III/2

CHAPTER IV - THE LESSON OF JOB

1. Moreh III, ch.22
2. Job. 42:6
3. Bibelexegese... by W. Bacher (op.cit.) p.131
4. Ibid., p.127
5. Moreh III, ch.22
6. Bibelexegese..., pp. 89 and 129
7. Moreh III, ch.23
8. Job 8:6 ff.
9. Moreh III, ch.23; for Maimonides' full refutation see ch.III, p.32
10. Job. 11:5-8
11. Moreh III, ch.23
12. Job 33:12 and 14 ff.
13. Ibid. vv. 23-24 and 26
14. Job. 36:26-33 and ch.37
15. Moreh III, ch.23
16. B.T. Sabbath 88b
17. Moreh III, ch.23
18. Job 1:6, cf. ibid. 2:1
19. Moreh III, ch.22
20. Ibid., ch.22
21. Ibid., ch.22
22. Job 9:22; 21:7, 23-26
23. B.T. Baba Bathra, 16a
24. Moreh III, ch.23
25. Job 42:7

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1. Theodicy by G.W. Leibniz, (op.cit.) p.138
2. Ibid. p.288
3. Ibid. p.288-9
4. "8 Chapters", ch.7
5. Theodicy (op.cit.) p.129
6. A Faith That Inquires, by Sir Henry Jones (Gifford Lectures) p.351
7. Moreh III, ch.15
8. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, II/4
9. Moreh III, ch.31
10. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 5, IX/1
11. "8 Chapters", ch.8
12. Ibid., ch.8
13. Ibid., ch.8
14. Sefer Ha-Maddah, Book 2, II/1-2
15. Ibid., Book 5, X/6
16. Extracts from אגרת השמד in Letters of the Jews through the Ages (edited by Franz Kobler; London, East & West Library, 1953) vol.1, pp.181-2; and on the whole, Maimonides advises the Moroccan community to leave rather than submit to ignominities.
17. From the אגרת תימן Ibid, p.188
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