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PREFACE

Moses Maimonides remains, without doubt, one of the major Jewish thinkers of all time. Maimonides' works cover all realms of Jewish scholarship. He has made major contributions in nearly every field imaginable: Halacha (Jewish law), philosophy, medicine, ethics, the calendar, and many more.

Maimonides is credited with being one of the first to attempt to harmonize the teachings of Greek philosophy with teachings of the Jewish tradition.¹ His mastery of not only Judaic scholarship, but also of philosophy and medicine, gave his work a mark of distinction which remains, in many ways, unparalleled to this day.

This study seeks to examine one aspect of Maimonides' scholarship, his ethics. The ethics of Maimonides are a matter of interest from a number of standpoints. They offer an insight into the attempt on Maimonides' part to harmonize Jewish teachings with the teachings of other traditions, specifically of the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

A study of Maimonides' ethics enables the modern reader to explore the psychological views of a medieval writer whose understanding of human nature and of the human will was well advanced for his own time.

A study of Maimonides' ethics is also interesting as it enables the reader, in the case of the material studied, to examine a complete text from among the many which Maimonides wrote.

This study focuses on a short work by Maimonides entitled שמונה פרקים, or Eight Chapters. Many scholars have noted that Shemoneh Perakim constitutes Maimonides' only completely ethical work. Whether Shemoneh Perakim is solely concerned with ethics is one of the questions which this study shall attempt to answer. Another focus of the study will be to determine whether the material that Maimonides presents in Shemoneh Perakim constitutes an ethical system. The third and final matter which the study will address is the purpose for which Shemoneh Perakim was written. What was Maimonides seeking to accomplish in writing Shemoneh Perakim?

The main text studied herein is the text of Shemoneh Perakim. The Hebrew translation of Yosef Kapach (Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, Jerusalem, 1977) is the version which has been employed for this study. The Kapach edition has been

chosen for this study because it is a critical edition which is based on various manuscripts. While the translation which Kapach renders differs from the traditional Ibn Tibbon translation, this writer found there to be little, if any, loss of meaning. Kapach's critical notes were in many cases helpful in locating sources as well as understanding of the text. All textual citations refer to the Kapach text.

While the secondary literature on Shemoneh Perakim is scant, the major available works have been employed. These include Joseph I. Gorfinkle's 1912 work, The Eight Chapters of Maimonides. Gorfinkle presents a translation as well as a helpful Introduction to the Shemoneh Perakim. The work, Ethical Writings of Maimonides, by Charles Butterworth and Raymond Weiss (New York University Press, New York, 1975) presents a second translation as well as introductory chapters tying the Shemoneh Perakim together with Maimonides' other ethical writings, as they are found throughout his writings. The third major secondary work is Eliezer Schweid's

עיונים בשמונה פרקים לרמב"ם, Studies in the Shemoneh Perakim of Rambam (The Jewish Agency, Department of Youth and Aliyah, Jerusalem, 1969). Other works are noted in the Bibliography which follows the study.

The presentation which follows is the result of extensive reorganization of ideas presented in Maimonides' Shemoneh Perakim. In order to extract a comprehensive and cohesive understanding of Maimonides' theory of moral education, it was necessary to divide the concepts presented in the text into component parts. Each component idea was then placed with other thematically related material in order that the result would be a systematic presentation of the ideas formulated by Maimonides and expressed in his Shemoneh Perakim.

The critical notes which accompany the Kapach translation of Shemoneh Perakim from the Arabic original into Hebrew, as well as the commentary of M. D. Rabinowitz, were employed in the study of the text of Shemoneh Perakim. These tools were utilized insofar as they facilitated understanding the text of Shemoneh Perakim. The material presented by Eliezer Schweid in his work was drawn into this study only after I had a firm grasp of the Shemoneh Perakim text. I felt it necessary first to understand the text, on its own merits, and without the interference of secondary material.

All translations of Hebrew text into English unless otherwise noted, are my own.

This study would not have been possible without the help and support of numerous individuals. I should like to

acknowledge the assistance of the most significant among them. First, deep gratitude is due Mr. Philip Miller, librarian of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, and his library staff. Their aid in the location of materials for this study was invaluable. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz, who served as my advisor for this thesis. His help in organization of the study, critical reading of the material and his extensive notes on my drafts are paramount in their importance vis-a-vis the completion of this study. I am indebted to my typist, Helen Radin, who graciously stepped forward in offering to type this thesis. I thank her for her care and for her time in helping to produce the final draft of this thesis. My final note of gratitude goes to my family. Their love, support and faith helped to make a long, and at times, tedious process smooth and rewarding. For their help I am eternally grateful. Without their support, and the use of the family computer, this study could never have progressed with the ease it did beyond the stacks of notecards. For all their support and love I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Alan and Judith, and brothers, Mark and Todd.

CHAPTER I

MAIMONIDES' LIFE AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

Moses Maimonides' life was far from a tranquil one. It was..."a mosaic of anxiety, tribulation, and, at best, incredibly strenuous work and intellectual exertion."² During his lifetime Maimonides found himself a member and leader of many different Jewish communities. By the time of his death in 1204, Maimonides had covered a great deal of ground, both physically and intellectually. His life's travels took him from his native Spain to northern Africa, to Palestine, as well as, significantly, to Cairo.³

Maimonides was born in Cordova in 1135, the son of a prominent judge and respected scholar. His mother died in childbirth. Moses ben Maimon found his early life unsettled as a result of the activity of the Islamic Almohades. The golden Age of Spanish Jewry was quickly drawing to a close as the Almohades undertook the conquest of Spain and northern Africa, seeking to spread the teachings of Mohammed and Islam.

Shortly after his Bar Mitzvah in 1148, Maimonides and his family, like the rest of Cordovian Jewry, found themselves faced with a decision. The invading Almohades forced the Jewish community to choose between conversion to Islam or leaving their homes. Maimonides' family chose

to flee, thus ending eight generations of life in Cordova.

The family's trek over the next ten years (1148-1158), took them through southern Spain and eventually into Northern Africa where they then settled for some years in Fez, Morocco (1159-1165).

Maimonides' early education was handled by his father. R. Maimon had been a student of Ibn Migash, a student of Alfasi.⁴ Having been a dayan (judge) and a member of the rabbinical court of Cordova, it is likely that R. Maimon was not unknown when he brought his family to Fez. Relations between the Jews of Spain and North Africa had been quite good in the realms of economy and scholarship. "The Jews in Fez knew who Rabbi Maimon was, that he came from a family of scholars and judges, and that the family tree traced their descent from the famous Rabbi Yehuda ha-Nasi, the editor of the Mishnah, and, according to tradition, from King David himself."⁵ R. Maimon passed the Talmudic skills he learned from Ibn Migash on to the young Moses.

At a very early age, during the years of life on the run from Spain and in Fez, Maimonides began writing. At age sixteen he wrote his treatise on the meaning of technical terms used in logic and metaphysics, Millot ha-Higayon, or Terminology of Logic. Also among Maimonides' earliest writings was his Essay on the Calendar. At age

twenty-three, Maimonides began his first major work, his Commentary on the Mishnah. It was a task which took him ten years to complete.⁶

Meanwhile, life in Fez proved to be no easier than life in the Spain that Maimonides and his family had left. The influence of the Almohades seemed to follow them as it spread to northern Africa. Maimonides and his family soon found life in Fez held for them the same persecution from which they had fled in leaving Spain. In 1165 Maimonides followed the same advice which he would often give later to Jews living in various communities who would correspond with him. With his family he fled the mounting persecution of the Almohades. The family left Fez, undertaking a hazardous sea voyage to the land of Israel, which at the time was the scene of the Crusades. Finding that Israel presented no haven from persecution, Maimonides and the family then moved on towards Egypt.

At no time did Maimonides cease the scholarly work which he began during his life in Fez. "His extraordinary difficulties in pursuing his studies during these years of instability and exile and the profound sense of uprootedness and precariousness which permeated his thought are poignantly portrayed in...Maimonides' writings from this period."⁷

Maimonides made his way south from the port of Acre to Jerusalem, where he prayed at the Western Wall, to Hebron. Leaving the land of Israel, he continued on to Cairo, a significant center within the Arab world with a large Jewish community. He took up residence in a suburb of Cairo, Fostat. From Fostat he would travel each day to the court at Cairo. It was here, in Egypt, that Maimonides established himself as a major figure in the Jewish community and the Jewish world.⁸

Maimonides' early years in Egypt held for him a good deal of personal suffering including his father's death, personal illness and intermittent strife for the Jewish community of Cairo. These all presented stumbling blocks to Maimonides' work and to his settling down to life in Egypt. But by far the most crushing blow came with the death of his brother David. David, a successful merchant, had been, for a long time, the focus of Maimonides' life. David supported Moses and the entire family. But in 1175 David was killed while on a business trip on the Indian Ocean. For many years Maimonides was inconsolable.

Sometime after David's death Maimonides began the practice of medicine. His skill led to his appointment as the house physician to the sultan Saladin and, later, to his son Al-Afdhal. He came to be regarded as one of the most prominent court physicians. At the same time,

Maimonides help and advice was sought throughout the Jewish community. "He emerged as the untitled leader of the Jewish community, combining the duties of rabbi, local judge, appellate judge, administrative chief responsible for appointing and supervising community officials, and overseer of philanthropic foundations--to which he was especially dedicated."⁹ Maimonides sought and received no financial recompense for his activities as leader of the Jewish community.

Maimonides' duties to both the court, as physician, and as leader of the Jewish community were exacting.

"An often quoted letter to his friend and translator Judah ibn Tibbon, offers us a glimpse into his busy and burdened life. 'My duties to the Sultan are very heavy...I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning, and when he or any of his children, or any of the inmates of his harem, are indisposed, I dare not quit Cairo, but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two of the royal officers fall sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair to Kahira (Cairo) very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Fostat (his home, about one and a half miles away) until the afternoon. Then I am almost dying with hunger. I find the ante-chambers filled with people, both Jews and Gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes--a mixed multitude, who await the time of my return.

I dismount from my animal, wash my hands, go forth to my patients, and entreat them to bear with me while I partake of some slight refreshments, the only meal I take in twenty-four hours. Then I attend to my patients, and write prescriptions and directions for their several ailments. Patients go in and out until nightfall, and sometimes, even, I solemnly assure you, until two hours and more into the night...

Thus no Israelite can have private interview with me except on the Sabbath. On that day the whole congregation, or at least the majority of the members, come to me after the morning service, when I instruct (advise) them as to their proceedings during the whole week; we study together a little until noon, when they depart. Some of them return, and read with me after the afternoon service until evening prayers. In this manner I spend that day.'¹⁰

Little is known of Maimonides' family life. He apparently married twice.¹¹ His only son, Abraham, seems to have been the product of the second marriage. Abraham later became the official leader (nagid) of the Egyptian Jewish community. Born in 1187, Abraham later became the defender of his father's legacy. The relationship between father and son was a good one, with the elder Maimonides focusing a great deal of attention on the young Abraham. Though only seventeen years old at the time of his father's death (1204), young Abraham seems to have absorbed a good deal of his father's learning and teachings. Much of the younger Maimonides' writings reflect his father's doctrines and constitute an important part of the Maimonidean legacy.¹²

The intellectual influences on Maimonides were several. The major Jewish influence on Maimonides was the result of the training he received from his father. In addition, he had lived, until age thirteen, in Cordova, which at one time had been a great center of Jewish learning. In addition to his Talmudic scholarship, Maimonides'

father studied Torah in depth and had begun a commentary on the Pentateuch.¹³

Young Moses' studies were not limited to the opinions of the rabbis of the Talmud. Nor were they solely concentrated on his father's works on the Torah. Maimonides spent a good deal of time studying medicine, algebra, geometry, astrology, the theological texts of Islam and many other subjects.¹⁴ Maimonides..."studied philosophy with the utmost zeal: the teachings of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, Alfarabi and Ghazzali, Saadia and Bahya, Judah Halevi, Abraham bar Hiyya, Abraham ibn Ezra. But the only master he recognized was Aristotle."¹⁵ Thus Maimonides' philosophical grounding was in both Jewish philosophical writings and in the writings of the Greek philosophers as well.

Maimonides' earliest works reflected his devotion to the Jewish tradition and his sense of personal kinship with his ancestor, Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, the compiler of the Mishnah. "This second-century aristocrat and codifier became his guide in thinking and action, so that it is no coincidence that Maimonides' inner and outer life showed similarities to his ancestor's."¹⁶

Following the early works, which Maimonides began while living in Fez and completed while enroute to Cairo, came two major works. The first, his Mishneh Torah is a

compilation of the entire range of Jewish Law, both practical and theoretical. The second work is his Moreh Nebuchim, or The Guide for the Perplexed, a philosophical work.

The Mishneh Torah was ten years in the writing.

"It brings together the entire body of Talmudic law and doctrine in all its vastness, all its diversity into one coherent whole, rendering final decisions as a guide to action. Each of the fourteen books into which the code is divided deals with a number of commandments that comprise a general theme. The first two books offer an outline of (Maimonides') teachings in theology and ethics."¹⁷

Maimonides began work on his major philosophical work, the Guide in 1185. The work took nearly fifteen years to complete.

"It is the greatest philosophic work produced in Judaism. Its aim is to meet the challenge of Greek philosophy, especially that of Aristotle's naturalism, to the doctrines and practices of (Maimonides') traditional religion...The Guide is organized around the teachings of the Bible which required clarification or justification, rather than the logical order of doctrines in philosophy."¹⁸

Maimonides produced another major halachic work, Sefer ha-Mitzvot, the Book of the Commandments. In this work he attempted to bring about a consensus on the 613 commandments. Many such attempts had been undertaken. "Dismissing his predecessors with a few lines of devastating critique, Maimonides suggests fourteen guiding principles which should help bring about a consensus."¹⁹

Maimonides was also the author of a great number of minor works including his Letter on Apostasy, Epistle to Yemen, various Responsa and his Essay on the Resurrection of the Dead, among others.

Maimonides' contributions to medicine are less well-known. "Maimonides wrote at least ten works on medicine."²⁰

When he died in 1204, in Cairo, Maimonides left behind a legacy which has in many ways remained unparalleled in all of Jewish scholarship. His halachic works are widely studied and serve as a major basis for all subsequent halachic work. His various treatises and letters are studied. His philosophic works are regarded as unequalled in their scope.

Though his life was not easy, he was constantly striving to forward Jewish scholarship, both in the legal realm and in the philosophical realm.

"All (the) apparently stultifying conditions notwithstanding, Maimonides was constantly studying, teaching and writing. He may have chafed under the tensions and pressures, but he never fell to brooding and self-pity; he sometimes described his difficulties in elegaic prose but did not allow them to paralyze his work."²¹

Maimonides worked as if he were compelled by a sense of mission. The legacy which he has left to the world and to Jewish scholarship is, in many ways, singular in its scope and quality.

CHAPTER II SHEMONEH PERAKIM

In his Commentary to the Mishnah, באור המשנה, Maimonides includes three הקדמות or introductions. The first is הקדמה למשנה, the general introduction to the Mishnah, which is also known as הקדמה לסדר זרעים, the Introduction to Seder Zeraim. The second introduction is that which preceeds פרק חלק, of Tractate Sanhedrin. The last of the three is Maimonides' introduction to Tractate Avot. This is also known as Shemoneh Perakim.

Maimonides himself did not entitle the work Shemoneh Perakim. He did, however, divide the treatise into its current form. The name was likely adopted from the end of his introduction to the work:

והם שמונה פרקים.

"....and they are eight chapters."²²

The date of the composition of Shemoneh Perakim in particular cannot be pinpointed with accuracy. "All that can be said is that it was written sometime between 1158 and 1165, along with the rest of the Commentary on the Mishneh, which was made public in 1168."²³

"Though one of his earliest works, and in spite of the difficulties in writing during the years of wandering and seeking a secure home, with no books accessible, the

Commentary (on the Mishnah) is a marvel of lucidity, masterful knowledge, and comprehensiveness."²⁴ Reference to the Commentary on the Mishnah is often made in Maimonides' later works. "The fact that it is so often referred to in his later works testifies that at a very early date Maimonides had outlined for himself a thorough philosophical system and a literary scheme from which he deviated only slightly."²⁵

As part of the Commentary, Shemoneh Perakim is "a self-contained unit."²⁶ No tractate of the Mishnah deals with ethics per se. "In order to give a coherent account of this subject, Maimonides wrote a long Introduction to the Pirke Avot."²⁷ Pirke Avot, the Chapters of the Fathers, are also known as Ethics of the Fathers.

Shemoneh Perakim was originally written in Arabic, and was later translated by Ibn Tibbon into Hebrew. "Ibn Tibbon translated Maimonides' Commentary on Avot, including its introductory chapters, the (Shemoneh) Perakim, at the request of the men of Lunel,²⁹ who were presumably convinced of his capabilities by what Maimonides thought of him."³⁰ Ibn Tibbon had become known for his translation of Maimonides' Guide.

Maimonides commends to the reader understanding of the teachings of Shemoneh Perakim prior to tackling the words of Avot.

וראיתי להקדים לפני שאתחיל לפרש הלכה הלכה פרקים מועילים
שיושג לאדם בהם הקדמות, וגם יהיו לו כמפתח למה שנאמר
לקמן בפירוש.

"I have seen fit, before I begin to explain each of the laws, to preface (my comments) with some useful chapters. From them one will get certain principles, which will serve them as a key to what shall be said in the commentary."³¹

Maimonides acknowledges that in Shemoneh Perakim he borrows ideas from other writers. These ideas come from both Jewish and non-Jewish writers.

ודע כי הדברים שאומר בפרקים הללו ובמה שיבא מן הפירוש
אינם ענינים שחדשים אני מלבי, ולא פירושים שאני מצאתים,
אלא הם ענינים מלוקטים מדברי חכמים במדרשות ובתלמוד
וזולתו מחבורותיהם, וגם מדברי הפילוסופים הראשונים
והאחרונים, ומחבורי הרבה מבני אדם וקבל האמת מפי שאמרו.

"Know that the things about which I speak in these chapters and in what follows in the Commentary, are not matters which I myself have invented. Nor are they commentaries which I have fashioned. Rather they are matters collected from the words of the Sages, in the Midrash, the Talmud and other such works. They are also taken from the teachings of the philosophers, both ancient and modern, and from the compositions of many men. (You should) hear the truth from whoever says it."³²

Maimonides does not mention the names of those from whom he has borrowed ideas in order that we may hear their words without bias.

והפירוש שאביא למעשים ענין שלם שהוא לשון איזה ספר
מפורסם, אין בכל זה רוע, ואיני טוען לעצמי מה שאמרוהו
מי שקדמוני, והנני מודה בכך ואף על פי שלא אזכיר אדם
מלוגי אדם מלוגי, לפי שזה אריכות שאין בה תועלת. ואולי
אגרום שיכנס בלב מי שאינו מקובל עליו שם אותו אדם
שאותו הדבר נפסד ויש בו כוונה רעה שאינה ידועה לו,
ולפיכך נראה לי להשמיט שם האומר.

"It is possible that sometimes I will bring a complete passage from a well-known book. There is nothing wrong with that. I do not attribute to myself that which has been said by someone who has preceded me. I acknowledge this, and say that I shall not indicate that so-and-so said this or so-and-so said that, since this is needless prolongation (of the text). It is possible that the mentioning of an authority's name might lead the one who lacks insight to believe that the matter is faulty or carries evil intentions. because he (the reader) does not know (the matter fully). Therefore I saw fit to exclude the name of the authority."³³

Maimonides' purpose in Shemoneh Perakim is to present useful information, with as little extraneous or misleading material as possible. He wishes to help the reader attain a specific goal, and seeks to expedite rather than hinder the process.

כי מטיתי שתושג התועלת לקורא ולבאר לו הענינים
הכסופים במסכתא זו.

"For my goal is to be useful to the reader, and to explain for him hidden matters in this tractate (Avot)."³⁴

Scholars have generally approached Shemoneh Perakim as reflecting two purposes which do not correspond to Maimonides' stated purpose. The first view is that Shemoneh Perakim is an attempt to harmonize the teachings of Aristotelian ethics with the Rabbinic tradition. Gorfinkle notes that Shemoneh Perakim, "...constitutes the most remarkable instance in medieval ethical literature of the harmonious welding of Jewish religious belief and tradition with Greek philosophy."³⁵

The second view is that Shemoneh Perakim represents an early psychological treatise. Isadore Twersky says of Shemoneh Perakim that it "...may be described as a psychological-ethical treatise; its basis is psychology while its goal is ethics."³⁶

Indeed, these two views are related in that Shemoneh Perakim may be seen as attempting to do both. In his approach to ethics, Maimonides draws upon the teachings of both the rabbinic tradition and those of Aristotle, whom he viewed as a master. Maimonides seeks to establish the common ground between Greek thought and Jewish thought. In doing so, he borrows from Aristotle certain notions to set up a system of ethics which is psychological in nature. The end result is an amalgam of Jewish and Greek ethics delivered through the medium of psychology. It is this combination which this study intends to examine.

CHAPTER III MAIMONIDES' PERCEPTION OF THE GOAL OF LIFE

Maimonides is teleological in his view of life. In opening chapter five of the Shemoneh Perakim, Maimonides declares that there is a single goal towards which all humans should strive.

ראוי לאדם לשעבד כל כחות נפשו על פי המחשבה...
וישים נגד עיניו תכלית אחת והיא השגת האל...
כפי יכולת האדם.

"It is fitting for man to engage all powers of the soul by thought...and to place before himself one goal and that is the attainment of the knowledge of God השגת האל³⁷ according to human capability."³⁸

Maimonides then proceeds to say that all human actions and movements should be directed towards the fulfillment of this goal. As he sees it, there should be no action which is without this purpose and which does not ultimately lead to השגת האל.

Maimonides' statement of the goal is in marked contrast to Aristotle's discussion of the overall human goal. Aristotle saw the supreme goal of life as "true happiness." This "true happiness" he defined as the "exercise of natural human faculties in accordance with virtue."³⁹ Happiness, or the good life, is determined by activity which is in

accordance with the virtue in question. It is the fulfillment of man's natural tendencies. Aristotle taught that "...the ultimate end for man...is living well."⁴⁰ By "living well" one comes to the goal of true happiness. "Indeed, almost everyone thinks that happiness is one of the most important goals, if not the supreme goal, of life."⁴¹

We shall see that Maimonides also considers virtues to play a role in attaining the goal of life. But it is directed towards a different end. Maimonides approaches the issue of the goal in a different manner. He does not consider enjoyment or suffering as being of true value.

לא תהא מסרתו אז ההנאה בלבד עד שיבחר מן המאכל
והמשתה את היותר ערב, וכן בשאר ההנהגות, אלא
יתכוון למה שיותר פועיל, ואם יודמן שיהא ערב הרי
טוב, ואם יודמן שיהא בלתי ערב איו בכך כלום.

"The individual's goal should not only be pleasure, to the point at which he chooses the more pleasing food and drink. This is also so for all other behavior. Rather, one should direct themselves towards the most efficacious. Whether it happens to be pleasureable or not is not significant."⁴²

While various human actions may serve intermediate goals (e.g. eating, drinking, earning a living and educating children), the true goal of all actions is **השגת האל**. Maimonides has taken a different tack from that of most philosophers who place value on enjoyment and happiness. He is unconcerned with enjoyment. If it is a side benefit of one's working towards **השגת האל**, he accepts it. But Maimonides does so without any concern for the pleasure-

able. His sole focus is **השגת האל**.

Maimonides notes that the Sages explained that even the commission of an **עבירה** should contain cognizance of the true goal.

**ואמר בכל דרכיך דעהו, ופירשו חכמים ואמרו אפילו
בדבר עבירה, כלומר שתשים לאותה הפעולה תכלית כלפי
האמת ואף על פי שיש בה עבירה מאיזו בחינה שהיא.**

"As it is said: 'Know Him in all your ways'. The Sages explained this saying: Even in a matter of transgression. That is to say, make the goal of that action seeking truth, even though it is, in some aspect, a transgression."⁴³

Maimonides feels that constant cognizance of, and striving for the goal will ultimately bring the individual to overcoming transgression for the sake of **השגת האל**.

Upon examination of Maimonides' corpus of work one finds that he has laid out three paths to the goal of

השגת האל. The three paths are not mutually exclusive but, rather, are very much interrelated. In essence it is by attaining perfection in each of the three realms that one reaches perception of God.

The first path is laid out by Maimonides in his Mishneh Torah. This is the path of law, which is followed through study and practice of the mitzvot of the Torah. By studying both the practical and theoretical mitzvot one can come closer to the fulfillment of God's commandments.

But study alone is insufficient. It must be accompanied by action. Thereby can one move along the road to the goal.

The second path is the metaphysical path to **השגת האל**. This path is explored in Maimonides' מורה נבוכים, Guide For the Perplexed. In the Guide Maimonides examines the meaning of God's revealed will in the Torah. He devotes much of the work to the philosophic interpretation of the Torah. In doing so he considers many different philosophic issues. Maimonides tries to elucidate the text for those firmly grounded in religious beliefs and practices but who, as a result of studying philosophy, are troubled by the literal meaning of the text. Among other issues in the Guide, Maimonides considers God, Creation, Prophecy, the nature of evil and Divine Providence.

The third way to the goal of **השגת האל** is Maimonides' understanding of **מידות** or his ethical system. This is found most fully explicated in Shemoneh Perakim. In Shemoneh Perakim Maimonides presents the goal of **השגת האל** as the sole true goal of human existence. He proceeds to present a way in which one can direct themselves to **השגת האל**.

"Although written originally as an introduction to the commentary on Pirke Avot, for the purpose of explaining in advance problems that Maimonides brings up in the course of his commentary, the Perakim form in themselves a complete system of psychology and ethics...They do not, however, form an exhaustive treatment of this subject, as Maimonides himself states, but with a reference here and there to some of his other works may be easily made to do so."⁴⁴

The Shemoneh Perakim are addressed to a less well-educated audience. "Being intended for readers not necessarily versed in philosophy, and some not being deep students of the Talmud, avoid all intricate philosophical and Talmudical discussions."⁴⁵ In a sense they are, according to Gorfinkle, an introduction to Maimonides' philosophy, which would be worthy of study prior to study of the Guide.

Shemoneh Perakim does not, in any sense, constitute as fully developed a study as either the Mishneh Torah or the Moreh Nebuchim. But as a guide to the goal of Shemoneh Perakim do constitute a path which may be followed by anyone, at any time.

Though shorter than the two aforementioned works, the Shemoneh Perakim, in developing the סודות system, relies heavily on the fundamental teaching which Maimonides lays out in the Mishneh Torah and in the Guide. This study will explore the סודות system as a way of reaching the overall goal of human life as taught by Maimonides.

The סודות system, as a means to the goal of השגת האל, is also the way one may attain שלמות, that is perfection. Eliezer Shweid notes that:

אין המוסר נתפס לו כתכלית עצמו.

"Ethics is not seen by (Maimonides) as an end in and of itself."⁴⁶ Rather, it is a means to be utilized in the

realization of the goal of the human life (i.e. **השגת האל**).

For Maimonides, ethical matters such as are spoken of in

Avot, are to be viewed as "useful matters" (**עניינים**)

47. That is why he writes a commentary on Avot. (מ' עילים)

כי אף על פי שהיא מפורטת וקלה להבנה לפי הפשט
הרי אין עשיית כל הכלול בה קל לכל אדם, וגם לא
כל ענייניה טובים בלי פירוש מספיק, ונוסף לכך
שהיא מביאה לידי שלמות גדולה ואושר אמיתי.

"For even though it (i.e. Avot) is clear and easily understood on the surface, carrying out that which it contains is not easy for all people. Nor are all of its intentions understandable without a lucid explanation. However, (fulfillment of its teachings) leads to great perfection (**שלמות**) and true happiness."48

In speaking of the nature of **שלמות** and **אדם שלם** the perfect person, as expressed in Maimonides, Schweid states:

אדם שלם הוא מי שהשכיל כל האפשר בשכל האנושי.

"The perfect person is one who has developed his intellect to the greatest of human intellectual potential."49 For Maimonides intellectual perfection, to the degree that is possible in the physical world, and **השגת האל** are the same thing.

Maimonides' three paths of law, metaphysics and ethics provide three different, yet related, ways of reaching the goal of **השגת האל**, attainment of the knowledge of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOAL OF THE **מדות** SYSTEM: THE ETHICAL IDEAL

By means of the **מדות** system, Maimonides hopes to show us the way to the goal of perception of God. However, before we can understand the nature of Maimonides' system we must examine what is meant by **מדות**. In a general sense we are dealing with the field of ethics. "Ethics is the science of virtues or of good deeds."⁵⁰ It is "...the science of self-guidance, (which) consists, on the one hand, in acquiring for one's self noble soul-qualities or characteristics, and on the other hand, of avoiding evil qualities."⁵¹ The **מדות** system gives us guidance for living an ethical life, by acquisition of noble qualities and avoidance of evil qualities. These qualities, as we shall see, are found in the soul.

To translate **מדה** (plural- **מדות**) as "ethics" is not entirely accurate. A more helpful and more literal translation of **מדות** is "moral habits".⁵²

המדה היא...סבך שני, או סבך נקנה שאינו מלידה. הוא
תכונה שאפשר לרכוש אותה כדעת אריסטו, אך ורק בפעולה
חוזרת ונשנית.

"The **מדה** (moral habit) is second nature, or an acquired nature which is not inborn. It is a quality which it is possible to attain, according to Aristotle, only through

repeated action."⁵³ Through "repeated action" the quality becomes what we commonly call a habit. But as opposed to physical habits we are dealing with habits involving moral judgment, and qualities of the soul. The moral habits are, however, manifested by physical acts. Our moral habits affect how we act towards our fellow human beings.

As the **מדות** are qualities which are acquired during the individual's lifetime, they are subject to the influence of one's environment. In a reference to Saadia Gaon, Maimonides notes that:

קשה ורחוק שימצא מי שהוא מסבכו מעותר לכל
המעלות המדותיות וההגיוניות.

"It is difficult to find one who is naturally inclined towards moral and rational habits."⁵⁴ The possibility exists that we will acquire what Maimonides views as incorrect moral habits. The intermediate goal of his **מדות** system is to provide the mechanism for changing bad moral habits to good moral habits, which he calls **מעלות**, virtues.

"Classical philosophy regards virtue, or excellence, as the goal of human life....This orientation towards human excellence or perfection is well-suited to the interests of Jewish tradition."⁵⁵

The **מדות** system involves two important aspects, vis-a-vis the moral habits. Moral development involves acquiring good moral habits and also the avoidance of bad moral habits. When one has bad moral habits the focus

shifts to changing them to good moral habits. This is important because moral habits play a role in the path to perfection. By pointing the way of the path to perfection, one is by extension directed towards **השגת האל**. The guidance of the **מדות** system is of help in setting us on the path to the true goal of life.

The essence of the **מדות** for Maimonides, is not the good act (**המעשה הטוב**), or the good moral habit (**המדה הטובה**) in and of themselves. The essence is **שלמות**. Good acts and good moral habits are merely the means by which one can reach **שלמות**, which is necessary for **השגת האל**. Maimonides' ethics are therefore necessary as a means to an intellectual goal. As we have seen **השגת האל** is via the intellect.

Speaking of Maimonides' understanding of the relationship of acts and moral habits to the individual, Schweid states:

**לא די לו...שיהיה האדם עושה טוב,
מן הראוי שיהיה הוא בעצמו טוב.**

"It is not enough that one does good. It is desirable that one be good."⁵⁶ The way in which one acts, and one's moral habits reflect one's essence. They are not a separate part of one's behavior. This is important because there are limitations upon **השגת האל**.

We are unable to fully attain **השגת האל**.

**כי אנו אין יכולת בשכלינו לדעת מציאותו יתעלה
בשלמות, וזה מחמת שלמות מציאותו וחסרון שכלינו.**

"We are not capable, through our intellect to know the reality of the Exalted One completely. This is because of the fullness of His essence and the limits of our intellect."⁵⁷ Maimonides brings as a metaphor the example of the eye's inability to fully see the light of the sun.

**ושקוצר שכלינו מלהשיגו כקוצר ראות העין מלהשיג אור
השמש, שאין הדבר מחמת חולשת אור השמש, אלא מפני שזה
אור יותר חזק מן האור הרוצה להשיגו.**

"The inability of our intellect to attain (knowledge of God) is like the inability of the eye to receive the light of the sun. This (inability) is not because the sun's light is weak, but rather, because the light is too strong for that which wishes to attain (knowledge of) it."⁵⁸

The limitations on the fulfillment of the goal exists so long as we have a physical existence.

התכלית בלתי אפשרית לו כל זמן שהוא בעל גוף.

"The goal is unattainable for the individual so long as he is of the body."⁵⁹ Only when we have transcended the physical world can we fully attain **השגת האל**, that is attainment of the knowledge of God, in God's fullness.

An important example which Maimonides brings, in order to illustrate our intellectual limitations concerns God's knowledge. We cannot know God's knowledge because

כיון שהוא ידיעתו וידיעתו הוא.

"God and God's knowledge are one and the same."⁶⁰ They are inseparable. But our intellect is incapable of conceiving of them as inseparable. Just as we cannot help but distinguish between our body and our intellect as two distinct entities, so too, as a result of our intellect can we not help but perceive God and God's knowledge as anything but two separate entities. We can only approach correct perception of them, as a unity, when we have left the physical realm. The best we are able to do, in our physical existence, is to direct all of our actions to the goal of

. השגת האל

When we leave the physical realm the degree to which we have approached **שלמות** will determine whether we attain

. השגת האל. As a result, one's acts and moral habits take on importance, as they are the path to **שלמות**.

In order to understand Maimonides' notion of correct moral habits we must examine the way in which Maimonides evaluates the quality of moral habits. In doing so, he borrows a notion from Aristotle. Maimonides pictures ethical qualities as lying along a continuum. The ends of the continuum are the extremes which he sees as bad. In the middle lies the mean which represents the desired moral habit. "This notion of the mean, which is central to Aristotle's ethics, Maimonides reconciles with Jewish tradition by stressing the command in Deuteronomy 28:9 to 'walk in God's

ways', which according to Maimonides is the middle way."⁶¹

The mean represents not a compromise but the complete opposite of both extremes. That is to say, the mean represents good.

המעשים אשר הם טוב הם המעשים המאוזנים הממוצעים
בין שתי קצוות שסתייהם רע; האחד הגומה והשני
מיעוט.

"Good acts are those which are balanced in the middle between two extremes which are bad; one is the exaggeration (or overdoing the act) and the other is a lacking (underdoing the act)."⁶² The act or quality which is sought is that which lies at the mean. Because of the way in which the mean lies between two extremes it is therefore possible for one to stray from the mean in either of two directions, exaggeration or deficiency.

משובח באמת המצוה ואילו צריך האדם להתכוון,
ויכוון מעשיו תמיד כלפי המצוה הזו.

"True praise is for the man. Towards the mean people should always direct themselves and all their actions."⁶³ According to Maimonides, one should direct themselves towards those actions which will bring them closer to the goal of

השגת האל. All actions are viewed as either good or evil in relation to the goal. If an action serves to bring one closer to the goal, then it is good. If, on the other

hand, it deters the goal, then the action is evil. Such actions, which are praiseworthy, lie at the mean.

Maimonides lists several examples of what he is trying to express by the notion of actions which lie at the "mean".

הנדיבות סמוצת בין הכליות והמזרנות. והאומץ סמוצת
בין חרף הנפש והסורף. והבריחות סמוצת בין החושפה
והסמסום. והענווה סמוצת בין הגאווה ושפלות הרוח
(וכו')

"Liberality is the mean between miserliness and extravagance; courage is the mean between recklessness and cowardice; with is the mean between overbearing nerve and dullness; humility is the mean between haughtiness and abasement, etc."⁶⁴ It is the quality which lies between the two extremities which is desired.

ורבות סועים בני אדם בפעולות הללו וחושבים את אחד
הקצוות טוב.

"Many people err concerning these actions and think that one of the extremes is good."⁶⁵ And so, says Maimonides there are those who mistakenly view the one who places himself in danger and emerges safely as being courageous when, in fact, he was saved by chance. And there are those who say:

ואומרים על קריר הנפש—מתון, ועל העצלן—טוב עין,
ועל גערר ההרגש בהנאות מחמת ריחות סבוע—פרוש.

"And (they) say that someone who is apathetic is deliberate; or that a lazy person is considered to have a good eye; or that one who by nature is insensible to pleasure, is callous."⁶⁶ But according to Maimonides, these people err in their judgment. The true praiseworthy act is the mean, and is neither extreme.

Schweid notes that:

האמצע בהנהגה המוסרית איננו משרה בין קצוות,
הוא תנאי הכרחי לקיום האדם ולשלמותו.

"The mean in ethical behavior is not a compromise between extremes. It is that which constitutes a necessary condition for the continued existence of a person and his fulfillment (perfection)".⁶⁷ Both extremes are to be viewed as evil.

Maimonides takes this notion of the mean quite seriously. It, not the goal of השגת האל, is the immediate content of moral education. As such, he seeks to prove that the Torah legislates towards the mean as the ideal which will help bring us closer to the goal.

התורה לא אסרה מה שאסרה וצוותה מה שצוותה כי אם
מטבה זו, כלומר כדי שנתרשק מן הצד האחד יותר, על
דרך הכשרה.

"The Torah has not forbidden that which it has forbidden, and commanded that which has been commanded, for any reason other than that through discipline we should distance our-

selves from one extreme."⁶⁸ According to Maimonides, the Toraitic ordinances provide a regimen which, when followed, result in attainment of the mean. The mitzvot provide us with guidance towards the mean and away from the extremes.

Maimonides held that even though the Toraitic commands were of great significance, there is a need for moderation in the fulfillment of the mitzvot. Should one proceed to overdo the fulfillment of certain commandments it could lead one to the extreme rather than the mean. Some of the examples which Maimonides raises in the text are:

שיאסור האוכל והשתיה יותר ממה שנאסר מן המאכלות,
ויאסור הנשואין יותר על מה שנאסר מן הביאות, ויתן
כל ממנו לעניים או להקדש יותר על מה שיש בתורה
מן הצדקה וההקדשות והערכין.

"(The restrictions which) prohibit eating and drinking, beyond the stipulated prohibitions about food; and (those which) prohibit marriage, beyond what is prohibited concerning sexual intercourse; and those who give all their money to the poor or to the Temple, (over and) above what the Law says about charity, Temple properties, and valuations."⁶⁹

In order to support what he has said, Maimonides quotes from the Talmud Yerushalmi, Nedarim 9:1:

רב אדי בשם רבי יצחק לא דיין מה שנאסר לך התורה
אלא שאתה אוסר עליו דברים אחרים.

"R. Adi in the name of R. Yitzchak said: Is that which the Torah has already prohibited not enough for you that you have to prohibit yourself from other things?" Thus,

Maimonides sets the commands of the Torah as the standard for instructing oneself regarding the mean.

Maimonides distinguishes between two different types of mitzvot which are to be found in the Torah. In large part, this distinction Maimonides gleans from the writings of Saadia Gaon in his work, Emunot V'Deot. According to Saadia we can differentiate between what he calls "rational" law and "revealed" law.

Rational law (מצוות שכליות), according to Saadia includes those mitzvot which could be learned via the intellect. They aid in the maintenance of the social order.

והם הדברים המפורסמים אצל כל אדם שהם רעות כגון שפיכת דמים, וגניבה, גזל, ואנווה, וההזקה למי שלא עשה רע, וגמילות המיטב ברעה והזלזול בהורים, וכיוצא בתן וחם המצוות שעליהם אומרים החכמים עליהם השלום דברים שאלמלא לא נכתבו ראויין היו לכתבן.

"These are the things which are known to all as evil such as murder, theft, robbery, fraud, harming an innocent person, repayment of a benefactor with evil, disrespect of parents, and others like these. These are the mitzvot about which the Sages said they are things which if they had not been written (in the Torah) they would be worthy of being written therein."⁷⁰

The revealed laws (מצוות שמעיות) are those laws which one would not come to on their own via the intellect. Had these ideas not been presented at Sinai there would have been no obligation to follow these laws. In this category we find laws such as the laws of Kashrut, the laws of (the

wearing of clothes made of a mixture of wool and linen), and the laws concerning defilement and purity, among others.

רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר לא יאמר אדם אי אפשר
לאכל בשר בחלב אי אפשר ללבוש שאטנז אי אפשר לבוא
על הערוה אלא אפשר ומה אעשה ואבי שבשמים גזר
עלי.

"Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: A person should not say it is not possible to eat milk with meat, it is not possible to wear "shatnez", it is not possible to commit sexual improprieties, but rather, it is possible. But what can I do, my Father in heaven has decreed it!"⁷¹

Saadia bases his sense of the importance of the revealed laws by justifying the rational laws as being beneficial to our people as they are to the welfare of all people. That which may be deduced via the intellect (i.e. the rational laws) constitutes a common foundation for all people. One need not wait for revelation of these laws to be obligated to the fulfillment of them. Revealed law, on the other hand, does not require the involvement of the intellect. The revelation is not intended for rational evaluation. It is intended that one heed revealed law precisely because it is revealed by God. Hence the statement of Rabban Gamliel, "My Father in Heaven has decreed it!"

According to Maimonides, the rational laws are those laws which concern issues בין אדם לחברו, between man and

his fellow man. They are those laws which are called
מצוות.

**ואותן שקורין אותן האחרונים שכליות נקראין
 "מצוות" כמו שביארו חכמים.**

"Those (laws) which the moderns call rational, are called the commandments, as explained by the Sages."⁷² By contrast, the revealed laws, which were revealed by God, concern matters **בין אדם למקום**, between man and God. The reward for fulfillment of the revealed laws is greater precisely because they are God's commandments. They concern matters which one may not rationally deliberate.

ומצוות אלו וכיוצא בהן הן שקורין אותן ה' "חוקות"
 "These mitzvot, and others like them (reference to kashrut, "shatnez", etc.) are those laws which God called "My statutes."⁷³ But while reward for fulfillment of the revealed law may be greater, it is fulfillment of both categories which brings one to **השגת האל**, and **שלמות**.

According to Maimonides, the stories in the Bible serve to provide us with models and paradigms of people living in accordance with teachings of the Torah and performing "praiseworthy acts". The biblical personages model for us the striving for the mean through their action, and by extension for **השגת האל**.

וכל מה שבא במקרא בגנות האנשים בעלי הרעות והמגרעות
וגינוי זכרם, ושבח הצדיקים ורוסמותם, אין הכוונה בהם
אלא כמו שאמרתי לך, כדי שילכו בני אדם בדרכם של אלו
ויתרחקו מדרכם של אלו.

"All instances in the Bible, wherein corrupt and defective individuals are censured and their deeds are denounced; and wherein good men are praised and glorified, the purpose, as I mentioned to you, is for people to follow the way of the latter and avoid the way of the former."⁷⁴

Of all the models we find in the Bible one represents, for Maimonides, the ideal of fulfillment of the mitzvot, and of שלמות.

וכבר אמרו עליהם השלום האי מאן דבעי למחוי חסידא
ליקיים מילי דאבות. ואין אצלינו מעלה מן החסידות וזולת
הנבואה, והיא מביאה אליה כמו שאמרו חסידות מביאה
לידי רוח הקודש. הנה נתבאר מדברים שהתנהגות במוסרי
מסכתא זו מביאה לידי נבואה.

"They (the Sages), peace be upon them, said: "Whoever wants to become a pious man should fulfill the words of Avot (Baba Kama 30a). And there is among us, no rank higher than piety save for prophecy. One leads to the other, as it is said: "Piety brings closer the Holy Spirit (Avodah Zarah 20b). From their words it is clear that behavior in accordance with the teachings of this tractate (Avot) brings one closer to prophecy."⁷⁵

For Maimonides, the highest ideal towards which one can strive in this world is that of a prophet.

While as an ideal the prophet represents השגת האל in the fullest manner in which it is possible for a human being to attain, the different prophets of the Bible are distinguished one from the other by the degree to which they

have balanced their **מדות** in relation to the mean. It is important to note here Maimonides' emphasis on the mean. As we shall see, Maimonides builds his **מדות** system around the concepts of virtues and vices. The ideal, as we have noted is, to balance one's **מדות** at the mean (that is, acquiring noble moral qualities, or "virtues" which lie at the mean) and to avoid acquiring the qualities which lie at the extremes (that is, evil qualities or "vices").

It is not necessary that one attain complete perfection in order to be a prophet. Maimonides says of prophecy that:

ואין מתנאי הנביא שיהו בו המעלות המדותיות בכללותן
עד שלא יהו בו שום פגרה כלל.

"It is not a condition of prophecy that one possess all the ethical virtues to the point at which one possesses no vices at all."⁷⁶ But Maimonides does qualify the above statement by laying out certain limits, namely that all prophets, prior to their beginning to prophesy must have acquired all rational virtues (i.e. noble qualities which are universal and not the result of revealed law). But prophecy requires development of the intellect, in the form of acquisition of all the rational virtues. Again, complete **שלמות** is not required, as shown by this statement:

ודע שכל נביא אינו מתנבא אלא אחר שנקנו לו כל המעלות
ההגיוניות ורוב המעלות המדיות והחמורות שבהן.

"Know that no prophet prophesies until he has acquired all the rational virtues and most of the ethical virtues, that is to say, the most stringent among them."⁷⁷ Maimonides holds that it is the ethical virtues which are not yet acquired which distinguish between prophets. He subordinates the ethical virtues to the rational virtues. The more qualities which lie unbalanced (toward the mean), the more that separates the prophet from **השגת האל**. However, Maimonides does not further develop this point here in Shemoneh Perakim. He more fully explicates his understanding of prophecy in the Guide. Here, in Shemoneh Perakim, the emphasis is on the **מדות** system. The prophetic figure is employed as a paradigm.

To further explain the prophetic model vis-a-vis **מדות**, Maimonides turns to the Rabbinic tradition to find a metaphor which explains the separation and the distinction between prophets.

הרבה ימצא במדרשות ובהגדות ומהם גם בתלמוד שיש מן
הנביאים מי שרואה את ה' מאחורי מסכים מרובים ומהם
מי שרואהו מאחורי מסכים מעטים, לפי ערך קרבתם לפני
ה' ורוב מעלתם בנבואה.

"In the Midrash and the Aggadah as well as in the Talmud we find many (references to) those among the prophets who saw God from behind many veils and those who saw Him from behind a few veils, according to their closeness to God and the

level of their prophecy."⁷⁸ Maimonides refines this metaphor by stating:

וְכָל מִי שֶׁהֵיָה בּוֹ מֵהֶם שְׁתֵּי מִדּוֹת אוֹ שְׁלֹשׁ שֶׁאֵינּוּ מְסֻבָּעֵת כְּמוֹ
שֶׁבִּיאָרְנוּ בַּפֶּרֶק הָרְבִיעִי אוֹמְרִים עֲלֵיו שֶׁהוּא רֹאֵה אֶת ה' מֵאַחֲרֵי שְׁנֵי מַסְכִּים אוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה.

"Anyone who has two or three **מִדּוֹת** which are not balanced (i.e. to the mean), as we explained in chapter four, it is said of them that they see God from behind two or three veils."⁷⁹ By working towards the mean the veils can be removed and the prophet draws closer to God. The same is true for all people.

It must be stressed that Maimonides' description of prophecy was not intended to be merely a description of prophecy as found in the Bible. Rather, he fully intended it as an ideal towards which any person could strive, at any time. "Shemoneh Perakim is concerned with prophetic way of life which can be followed at any time."⁸⁰

According to Maimonides, only one prophet drew near enough to God so as to see Him through but one veil, Moses.

שֶׁמֹּסֶה רִבִּינוּ רֹאֵה אֶת ה' מֵאַחֲרֵי מִסַּךְ אֶחָד בְּהִיר כְּלוֹמֶר
שְׁקוֹף

"Moses, our teacher, saw God from behind one clear veil, that is to say, transparent."⁸¹ It is still a veil. No other prophet had so perfected themselves so as to draw as close to God as had Moses. The possibility of doing so

lies before each of us.

Maimonides proceeds to explain that when Moses requested to see God **פנים אל פנים**, without the intervention of veils, his request was denied. The sole veil which separated God and Moses was the sole veil which none of us can remove so long as we are **בעלי גוף**, in the physical realm. While we are **בעלי גוף**, we cannot become pure intellect, such as is God. Hence the body prevents us from ideal perfection.

ואמר הראיני נא את כבודך. אז הודיעו ה' יתעלה שזה
בלתי אפשר מכיון שהוא שכל מצוי בחומר, כלומר מחמת
היותו אדם והוא אמרו כי לא יראיני האדם וחי, ולא
נשאר בינו ובין השגת ה' יתעלה כפי אמתת מציאותו
אלא מסך אחר בהיר והוא שכל האנושי שאינו נמרד.

"So he (Moses) said: 'Let me see Your glory'. God, may He be exalted, informed him that this was not possible due to his being an intellect existing in matter, I mean, since he was a human being. This is what He said: 'For man shall not see Me and live.' Between him and the perception of the true reality of God's existence there remained only one transparent veil, namely the un-separated human intellect."⁸²

The human intellect cannot be drawn aside so long as it is inseparable from the human body (i.e. the physical realm) and hence full perception of God is not possible in this life. Nonetheless, according to Maimonides, Moses represents the greatest example of the pursuit of the mean and of

השגת האל.

In chapter seven of the Shemoneh Perakim, Maimonides

identifies the "ideal" of the Aristotelian ethics as being the philosopher. For Maimonides, the prophet is a philosopher though not every philosopher is a prophet.⁸³ This issue is more fully explicated in the Guide though Maimonides does draw the parallel here in Shemoneh Perakim in his effort to prove the compatability of Greek philosophy and of the Torah.

CHAPTER V

WHY IS THERE A PROBLEM REACHING THE IDEAL?

Maimonides tries to explain that the reason why people fail to attain **השגת האל** is because of deficiencies in their ethical qualities. In order to do so he employs a metaphor of sickness and health. It is possible that he does so because of his own background in medicine.

**אמרו הקדמונים שיש לנפש בריאות וחולי כמו שיש לגוף
בריאות וחולי.**

"The ancients said that the soul is subject to health and illness just as the body is subject to health and illness."⁸⁴

**והמטרה בבריאות גופו כדי שתמצא הנפש את כליה בריאים
ושלמים שתשתמש בהם בלמודים וקניית המעלות המדותיות
וההגיוניות כדי שיגיע לאותה תכלית.**

"The purposes of a healthy body is for the soul to find all of its vessels healthy and complete in order that they may be used in learning and acquiring the ethical and rational virtues so as to arrive at the goal (of **השגת האל**)."⁸⁵ It seems reasonable to say that the body and soul function together.

Following Aristotelian thought, Maimonides holds that the soul is not distinct from the body; that is, there is no form independent of matter. In the case of humans, the

intellect is the form, which is connected to the matter, which is the body. This is as opposed to Platonic thought wherein the soul and body are separate entities.⁸⁶ By contrast, Maimonides holds that God's intellect is not involved with any physical entity. An independent intellect, such as God can function at its fullest potential because of the lack of any intermediary which can diminish its qualities whereas the human intellect is diminished by the vehicle through which it functions, namely the body. It stands to reason that a healthy body and a healthy soul will diminish the intellect less than an ill body or an ill soul. It is beneficial for one to strive for health of both the body and soul in order that form (i.e. the intellect) and matter (i.e. the body) may function properly, resulting in

השגת האל.

Like Aristotle, Maimonides holds the soul to be the source of many different actions and functions. What differentiates one function from another is determined by which part of the body is operating in tandem with the soul.

**אבל הנכון הוא שיעשה תכלית כל פעולותיו בריאות
גופו והתמדת סביאותו בשלום כדי שיעמדו כלי כחות
הנפש שהם אברי הגוף שלמים.**

"The proper goal for all of one's conduct is the body's health and prolonging its existence in a sound manner in order that the instruments of the soul's powers--which are the organs of the body--remain sound."⁸⁷ The soul operates

through the parts of the body and hence concern for health of the soul is not sufficient. One must be concerned with the health of the body as well. Schweid gives the example of electricity in order to clarify this concept. He likens the soul to electricity. It will manifest itself differently when connected to various different electrical appliances. In spite of its many different forms and manifestations, it still is electricity.

Maimonides helps us explaining what he means by a "healthy soul".

**ובריאות הנפש הוא שיהא תכונותיה ותכונות חלקיה תכונה
שהיא עושה בה לעולם הטובות והחסדים והמעשים הנאים.
וחליה הוא שיהא תכונותיה ותכונות חלקיה תכונה שתעשה
בה לעולם את הרעות והנזקים והמעשים המנונים.**

"The health of the soul consists in its condition and that of its parts being such that it always does good and fine things and performs noble actions. Its sickness consists in its condition and that of its parts being such that it always does bad and ugly things and performs base actions."⁸⁹

As is the case with the extremes vis-a-vis the mean, Maimonides defines illness of the soul, in his metaphor, as that which is evil and which delays attainment of the goal. Those who are **חולי נפש**, are those who perceive evil things as being good and who pursue evil, which to them appears good.

כך חולי הנפש כלומר הרשעים ובעלי המגזעות
 נדמה להם בדברים אשר הם רעות שהם טובות,
 ובאותם אשר הם טובות שהם רעות, והרשע
 שואף תמיד את המטרות שהם לפי האמת רעות,
 ומדמה אותם מחמת מחלת נפשו שהם טובות.

"Those who have sick souls, that is to say, (those who are) evil and those who possess vices (evil qualities) imagine evil things to be good, and good things to be evil. The evil person always strives for goals which are, in truth, evil and imagines them, because of the illness of his soul to be good."⁹⁰

Illness of the soul, it may be said, is the distortion of perception.

But like one who is physically ill, one who suffers an illness of the soul is not without hope. By pursuing proper help the individual can restore the soul's health and thereby move towards **השגת האל**.

וכשם שהחולים כאשר יודעים מחלתם ואינם בקיאים
 במלאכת הרפואה שואלים לרופאים אלה מודיעים
 אותם מה שראוי להם לעשות.

"Sick people, when they know they are sick and know they are not experts in medicine, ask doctors who inform them what is correct to do."⁹¹ Medical doctors are trained to attend to those who suffer illnesses of the body. The

חולי נפש must seek out a doctor of the soul. Maimonides identifies the doctors of the soul as the **חכמים**, the Sages. They will be able to advise the individual in matters of the soul.

חולי הנפש ראוי להם לשאול את החכמים שהם
רופאי הנפשות ואלה יזהירום מאותם הרעות
שהם חושבים אותם טובות, ירפאום בפעולה
אשר בה מרפאין מדות הנפש.

"Those with illness of the soul should inquire of the Sages, who are the doctors of the soul. They will caution them from evil things which they (the ill people) think are good, and will heal them through actions which heal the moral habits of the soul."⁹²

Maimonides feels that the Sages are equipped to redirect the individual's sense of perception. They can lead the sick of the soul towards good and away from evil.

As discussed earlier, striving for the mean and balancing **מדות** towards the mean lead to fulfillment of the goal of **השגת האל**. In terms of the metaphor of illness and health, Maimonides expresses this by identifying **תקון המדות** with healing the soul.

תקון המדות אינו אלא רפואת הנפש.

"Improvement of the moral habits is the equivalent of healing of the soul."⁹³ Thus, the manner in which one corrects moral habits, which are not balanced at the mean and hence delay **השגת האל**, is to seek a doctor of the soul and follow his prescription for restoring health of the soul. Before we can understand how one restores the health of the soul and corrects moral habits it will first be necessary to understand Maimonides' conception of the human soul and its powers.

According to Maimonides, each creature has its own unique soul. The human soul is unlike that of any other creature.

כל מין ומין מאותם שיש להם נפש יש לו נפש מיוחדת
זולת נפש האחר.

"Every species which possesses a soul has a unique soul, different from that of any other (species)."⁹⁴ Using the example of sensation which, as we shall see, comes from the soul Maimonides explains:

כן פועל רגש האדם היא נפש האדם, ופועל רגש החמור היא
נפש החמור ופועל רגש הפרס היא נפש הפרס ואין להם
ענין הכוללם זולת שתוף השם בלבד.

"The agent of a man's sensation is the human soul; the agent of a donkey's sensation is the donkey's soul; and the agent of an eagle's sensation is the eagle's soul. There is nothing common to all of these 'souls' except that they share a common name."⁹⁵

We find in Aristotle the concept of the unity of the soul. "In Aristotle's system, the soul is what makes the body one thing, having unity of purpose, and the characteristics that we associate with the word 'organism'.⁹⁶

Maimonides concurs, saying that the human soul is a unity.

נפש האדם היא נפש אחת.

"The human soul is one soul."⁹⁷ Maimonides likens this one soul to matter, which has intellect as its form. The role of the human soul - matter, is to attain its form: intellect. Complete attainment of intellect (that is, pure intellect) would be **השגת האל**. If the soul does not strive to attain its form, then Maimonides feels that its existence is futile.

ורע שזו הנפש האחת...היא כחומר, והשכל לה צורה, אם לא תושג לה הצורה הרי תהיה פציאות החכמה אשר בה לקבלת אותה הצורה לבטלה, וכאלו פציאותה לריק ותוא אסרו גם בלא דעת נפש לא טוב, כלומר שפציאות נפש שלא הושגה לה צורה אלא היא נפש בלא דעת לא טוב.

"Know that this single soul...is like matter, and the intellect is its form. If it does not attain its form, the existence of its capacity to receive this form is for nought and is, as it were, futile. This is the meaning of his (Solomon's) statement: 'Indeed, without knowledge a soul is not good.' He means that the existence of a soul that does not attain its form, but is rather 'a soul without knowledge, is not good'."⁹⁸

Maimonides closes off the discussion of matter and form here in Shemoneh Perakim and proposes to treat it in a projected work called ספר הנבואה, Book of Prophecy. But it was never written.

Because the actions of the soul are sometimes called **נפשות**, Maimonides notes that many have been misled into thinking that there is more than one human soul. But this is erroneous.

נפש האדם נפש אחת ויש לה פעולות הרבה שונות, יש
 סנקראות מקצת אותן הפעולות נמשות, ולפיכך יש
 שחשבו בכך שיש לאדם נפשות רבות כמו שחושבים
 הרופאים.

"The human soul is one soul which has many different functions, some of which are sometimes called 'souls'. As a result there are those who thought that man had many souls, as the doctors thought."⁹⁹ Maimonides writes that doctors believed there were many human souls, including one whom he calls גדול הרופאים, the greatest doctor - Hippocrates.¹⁰⁰

עד שפתח גדול הרופאים שהנפשות שלש סבכית וחיונית
 ונפשית.

"(To the point that even) Hippocrates stated that there are three souls: vegetative, animal, rational."¹⁰¹ This notion of three levels goes back to Aristotle. Aristotle's approach to the soul is biological in nature. He held that there are three different levels of being alive which are manifested through the different levels of the soul.

The סבכית or vegetative, refers to the soul or soul qualities which are found in plants. In Aristotle this is the lowest level. The חיונית or animal, refers to those qualities which are found in all living animals. These include locomotion, sensation and desire. The נפשית or rational, refers to those qualities of a soul involving intellect. The intellect enables one to direct desires towards fulfillment of a plan. This is unique to humans who think

and speak. The last is comparable to Maimonides' notion of man as **חַי מְדַבֵּר**, the speaking or rational being. "Aristotle maintained that the lower level of soul is a necessary condition for the higher and that the possession of a higher type of soul also changes the way in which the lower functions."¹⁰²

Maimonides' preference is not for this three-fold division. He prefers to speak of **חֲלָקֵי הַנֶּפֶשׁ**, of parts of the soul and hence creates different terms which he correlates to the three-fold division presented above.

Maimonides notes that the philosophers also speak of **חֲלָקֵי הַנֶּפֶשׁ**, parts of the soul. Speaking of the term **חֲלָקֵי הַנֶּפֶשׁ**, Maimonides says:

וְשֵׁמוֹת אֵלּוּ מִשְׁתַּמְשִׁים בָּהֶם הָרַבָּה הַפִּילֹסוֹפוֹת. וְאֵין כּוֹרֵנִם
בְּאִמְרָם חֲלָקִים שֶׁהִיא מִתְחַלֶּקֶת כְּהִתְחַלְקוֹת הַגּוּפוֹת, אֲלָא הֵם
מוֹנִים מַעֲוִלוֹתֶיהָ הַשּׁוֹנוֹת שֶׁהֵם לִגְבֵי כִלּוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ כְּחֲלָקִים
לִגְבֵי הַכִּלּוֹת הַמְּחוּבֵּרֶת מֵאוֹתָם הַחֲלָקִים.

"The philosophers use these terms frequently. They do not intend to speak of parts (of the soul) as if the soul were divided into parts as the body is divided into parts. Rather, they count the different activities of the soul, in its totality, in the same way (as they would speak of) parts of a whole which is composed of those same parts."¹⁰³

Maimonides does not wish to convey the idea that he is speaking of anything more or less than one unified soul.

Maimonides divides the soul into five parts.

אני אומר שחלקי הנפש חמשה הזן, והמרגיש, והמדמה,
והמתעורר וההוגה.

"I say that there are five parts of the soul: the nutritive, the sensitive, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the rational."104

The first part of the soul which Maimonides considers is חלק הזן, the nutritive part.

ממנו הכח המושך, והמחזיק, והסעכל, והפולט את
העורפים, והמגדל, והמוליד בדומה, והמבדיל את
הלחיות עד מפריש את הצריך ליזון בו והצריך
להפלט.

"(The nutritive part) consists in the power of attracting, retaining, digesting, excreting, growing, procreating its kind, and separating mixtures so that it isolates what it needs for nourishment and what it should excrete."105

Maimonides goes no further in describing the seven powers he attributes to חלק הזן as he feels they are matter of discourse for medical doctors which is not relevant here in Shemoneh Perakim.

The next part of the soul he considers is חלק המרגיש, the sensitive part.

והחלק המרגיש, ממנו חמשת הכחות המפורסמות אצל
החיות, הראות, והשמע, והסעס, והריח, והמסוש.

"In the sensitive part (of the soul) are found the five powers which are well known to all: sight, hearing, taste,

smell and touch."¹⁰⁶ Maimonides notes that touch is different from the other four senses.

והוא מצוי בכל שטח הגוף ואין לו אבר מיוחד כמו
לארבעה הכחות.

"It is found in all parts of the body and does not have a special organ like the other four senses."¹⁰⁷

The third part of the soul given consideration is
חלק המדמה , the imaginative part.

הוא הכח הזוכר רשמי המוחשיות אחר העלמם מלפני החושים
שהשיגום, ומרכיבם זה בזה ומבדילם זה מזה ולפיכך
מרכיב הכח הזה מן הדברים שהשיג דברים שלא השיגם
מעולם ואי אפשר להשיגם.

"(The imaginative part) is the power that preserves the impressions of sensibly perceived objects after they vanish from the immediacy of the senses that perceived them. Some impressions are combined with others, and some are separated from others. Therefore, from things it has perceived, this power puts together things it has not perceived at all and which are not possible for it to perceive."¹⁰⁸

This part of the soul helps one to distinguish reality from non-reality. It also helps us to remember sensations once they are gone. In a simple sense it is memory. But notice its combining power.

Maimonides notes that a small group of thinkers¹⁰⁹
erred in their explanation of the powers of the חלק המדמה .
This group held that anything that was imaginable was
possible in reality. Maimonides disagreed with this.

ולא ידעו שהכח הזה מרכיב ענינים נמנעי המציאות.

"They did not know that this power combines things whose existence is impossible."¹¹⁰ Maimonides believed that

חלק המדמה did have the ability to create images which do not, and in some cases cannot, exist. This ability to distinguish reality from non-reality helps us to properly perceive the world. More importantly, it helps us to correctly perceive what is good and what is evil.

Next Maimonides turns to the **חלק המתעורר**, the appetitive part of the soul.

והחלק המתעורר הוא הכח שבו ישתוקק האדם לאיזה דבר או ימאסחו. ומכלל הפעולות אשר תהיינה מן הכח הזה הרי"ה והבריחה, והאהדה לדבר מסוים או ההסתייגות ממנו, והכעס והרצון, והפחד והעוז, והאכזריות והרחמנות, ואהבה והשנאה, והרבה מאלו המקרים הנפשיים.

"The appetitive part is the power by which a man desires, or is repulsed by, a certain thing. From this power originate such actions as seeking something or fleeing from it, as well as being attracted to something or avoiding it; rage and agreeableness, fear and boldness, cruelty and compassion, love and hatred, and many such disturbances of the soul."¹¹¹

The powers of this part of the soul are unlimited vis-a-vis the parts of the body.

ובלי הכחות הללו כל אברי הגוף.

"The vehicles for these (appetitive) powers are all the limbs of the body."¹¹² By itself **חלק המתעורר** involves the drive towards that which is pleasureable and the avoidance

of that which is harmful in terms of sensation. It does so without regard for the goal of **השגת האל**. It is we who must give it proper direction. This is where ethics enters the picture. For Maimonides, ethics involves the choosing of that which is more beneficial, vis-a-vis the goal, over that which may be more pleasureable.

Ethics demands that we set aside the pleasureable and direct ourselves towards the goal by choosing the more pragmatic. Maimonides feels that humans should not be concerned with satisfying desires, which are found in the appetitive part of the soul. Animals act out of a desire for pleasure.

לפי שאדם אם נהג ואכל מאכל ערב לחיך ריחו טוב מאכל
תאוה והוא מניק ואפשר שיהא גורם למחלה מסוכנת או
אף גם לאיבוד לגמרי, הרי הוא והבהמה שוין, ואין זה
מעשה אדם מצד היותו אדם אלא מעשה אדם מצד היותו
בעל חי, נמשל כבהמות נדמו. אבל תהיה פעולתו
אנושית אם אכל את המועיל בלבד.

"For if a man sets out to eat appetizing food which is pleasant to the palate and which has an agreeable odor, but is harmful and could be the cause of grave illness or eventually of destruction, then this man and the beasts are alike. That is not the action of a man insofar as he is a man. Indeed, it is the action of a man insofar as he is an animal: 'He is like the beasts that perish'. A human action (requires) taking only what is most useful."¹¹³

Maimonides holds that as rational beings, who unlike animals possess intellectual capacity, we should be able to distinguish between those things which are beneficial to us and

those which are pleasureable, yet harmful. This distinction requires control of the appetitive part of our soul. As humans we should act only in ways that are useful, without regard for pleasure. Animals act out of a desire for pleasure.

The final part of the soul is **חלק ההוגה**, the rational part. This part of the soul is the part which serves as the vehicle for thought and the acquisition of knowledge. It also aids in the differentiation between good and evil.

הוא הכח המצוי לאדם אשר בו ישכיל, ובו תהיה החשיבה
ובו הוא קונה את המדעים ובו הוא מבדיל בין הרע
והטוב מן המעולות.

"This is the power which is unique to man. Through it he is educated, thinks, acquires knowledge (of the sciences), and distinguishes between good and evil acts."¹¹⁴

This part of the soul manifests two basic types of action: practical and theoretical.

והמעולות הללו מהם מעשי ומהם עיוני, והמעשי ממנו מלאכתי
וממנו מחשבתי. והעיוני הוא אשר בו ידע האדם את
הנמצאים שאינם משתנים מכפי שהן, ואלו הם הנקראים
מדעים טהם.

"Some of these actions are practical and some are theoretical. Of the practical actions, some are productive and some are deliberative. The theoretical aid one in knowing the essence of things which do not change. These are simply called sciences without specifications."¹¹⁵

It is in the last two parts of the soul, the appetitive and the rational parts, that we find the ethical issues may be raised. It is these two parts over which we have control. Because man can voluntarily act on his desires and can distinguish between good and evil, through the intellect, these two parts of the soul are more directly involved in the ethics than the other three. As such, Maimonides' therapy for curing the diseases of the soul will revolve around the actions and powers found in the appetitive and rational parts of the soul.

These are the five parts of the soul and their various powers as Maimonides presents them. Though he distinguishes between these five parts of the soul, Maimonides remains steadfast in his conviction that the human soul is a unity. He states that the soul, both as a unity and in all its parts, should be directed towards the goal of

השגת האל.

וזה הוא מה שדורש יתעלה מאתנו שתהא מטרתינו
באמרו ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך,
כלומר בכל חלקי נפשך, שתשים תכלית כל חלק
מהם תכלית אחת והיא לאהבה את ה' אלהיך.

"This is what the Exalted One seeks from us as our goal. As He said: 'And you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul...' (Deut. 6:5), that is to say, with all the parts of your soul. You should place before every part of your soul one goal which is to love the Lord your God."116

All ethics rests on a view of human nature. To understand Maimonides' ethics we need to understand his "psychology", particularly his view of freedom of the will.

As to human nature, Maimonides states that on the issue of free will Torah and Greek philosophy agree.

אבל אתה דע שדבר מוסכם הוא מתורתנו ופילוסופים
יוון במה שאמרוהו הוכחות האמתיות שכל פעולות
האדם מסורות בידו, אין עליו הכרח בהם, ואין
לו מושך חיצוני כלל.

"But you, know that there is one thing agreed upon between our Torah and Greek philosophy (which has proved it by true proofs)-that all of man's actions are in his hands. There is no compelling force upon his actions, nor is there any external compulsion which forces him toward virtue or vice."¹¹⁷

Maimonides holds that humans are free in all their actions. In no case are there outside factors and forces which may force one towards a certain action or away from a certain action.

שיהא מוכרח או מנוע אין זה בשום פנים ואופן.

"That one would be compelled (to) or prevented (from a particular action) is not (true) in any case or situation."¹¹⁸ According to Schweid, our freedom to choose between different choices, as taught by Maimonides, is our freedom to err.¹¹⁹ Because we are in control of whether we err or not, we are also in control of the health of our soul. This includes the choice to ignore our illness and carry on without seeking the

help of a doctor. The end result is that we continue to misperceive good and evil, continuing to act in a manner which delays or even precludes **השגת האל**.

In order to strengthen his case about free will, Maimonides turns to the commands and ordinances found in the Torah.

ואלו היה האדם מוכרח במעשיו כי אז בטלים הצווי והאזהרה התורניים.

"If man were compelled in his actions, then the Toraitic commands and warnings would be for naught."¹²⁰ If man were not free to obey or disobey the laws then there would have been no reason for the promulgation of the laws we find in the Torah. Equally useless would be the obligation to learn since there would be no benefit to be gained from education as all benefits would have been determined in advance. Furthermore, there would be no need for reward and punishment were man not free to act according to his own will.

והיה גם השכר והעונש עוול מוחלט, בין סאתנו זה לזה ובין מאת ה' לנו, כי שמעון זה שרצח את ראובן אם היה זה אנוס ומוכרח להרוג וזה אנוס ומוכרח ליהרג, אם כן מדוע נעניש את שמעון שיענישהו על מעשה שהוא מוכרח לעשותו ועל כל פנים, ואפילו אם רצה שלא לעשותו לא יוכל.

"Reward and punishment would certainly be unjust, whether meted out by us or by God. If a certain Shimon killed a certain Reuven because he was bound and forced to kill

him, and because he (Reuven) was bound and forced to be killed, how could we punish Shimon. It was an act which he was compelled to commit in any case, whether he wished to or not. Even if he did not wish to commit the act, he could not (not commit the murder)."¹²¹

Maimonides determines that in order for the commands and prohibitions of the Torah to have been promulgated for a purpose, man must be free.

אבל האמת שאין בו ספק שכל מעשי האדם מסורים בידו,
אם רצה עושה ואם לא יעשה, ללא הכרח ולא כפייה עליו
בכך.

"The truth, about which there can be no doubt, is that all human actions are in human hands. If he wishes, he can do it, if he doesn't, he need not do it, without any force or compulsion being exercised on the choice."¹²² But even though the option to choose is ultimately left to us we are commanded regarding the choice.

ולפיכך נעשה חיובי הצווי ואמר ראה נתתי לפניך היום
את החיים ואת הטוב ואת המוות ואת הרע, ובחרת
בחיים ונתן את הבחירה בזה בידיו.

"Therefore was the command made obligatory, as it is said: 'Behold, I have placed before you this day, life and good, death and evil...Therefore choose life!' (Deut. 30:15,19). And the choice in this matter is left in our hands."¹²³ God does not compel us to fulfill His mitzvot.

אין ה' גוזר על עשיית מצווה...
ואין ה' גוזר על עבירה.

"God does not ordain the fulfillment of a mitzvah...God does not ordain transgression (of a mitzvah)."¹²⁴

ואין דבר המכריחו עליהם ולא מונע אותן מהן,
כמו שביאר בספר האמת ואמר בפרשו ענין זה הן
האדם היה כאחד ממנו לדעת טוב ורע, וכבר ביאר
התרגום את פירושו שענינו ממנו לדעת טוב ורע.
כלומר שהוא נעשה אחר בעולם כלומר טוב שאין
כמותו טוב אחר הדומה לו בענין זה המצוי לו,
ומה הוא, שהוא עצמו מצד עצמו ידע הטובות
והרעות ויעשה איזה מהן שירצה ואין מונע
אותו מכך.

"He (God) does not force him (man) to perform them nor does He prevent him from performing them. This notion was explained in the Book of Truth, where He said: 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil'. The Targum has already made clear the interpretation of this appraisal. ('like one) of us, knowing good and evil.' It means that he (Adam) has become unique in the world, i.e. a species having no similar species with which he shares this quality he has attained. What is this quality? It is that he himself, of his own accord, knows the good and the bad things, does whatever he wishes, and is not prevented from doing them."¹²⁵

Maimonides' statements are not intended to preclude God's ability to act. According to Maimonides, there are realms in which man does not have the ability to act and realms in which man has no freedom to choose. This concept, he says, was expressed by the Sages in their statement:

הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים.

"Everything is in the hands of heaven except for the fear of heaven."¹²⁶ Maimonides states that this statement is true. But having allowed that man has freedom to choose, and is in

control of all his acts, he must now either reconcile the two stands or drop one of them.

Maimonides feels that many people have been misled by the statement of the Sages. Fear of heaven, he says, resides in one of the parts of the soul.

ובחלק הזה מן הנפש תהיה יראת שמים ואינו בירי שמים
אלא מסורה לבחירת האדם.

"And it is in this part of the soul (the rational) that 'fear of heave' resides. It is not in the hands of heaven but is given to human choice."¹²⁷

He then turns to explain how people have misunderstood the meaning of הכל. Literally, the text means that "everything is in God's hands." Humans are left no freedom except to believe or not. But Maimonides refines its meaning by saying it does not refer to everything in a total sense. Rather it is intended to refer to those things in nature in which humans have no choice.

והנה אמרם "הכל" אין הכוונה בכך אלא על דברים
הטבעיים אשר אין לאדם בחירה בהם כגון היותו ארוך
או קצר, או ירידת גשם או בצורת וכו'.

"Their statement, 'Everything' is not intended to mean literally that, but rather to refer to those natural things over which man has no choice. These include: his being tall or short, the falling of the rain or drought, etc."¹²⁸

To limit God only to action in nature is insufficient for Maimonides. He raises the question of God's will in other areas.

אבל חיבר המפורסם אצל בני אדם ואפשר למצוא בדברי
חכמים ובלשונות הכתובים כמותו, והוא שעמידת האדם
וישיבתו וכל תנועותיו ברצון ה' יתעלה ובחפצו.

"But the thing which is well known among men and which may be found among the words of the Sages, and in other writings as well, is that man's risings and sittings and all his movements are by the will and desire of God, the exalted One."¹²⁹ And this, says Maimonides, is true. But only in a limited sense.

God, in the act of creating the world, determined certain things.

ה' רצה שתהיה הארץ בכללותה במרכז ולפיכך כל זמן
שנזרק חלק ממנו למעלה הרי הוא נע אל המרכז.

"God willed that the earth, in its totality, be in the center. Therefore, every time that a part of it (the earth) is thrown upwards from it, it moves towards the center."¹³⁰ Thus, if a rock is thrown in the air, it will always return to earth. And so it is with all things. That which God set in motion at the time of creation is that which continues to exist now. Thus Maimonides quotes Koheleth:

שנאמר מה שיהיה הוא שיהיה ומה שנעשה הוא שיעשה ואין
כל חרש תחת השמש.

"As it is said: 'What was, shall be; and what was done, shall yet be done. There is nothing new under the sun.' (Ecclesiastes 1:9)"¹³¹ It is based on this verse from Koheleth that the Sages said:

נכל הניסים אשר הם מחוץ לסבך שהיו כפי שהובטח בהם,
כולם כבר קדם הרצון בששת ימי בראשית.

"For all the miracles which are supernatural, which were and which will yet be, as they were promised, they were willed during the six days of creation."¹³²

This intensifies the problem. All of this is the realm of God's control. What then, is left for human freedom? The ordinances which we find in the Torah reflect those matters in which man properly has freedom of choice.

הצווי והאזהרה התורניים אינם אלא בפעולות שיש לאדם
בחן בחירה לעשותן או שלא לעשותן.

"The commands and precautions of the Torah refer only to those actions in which man has a choice to do them or not to do them."¹³³ God commands, but God does not, stresses Maimonides, preordain human obedience or disobedience to matters in which there is freedom of choice.

Having stated that "man is responsible for all of his actions" and almost in the same breath that "Everything is in the hands of heaven..." Maimonides is left with the problem of reconciling the dichotomy. He does so by

utilizing the same reasoning he gave for the rock falling back to earth. It goes to the center as a result of God's will. It is not that God wills each time that a rock is tossed in the air that it return to earth, as the Mutakallim argued. Rather, God "willed" a certain state (or law) in motion at the time of creation. Since creation, the world has continued in the fashion in which God set it. In proof, Maimonides quotes Avodah Zarah 54b:

עולם במנהגו הולך.

"The world goes according to its custom."

So it is with man. Maimonides states that God created man with the freedom to choose to do or not do certain acts. That freedom is the result of God's will. Performance of an act at any given moment is a manifestation of human will, and not of God's momentary interaction in our lives.

ועל דרך זו אומרים באדם אם עמד וישב שברצון ה'
עמד וישב, כלומר שניתן בסבכו בראשית פזיאות
האדם שיעמוד וישב כרצונו.

"In this regard it is said of man: If he stood and sat, it is according to the will of God, the exalted One, that he stood and sat. That is to say, that He made it part of the nature of man, in the creation of the reality of man, that he should stand and sit according to his (man's) will."¹³⁴

God does, according to Maimonides, have the ability to limit a person's ability to act. God also metes out punishment.

כי יש שה' מעניש את האדם בכך שלא ישוב ולא
 יסאיר לו הבחירה בתשובה, לפי שהוא יתעלה
 יודע העונות ומחייבת חכמתו וצדקתו שיעור
 העונש, והנה יש שהוא מעניש בעולם הזה
 בלבד, ויש שהוא מעניש לעולם הבא בלבד,
 ויש שמעניש בשני העולמות יחד.

"There are those (cases) in which God punishes man because he has not repented, and He does not leave him the choice to repent. He, the Exalted One knows the transgressions, and His wisdom and justice require a (certain) measure of punishment. There are those whom He punishes solely in this world, and those whom He punishes in the world-to-come. And there are those whom He punishes in both worlds."¹³⁵

There are also those who claim that God causes certain people to do evil, and then punishes them for having committed the evil acts. Maimonides restates his stand that man is free in his actions and that God does not cause a person to be wicked or good. He considers the case of the Pharoah in Egypt wherein the text states:

והזקתי את לב פרעה.

"I will harden Pharoah's heart." (Exodus 14:4) There are those, says Maimonides, who claim that this means that God left Pharoah and his servants no choice but to oppress the Israelites. God had removed any chance that Pharoah might release the children of Israel out of any sense of compassion. But Maimonides responds by saying:

כי פרעה ועבדיו הפרו ברצונם בלי הכרח ולא
 אונס, והרעו לגרים אשר היו בארצם ועשו
 להם עוול מוחלט כמו שאמר בפירוש ויאמר אל
 עמו הנה עם בני ישראל הבא נתחכמה לו,
 ומעשה זה עשו מרצונם וברוע מחשבתם, ולא
 היה עליהם בזה הכרח, והיה עונש ה' להם
 על כך שמנעם מן התשובה כדי שיביא עליהם
 מן העונש מה שחייב צדקו שזהו עונשם,
 ומניעתם מן התשובה הוא שלא יסלחום.

"Pharoah and his followers disobeyed by choice, without force or compulsion. They oppressed the strangers in their midst, treating them unjustly. As it is said clearly: 'And he said to his people: Behold the people of Israel...Come let us deal wisely with them' (Exodus 1:9-10). This action was their own choice and because of their evil thoughts; nothing compelled them to act this way. God punished them for this (by preventing their repentance in order that justice would be served). What prevented them from repentance was that they did not set them (Israel) free."¹³⁶

Maimonides holds this to be a matter of great import which should be studied well. God was punishing Pharoah and his servants for many evil acts against the Israelites. The hardening of Pharoah's heart was God's act of preventing them from repenting for their earlier evil acts. Those acts were committed by the will of Pharoah, not the will of God. But God does punish evildoers by limiting their ability to act or repent in order that they will be subject to justice.

Maimonides seeks to establish complete human freedom of action despite the Rabbinic teaching that God controls everything but "the fear of heaven". He does so by establishing that man is free insofar as he has freedom of choice in

all his actions. There are, however, certain things which are beyond human choice. These are the rules that God willed for nature at the time of creation. Certain things, such as man's general ability to sit or stand, God decreed at creation. How man acts at a given moment, that is to say, by sitting or standing, is not a matter of God's will but of human will. God does not force humans to act in any given way, but does maintain justice in the world. God punishes those who are wicked, at the extreme, by removing their ability to repent.

Another aspect of Maimonides' psychology of human nature is his understanding of **הרגלים**, habits. Particularly relevant to our discussion are the **מדות**, which as previously noted are "moral habits". The source of the **מדות** is the soul.

In his discussion of the **מדות**, Maimonides states that there are two types of moral habits. Those which are good moral habits are known as **מעלות**, virtues. The bad moral habits are known as **מגרכות**, vices.

While the source of the **מדות**, is the soul, only certain parts of the soul are involved with the vices and the virtues.

אבל החלק הזון ומדמה לא ייאמר בו מעלה ולא מורעה.

"But of the nutritive and imaginative parts there is nothing to say regarding virtues or vices."¹³⁷

There is no moral will involved at this level. According to Maimonides we only speak of these parts in terms of whether they are functioning properly or not.

Within the other parts of the soul, namely the sensitive, appetitive and rational, we do find involvement with the vices and virtues. Maimonides divides the virtues and vices into two categories which, in turn, are connected with these three parts of the soul.

והמעלות הם שני סוגים, מעלות מדותיות ומעלות הגיוניות

"The virtues are of two types: moral virtues and rational virtues."¹³⁸ And there are two corresponding categories of vices. Maimonides then proceeds to relate these categories to the parts of the soul in which they are found.

המעלות המדותיות הם נמצאות לחלק המתעורר בלבד. והחלק המרגיש הוא בענין זה משרת בלבד לחלק המתעורר.

"The moral virtues are found only in the appetitive part. The sensitive part is only involved in these matters insofar as it serves the appetitive part."¹³⁹ Maimonides says that there are many virtues of this type, which operate out of the appetitive part of the soul.

ומעלות החלק הזה מרובים מאד כגון הפרישות והנדיבות והצדק והמתינות והענווה ועין טובה והאומץ והסורך וזולתם.

"The virtues of this part of the soul are many, like: self-restraint, generosity and righteousness, moderation, humil-

ity, the 'good eye', courage, cowardice, and others like these."¹⁴⁰

The rational virtues are found in the rational part of the soul.

הפעלות ההגיוניות הם נמצאות לחלק ההוגה, שהם החכמה
והיא ידיעת הסיבות הרחוקות והקרובות אחרי ידיעת
מציאות הדבר אשר חוקרים את סבותיו. והשכל, ממנו השכל
העיוני והוא המצוי לנו בטבע כלומר מושכלים ראשוניים,
וממנו השכל הנקנה.

"The rational virtues are those found in the rational part. They include: wisdom, which is knowledge of the remote and more proximate causes, which only follows upon knowledge of the existence of that which is being investigated; and intellect, including theoretical intellect which is that which we find in nature like 'first intelligences' and (also including) acquired intellect."¹⁴¹

The rational virtues are unchanging.

ודע שהאמת הם הפעלות ההגיוניות לפי שהם אמתיות לא ישתנו.

"Know that the rational virtues are truth, for since they are truth, they do not change."¹⁴²

While the ideal is to acquire virtues, Maimonides notes that everyone has vices.

יש לכל אדם מנצות, לפי שכבר אמרו הפילוסופים. ששם
ורחק שימצא מי שהוא מטבעו מעותד לכל המנצות
המדות וההגיוניות.

"Everyone has vices. The philosophers have already said that far and few between are those who are naturally inclined to all the moral and rational virtues."¹⁴³

The vices separate us from our goal.

כל הסנועות הללו הם מסכים הסבדילים בין אדם לבין ה'.

"All these vices are veils which separate man from God."¹⁴⁴

Some vices altogether prevent our reaching prophecy, the highest rational virtue.

כל הכועס אם נביא הוא נבואתו מסתלקת ממנו.

"Anyone who is angry, if he is a prophet, his prophecy leaves him."¹⁴⁵

In accord with his theory of human freedom, Maimonides writes that:

האדם בטבעו מתחילתו אינו לא בעל מעלה ולא בעל סנועת.

"Man does not by nature, from the beginning, possess virtues or vices."¹⁴⁶ However, he does allow that we may be born with an inclination towards one or the other.

אפשר שיהא אפיו בטבעו מוכן למעלה או סנועת.

"It is possible that one's character may naturally be prepared for virtue or vice."¹⁴⁷ One moral quality (either vice or virtue) may be more easily acquired because of the inborn nature of one's soul. That is, the balance of the parts of one's soul.

But the acquisition of virtues and vices lies entirely in our hands.

קניית המעלות והמגרעות בידו... כיון שאין לו מעורר
היצוני שיעורוהו אליהן.

"Acquisition of the virtues and vices is in his (the individual's) hand...since there is no outside force which will direct him towards them."¹⁴⁸ As such, it is only the individual who can direct themselves towards the virtues. It is important that we recognize this and move ourselves in the proper direction.

Maimonides thinks that the astrologers, who hold that one's birthdate determines one's virtues and vices. He rejects this and holds that these qualities are learned.

שלא תחשוב שאותם ההזיות שבורים אותם בעלי משפטי המזלות
שהם אמת, שהם מדמים שמולדות בני אדם עושות אותם בעלי
מעלה או בעלי מגרעת, ושהאדם מוכרח על אותן המעולות
על כל פנים.

"You should not think that the fantasies which the astrologers invent are true. They imagine that a person's birthdate determines whether they are virtuous or full of vice. And (they believe) that man is compelled to these actions (of virtue or vice) in any event."

For Maimonides, it is solely the virtues or vices which we learn which in turn will determine our actions.

We learn to acquire virtues and vices and do so as part of our natural development.

והוא מתרגל בלי ספק מקטנותו למעשים בהתאם לנוהג משפחתו
ואנשי עירו, ויש אותם המעשים בינוניים, ויש שהם בקצה
הראשון או האחרון.

"(The individual) becomes accustomed without a doubt from his childhood, to acts which fit with the behavior of his

family and his neighbors. Among these are median acts (i.e. which fall at the mean), and also those which lie at one extreme or the other."¹⁵⁰

Since we are free, and that is a principle of the traditions, then learning the correct moral habits (that is, the virtues) is necessary.

כיון שזה חיובי במציאות האדם כלומר שיעשה ברצונו
פעולות הטוב והרע מתי שירצה צריך ללמדו דרך הטוב.

"Since it is part of human nature, that is to say, that the individual acts in accordance with their own will, doing good or evil acts when they want, it is necessary to teach him the good path."¹⁵¹ In part, the way that we learn the 'good path' is through the Torah which aids us in directing ourselves towards the goal.

Whereas we learn virtues and vices, rather than are born with them, they can be changed.

כי כל מצב אפשר לשנותו מטוב לרע, ורע לטוב והבחירה
בירו בכך.

"Every situation can be changed from good to evil and from evil to good. The choice lies with the individual in that."¹⁵² As such it becomes the obligation of every individual, if they are to reach the goal of השגת האל to direct themselves towards acquiring the virtues and divesting themselves of their vices.

ונתחייב להרגיל את עצמו לפעולות הטוב עד שיושגו
 לו המעלות, ויתרחק מפעולות הרע עד שיסורו ממנו
 המגורות.

"It is obligatory that one exercise themselves in good acts until they acquire the virtues, and that they distance themselves from evil acts, until they remove from themselves the vices."¹⁵³

In sum, Maimonides has established that people have difficulty reaching the ethical idea. But our actions are in our hands and thus we find that ultimately the choice to direct ourselves towards **השגת האל** is also ours.

In order to reach the ideal we must be cognizant of our actions, over which we have control, and see that they are properly directed. The source of our actions is our

מדות, moral habits, which are grounded in the soul.

Maimonides establishes that the human soul is one which may be seen as having five parts. Each part serves as the source of a certain level of action. At the higher levels we find those actions over which we have control. We also find the moral habits at these higher levels. It is necessary that we learn to recognize these parts, and their habits, in order that we may proceed towards the goal. To properly direct ourselves, we must strive to acquire good moral habits-virtues, and to overcome bad moral habits-vices.

Bad moral habits cause us to misperceive what is truly good and what in truth, is evil. This Maimonides calls an illness of the soul. It is necessary that we seek to cure ourselves of these illnesses of the soul. Only then can we move towards **השגת האל** . It is to this matter of the therapy for illnesses of the soul that we shall turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

MAIMONIDES' THERAPY: A PROPOSED SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

According to Maimonides, one who suffers an illness of the soul cannot attain the goal of **השגת האל**. His metaphor of sickness and health provides the framework for understanding how Maimonides teaches that one can overcome the illness of the soul and move towards **השגת האל**.

We have learned that for Maimonides a healthy soul is one wherein the soul and its parts do good acts. And a sick soul is one wherein the soul and its parts perform evil acts. We have established that the manner in which one acts is the result of one's habits, specifically one's moral habits. Those acts which a person freely performs generate from their moral habits. Maimonides proposes that in order to cure an illness of the soul we must change a person's moral habits. This, in turn, will change the way they act. Maimonides emphasizes changing the habits because habits affect the way in which one acts on a continuing basis. This is the essence of Maimonides' proposed therapy for illnesses of the soul.

One who suffers from an illness of the soul, according to Maimonides, is one whose acts are evil. As we have learned, Maimonides feels that most people incorrectly perceive what is truly good and what is truly evil. Rather,

they mistake good for evil and evil for good. Such people suffer from illnesses of the soul. It is necessary that these individuals be taught what is the true good. In part, that is the cure for an illness of the soul. However, Maimonides' therapy goes beyond teaching the true good. He seeks to provide a therapy which will condition the individual, enabling them to develop good habits, that is good moral habits.

Those who suffer illnesses of the soul are generally unaware of their illness. Hence, they are oblivious to the harm which may befall them.

ואמר באותם חולי הנפש שהם אינם יודעים מה יזיק להם ולא
מה יועיל להם דרך רשעים כאפלה לא ידעו במה יכשלו.

"It is said of those who suffer illnesses of the soul that they do not know what will harm them, nor do they know what will benefit them. As it is said: 'the way of the wicked is like darkness, they do not know over what they will stumble' (Proverbs 4:19)"¹⁵⁴

Maimonides makes a distinction here. When one is unaware of their illness, it is a different matter from the case of one who is aware that they are ill and nonetheless chooses to ignore their illness. Of the latter Maimonides says:

המרגישים והולכים אחר תאוותיהם עליהם אמר
ספר האמת בתארו את דכריהם כי בשרירות לבי
אלך וכו', כלומר שהוא מתכוון לרוות
צמאונו והוא מוסיף עצמו בצמאון.

"Those who sense (their illness), and who pursue their desires are spoken of in the Book of Truth, which describes them, saying: 'For in the stubbornness of my heart I walk, etc.' (Deut. 29:18) That is to say, even though he intends to quench his thirst, he actually increases the thirst."¹⁵⁵

As is the case with one who is physically ill and who ignores their illness, one who is afflicted with an illness of the soul and ignores their illness will suffer dire consequences.

חולי הנפש שאינם מרגישים את מחלתם ומדמין
אותה בריאות, או שמרגישים ואינם מתרפאים
הרי סופם יהיה מה שדרך להיות סוף החולה
אם הלך אחר תאוותיו ואינו מתרפא שהוא
יאר בלי ספק.

"The one who has a sick soul, who does not feel their illness, and imagines that they are healthy, or the one who feels the illness but does not seek healing will find their end much like that of the physically ill person who pursues their pleasures without medical care. They will surely die."¹⁵⁶

Just as one cannot ignore a physical illness and expect that it will be cured by itself, so too one may not hold out for such hopes in the case of illness of the soul.

Enter the doctor of the soul. The doctor of the soul, who, as we have seen, Maimonides identifies as the חכם, can diagnose the illness of the soul, and prescribe therapy based on his training. The specific training of the doctor

of the soul (i.e. the Sage) is in Torah, the Law. In the Guide for the Perplexed, Maimonides writes: "The Law as a whole aims at two things: the welfare of the soul and the welfare of the body."¹⁵⁷ In Shemoneh Perakim Maimonides states:

התבונן ברוב המצוות תמצא שכולם מכשירים
כוחות הנפש.

"If you examine most of the commandments you will find that they discipline the powers of the soul."¹⁵⁸

But most people do not strictly follow the commandments. In accordance with his belief in human free will, Maimonides holds that we find obedience and rebelliousness vis-a-vis the Law. Those who transgress the mitzvot are rebelling against the Law, and they are doing so as a result of their own will. The source of this rebelliousness, as well as obedience to the Law, is the soul.

Maimonides holds that two parts of the soul are directly involved in obedience and/or rebelliousness to the Law.

דע כי המרי והמסמעת התורניים אינם נמצאים אלא לשני חלקים
מחלקי הנפש, והם החלק המרגיש והחלק המתעורר בלבד, ובשני
החלקים האלו תהיינה כל העבירות והמצוות.

"Know that rebelliousness to and obedience of the Toraitic laws are found in two parts of the soul. These are the sensitive part and the appetitive part. All the commandments

and transgressions involve these two parts,"¹⁵⁹ Maimonides states that it is also possible to find obedience and rebelliousness in the rational part of the soul.

אבל החלק ההוגה הרי יש בו סבוכה, אבל אני אומר שימצא
גם בזה הכח המשמעת והסרי בהאמנת מחשבה נפסדת או
בהאמנת מחשבה אמתית, אבל אין בו מעשה שאפשר להניח
עליו בסתם שם מצווה או עבירה.

"Though there is confusion about the rational part I say that here too, there is obedience and rebelliousness, namely, belief in a false or true opinion. But it is not involving an act to which the words commandment and transgression apply."¹⁶⁰

Maimonides declares that the imaginative and nutritive parts are not subject to obedience or rebelliousness.

אבל החלק הזון והמדמה אין משמעת בהם ולא פרי, כיון
שאין לחשיבה ולרצון בהם פעולה כלל, ואין האדם
יכול על פי מחשבתו להשבית את פעולתם או להגבילם
בפעולה מסויימת. הלא תראה ששני החלקים הללו כלומר
הזון והמדמה פועלים בזמן השינה מה שאין כן שאר
כחות הנפש.

"But in the nutritive and imaginative parts there is no obedience or rebelliousness, since thought and will do not function in (these parts) at all. A man cannot, by thought, cause them to cease action, nor can he limit their actions. Do you not see that these two parts, the nutritive and the imaginative, act while one sleeps, unlike the other powers of the soul?"¹⁶¹

Thus it is over the appetitive and sensitive parts of the soul that one must seek to have complete control. And, as we have learned, it is through these two parts, plus the rational part, that virtues are acquired. Maimonides' therapy therefore seeks to direct the individual towards controlling those actions, over which they have control.

The therapy seeks to develop good moral habits (i.e. virtues) in the appropriate parts of the soul. These good moral habits in turn will result in good acts, and hence a healthy soul. So long as one still has bad moral habits (i.e. vices) which cause one's actions to be bad, one cannot have a healthy soul.

The manner in which we cure a defective moral habit is not unlike the medical treatment of a bodily illness.

ראוי שיתנהג כדרך שמתנהגים ברפואת הנופות, כשם
שהגוף אם נטה מאזונו ראינו לאיזה צד נטה ויצא ונעשה
נגדו הפכו עד שיחזור לאזונו, וכאשר יאוזן נסתפק
מאותו ההפך.

"It is necessary to follow the same course as one does in treatment of bodies. When the body loses its equilibrium we note to which side it is balanced, oppose it with its opposite until it returns to equilibrium. When it has reached its equilibrium we remove the opposite."¹⁶²

כך נעשה גם במדות.

"We do the same in the case of moral habits."¹⁶³

Maimonides gives us an example of how the therapy of applying pressure in order to bring about equilibrium operates vis-a-vis the moral habits.

המסל בזה, אם ראינו אדם שכבר נקנו לו תכונות
נפשיות בנפשו שהוא מצמצם מאד על עצמו מגרעת
מגורעות הנפש, והמעשה הזה שהוא עושה מן המעשים
הרעים...אם רצינו לרפא את החולה הזה לא נצוהו
להתנהג בנדיבות, לפי שזה כפי שרפא את מי
שגברה בו החמימות בדבר המאוזן שאין זה מרפא
מחליו, אלא ראוי לצוות לזה שינהג במורנות
פעם אחר פעם.

"We may, for example, see a man whose soul has reached a condition in which he is miserly towards himself. This one of the vices of the soul, and the action he performs is one of the bad actions...Thus, if we wanted to give medical treatment to this sick person, we would not order him to be liberal. That would be like using a balanced course for treating someone whose fever is excessive; this would not cure him of his sickness. Indeed, this man needs to be made to be extravagant time after time."164

The reverse would be true as well.

וכן אם ראינוהו מורן הרי נצוהו לנהוג בדרך
הכיליות כמה פעמים.

"If we saw him being extravagant then we would command him to behave in a miserly manner several times."165

But we would not exert the same pressure in each of the two cases. Maimonides states that there is a secret to mastery of this manner of treatment.

לא נצוהו לחזור על מעשה הכיליות פעמים
 רבות כמו שצוינוהו במעשה הפזרנות.
 ונקודה זו היא חוק הריפוי וסודו, לפי
 מחזרת האדם מן הפזרנות אל הנדיבות יותר
 קל וקרוב משיחזור מן הכיליות אל
 הנדיבות.

"We would not repeatedly command the miserly actions many times as we did in (the case of) the extravagant actions. This point is the rule of therapy and its secret. Turning a man from extravagance to liberality is easier than turning him from miserliness to liberality."

Maimonides brings several other such examples as well.

וכן חזרת נעדר הרגש ההנאות אל הפרישות
 יותר קל וקרוב מחזרת התאותן אל הפרישות.

"Turning the one who is insensitive to feeling to moderation is easier than turning the lustful to moderation."¹⁶⁷

Maimonides stresses that attaining the virtues and firmly establishing them in the soul is not an easy process. Nor is it quickly done.

ודע שאלו המעלות והמגרעות המדותיות אינם
 נקנים ומתחזקים בנפש אלא במה שאדם חוזר
 על אותן המעולות הנאות מאותה המדה
 פעמים רבות בזמן מסוים.

"Know that the moral virtues and vices are not acquired and established in the soul (by any means) other than through one repeating the same actions which pertain to a particular moral habit over a long period of time."¹⁶⁸

Maimonides is aware that this process may result in the acquisition of a vice just as easily as it may result in the acquisition of a virtue.

וכאשר נתרגל בהם הרי אם היו אותן המעשים טובים
הרי נקנית לנו מעלה, ואם היו רעים הרי נקנית
לנו מרעה.

"Once we become accustomed to them (after repeating the same action over a long period of time) then, if the acts are good, we have acquired a virtue. However, if the acts are bad, then we have acquired a vice."¹⁶⁹

Since we are born with neither virtues nor vices, but rather learn them from our environment and through repeated action, then once we have acquired virtues and vices they are not static. It is possible to change a vice to a virtue. Likewise, it is possible that a virtue will become a vice. The therapy seeks to change vices to virtues which will be lasting.

Maimonides states that we are to direct ourselves always towards the mean. At no time should we direct ourselves towards the extremes unless it is necessary for treatment of an illness of the soul.

כלמי המעשים המסופזעים ראוי להתכוון, ושאין ראוי
לצאת מהם לשום קצה מסתי הקצוות אלא על דרך הרפוי
וההקבלה בדבר הנגדי.

"It is necessary to direct one's actions towards the mean. (One should) not deviate from (these actions) to one extreme or another unless it is for (the purpose of) medical treatment and opposing something through its opposite."¹⁷⁰ By opposing something via its opposite Maimonides means the application of pressure at the extreme which is opposite the one from which we are trying to move the person. This pressure is intended to bring them towards the center.

In order to balance a moral habit correctly, we must know what it is that is causing our illness. That is to say, we must know which moral habit is a bad moral habit (i.e. vice) and what is its corresponding good moral habit (i.e. virtue).

כן ישים בנדר עיניו את המרה הגרועה שבו ישתדל
לרפאותה תמיד.

"One should always be aware of the defective moral habit which they will try to cure."

That is Maimonides' therapy. It holds for all sicknesses of the soul. Maimonides bids us commit it to memory.

וזהו חק רפואת המדות זכרהו

"This is the rule concerning treatment of the moral habits. Remember it!"¹⁷²

By applying this therapy to all of our moral habits we divest ourselves of our vices and acquire virtues in place

of the vices. Each vice we remove is another veil, which separates us from God which is removed. The more veils we remove, the closer we draw to the ethical ideal, the prophet, and to the goal of השגת האל.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In Shemoneh Perakim, Maimonides presents his approach to human nature and to the purpose of life. Furthermore, Maimonides' understanding of מדות, as presented in Shemoneh Perakim provides a detailed regimen for moral education.

Maimonides' approach to human nature borrows, as we have seen, from the writings of Aristotle, as well as those of other thinkers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. In bringing together the thoughts of various writers, Maimonides' presentation represents a view of life, its purpose, and the way to fulfill that purpose, which is different from most other views found among other writers of Maimonides' time, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Maimonides presents a view which borrows from other writers without acknowledging sources. His contribution results in an amalgam from the many prevalent views which he has woven together.

Borrowing from Aristotle's understanding of the human soul, Maimonides holds the soul to be the source of all human actions. Because of the soul's role in human action, it is important to strive for the health of the soul. A healthy soul will produce what Maimonides sees as healthy or good actions. On the contrary, an ill soul will produce unhealthy or evil actions.

In order to enable the individual to work towards a healthy soul Maimonides gives a detailed account of his understanding of how the soul functions vis-a-vis human actions. The variable which affects the way in which one acts, and over which the individual has control, is what Maimonides calls the **מדה**, moral habit. Moral habits can be good or bad. Good moral habits are known as virtues, while bad moral habits are known as vices. The **מדות** are channels of expression, created by the individual's mind and body, for the soul. The soul was viewed, among medieval thinkers, as pure substance. The **מדות** serve to translate the qualities of that pure substance into actions.

The use of the notion of virtue is an innovation within Jewish thought. The Bible and rabbinic literature both reflect qualities which are, without doubt, considered virtues. However, prior to Maimonides, the use of the terminology, virtue and vice, had not been part of the Jewish understanding of human nature. Maimonides introduced the concept of virtue into his discussion of Law.¹⁷³ In borrowing these concepts from Aristotle, Maimonides was thus able to focus on a new way, within the Jewish tradition, of viewing the human individual and human nature.

In order to understand how one controls their **מדות**, Maimonides turns to Aristotle's concept of the golden mean.

Like Aristotle, Maimonides pictures all moral habits as lying along a continuum. The extremes of the continuum represent the vices while the center or mean represents the virtue. The immediate goal, according to Maimonides, is attaining the moral habit which lies at the mean. That is to say, the immediate goal is to acquire good moral habits, or virtues.

In terms of action, the mean represents the path of moderation. Attaining it calls for the individual to avoid both overdoing the designated act which is represented by the mean as well as failing to perform sufficiently the designated act.

The ideal for moral education is to acquire all the virtues and to divest oneself of all vices. If one has acquired all the virtues then all of one's **מדות** would be balanced at the mean. The state in which one finds themselves at this point is what Maimonides calls **שלמות** or perfection.

Attaining **שלמות** is the step prior to attaining what Maimonides defines as the one true goal of all human life. That goal is **השגת האל**, attainment of the knowledge of God. According to Maimonides, all of one's actions should be directed towards this goal. (Sic) There is no hint of the "mean" on this level. Acquisition of the virtues is a necessary precondition for **השגת האל** and is, therefore, a necessary and important intermediate goal.

Maimonides is explicit in his expression of a secondary intermediate goal, which accompanies the striving for virtues. That is to educate the individual as to which actions are virtues and which are vices. People must be taught the correct path to follow, i.e. the proper way to act, before they can recognize that there is a problem. That correct path is the path of moderation.

Maimonides' conception of the mean is not identical to that of Aristotle. "(Maimonides) preserved that which is distinctive in Jewish tradition, and at the same time, incorporated the middle way into Jewish Law."¹⁷⁴ Maimonides remains faithful to Jewish tradition in identifying the Torah as the vehicle through which the individual can arrive at the proper understanding of how to act. As a rationalist, Maimonides believes that education serves to moralize us.

Maimonides identifies the person who can instruct the individual in that path, of Torah, as the **חכם**, the Sage. Maimonides calls the Sages "the doctors of the soul". The doctors of the soul are properly trained to diagnose and prescribe therapy for illnesses of the soul.

All **מדות** which are not balanced at the mean (i.e. moral habits which have not been acquired as virtues) constitute illnesses of the soul. Should a particular **מדה** be unbalanced, that is, fixed at or towards either extreme and not at the mean, then the individual must undergo therapy.

The purpose of the therapy is to correct moral habits. To do so is to change vices to virtues. Beyond changing vices to virtues, the therapy, when followed correctly, enables the individual to acquire (i.e. fix) the virtuous quality in their soul. This requires repetition of the actions necessary to balance moral habit towards the quality which lies at the mean. For the purpose of therapy an opposite extreme, a vice, may be employed. Under the guidance of a Sage, the end justifies the means--so later, redemption via direct transgression.

Maimonides singles out a model of the individual who strives to attain the mean in all moral habits, the prophet. Furthermore, the prophet is the Biblical model of a person striving for **השגת האל** which follows upon attaining the mean in all **מדות** and by extension, **שלמות**. The proximity of a given prophet to **השגת האל** was dependent on their success in balancing their **מדות** at the mean. Each **מדה** which remained unbalanced served as a veil which separated the prophet from God. Maimonides intends this metaphor to hold for all individuals.

It is important to correctly understand Maimonides' notion of prophecy. It is an option which is open at all times, to all individuals, as is the ability to work towards changing one's **מדות** from vices to virtues. Every individual can strive for **השגת האל** in the manner of the Biblical prophets. Prophecy, from the aspect of rendering prophesies,

is not the issue with which Maimonides is concerned here in Shemoneh Perakim. The issue of prophecy in Shemoneh Perakim, as well as the importance and place of virtues, centers on knowledge of God as the goal of human life, and the striving for that knowledge. Maimonides' presentation of the prophet is intended to serve as a model of his ideal of that striving.

Having placed a goal before the reader, Maimonides states that complete attainment of the goal is not possible in the course of human life. There is one veil which we cannot remove. It is the sole veil which even the greatest of prophets, Moses, could not remove. The final veil, which separates man from God, and which we cannot remove as long as we live, is our physical existence. Nevertheless, Maimonides places before the reader the goal of השגת האל and the path to that goal. Maimonides goes as far as a rationalist could practically go in fully understanding God humanly.

An important consideration which underlies Maimonides' entire discussion is the notion of human free will. Maimonides holds that man is free in all actions. Hence, the need for refined moral habits which affect the way in which one manifests their will, in action. In the course of his discussion in Shemoneh Perakim, Maimonides reconciles human free will with God's knowledge enabling both to exist, side by side within a tradition which holds that God controls

everything save for the fear of God (i.e., belief),

What is Maimonides attempting to do in Shemoneh Perakim?

It is beyond the scope of this study to determine whether Shemoneh Perakim is indeed an introduction which lays the foundation for understanding Maimonides' Commentary on Avot. Such a judgment could be rendered only after a thorough study of the Commentary. But there are other considerations which must be explored. Is his objective to stress the importance of **השגת האל** as the goal of life? That would render his discussion of **מדות** and of attainment of the mean as secondary to **השגת האל**. Or is Maimonides primarily concerned with the **מדות** and moral education? This would not necessarily negate the importance of **השגת האל** as the goal of life. It could be that Maimonides raises the issue of the goal here in Shemoneh Perakim because of the way he views life. As Maimonides sees it, the issue of moral education is undeniably connected to the goal of human life. But it may be that the emphasis in Shemoneh Perakim is intended to be on the **מדות** with the goal being mentioned to place the **מדות** in perspective.

Weiss and Butterworth in their study of Maimonides' ethics see Maimonides as laying out an ever-present way of life for the reader in Shemoneh Perakim. He presents an ideal, prophecy, which represents the highest form of living. The emphasis, they say, is on the prophetic way of life, not

prophecy.¹⁷⁵ It is an option which exists at all times, for all people. Weiss notes elsewhere that Maimonides does not seek to present the mean as a resplendent way which is exclusive to the Sages. Rather, it is intended to have a pedestrian character, that is to say, it is utilitarian.¹⁷⁶

I feel that Butterworth and Weiss have read far too strong a sense of this-worldly concerns into Maimonides' writing in Shemoneh Perakim. They emphasize, in the general introduction, that Maimonides emphasizes the need for moral virtue, as it serves as the basis for human political nature. That is, the need to live with other human beings. They see Maimonides as being concerned with man as a social animal.¹⁷⁷ Yet I do not find Maimonides' concern, in Shemoneh Perakim, to be with human beings as they live in society. It is true that he takes the rational virtues as those which are common among societies (e.g. not killing). But Maimonides is explicit in his statement of the goal of the מדות and of moral education. The purpose is to enable השגת האל. Butterworth and Weiss note that השגת האל is the ultimate prophetic goal. But I believe they fail to give it the proper place and emphasis in their reading of Shemoneh Perakim.

Grofinkle notes that Shemoneh Perakim contains a complete system of psychology and ethics. "they do not, however, form an exhaustive treatment of this subject, as Maimonides himself states, but with a reference here and there to some

of his other works may be easily made to do so."¹⁷⁸

Gorfinkle's treatment of Shemoneh Perakim does not seek to deal with the contents or sources of Maimonides' ethics in any detail. His study is directed towards a reading of the Shemoneh Perakim text. Therefore it is difficult to comment on his treatment of the material found in Shemoneh Perakim.

Bokser stresses the current secularization of society as the overriding force in today's world. As such the morality which prevails is a secularized morality. "The secularization of culture has lowered human morale and wrought havoc with morality. A secular culture is anthropocentric in the grossest sense. By eliminating God as the center of existence, it leaves man alone to dominate the scene, with his empirical plans and purposes as the sole arbiter of life...individualism, the earliest of (these) secular moralities, teaches that every man has duties only to himself."¹⁷⁹ In Shemoneh Perakim Maimonides posits a morality based on other than pragmatic or material concerns. His morality is a religious morality. It seeks to have the individual direct themselves towards God.

Eliezer Schweid stresses the Aristotelian underpinnings of Maimonides' ethical system in Shemoneh Perakim. But he notes that Maimonides goes beyond the Aristotelian base to

postulate some independent notions.¹⁸⁰ A major portion of this is Maimonides' consideration of human free will vis-a-vis God's knowledge and will.

Schweid also holds that, in part, the importance of Shemoneh Perakim lies in the audience for which it was intended. Whereas Maimonides' other major works require a background in law or philosophy, in Shemoneh Perakim he is addressing a wider audience.¹⁸¹ The system presented therein is an ethical system which is clearly religious in nature.¹⁸² It is, however, not limited to a specific reader or group of readers. It addresses basic concerns which apply to all people.

There are several aspects from which Schweid's work is valuable to the student of Shemoneh Perakim. First, his exegesis of the Shemoneh Perakim text aids in understanding Maimonides' text. Schweid frequently offers modern examples in order to illustrate points from Shemoneh Perakim. One such example is the case of the human eye's ability to perceive the light of the sun as rendered above.

Schweid also sheds a great deal of light on the Aristotelian underpinnings of and parallels to Maimonides work. Schweid not only explicates the Aristotelian background but provides general background into the milieu in which Maimonides lived and in which Shemoneh Perakim was written.

Schweid stresses, in his conclusion, the notion that for Maimonides, ethics are solely the means to the end of

השגת האל. But, he stresses, they are a necessary means.¹⁸³

Schweid also stresses the political nature of humans. He places ethics under the heading of political concerns for Maimonides as well as for Aristotle. But he notes that Maimonides' ethics do not constitute an ethics concerned with the זולת , the other. It seems to me that Schweid is unclear at this point. He leaves this dichotomy unresolved. If Maimonides is unconcerned with an ethics which regulate life in society, then how can it be said that Maimonides' ethics are of a political nature? If, on the other hand, Maimonides' ethics seek to guide people in their political and societal affairs, how can one accept the notion that Maimonides is primarily concerned with השגת האל , and that the ethics serve that goal? Schweid, it seems to me, leaves this conflict unresolved.

Nevertheless, Schweid's work is extremely valuable in a study of Shemoneh Perakim. It provides a commentary which I found to be unparalleled among the works which I read in preparation for this study.

I feel that Maimonides' interest in moral education is secondary to his concern for השגת האל . Maimonides

stresses moral education because it is a necessary precedent for **השגת האל**. But, I believe he does not see the **מדות** as being of paramount importance in and of themselves. The **מדות** are important as a path to but are not the only path to it. Maimonides has a hierarchy for the paths to the goal, which are three.

That moral education is, for Maimonides, secondary in importance can, I believe, be proven by Maimonides' conception of how **השגת האל** is in fact attained. Attainment of the knowledge of God is attained via the intellect. Therefore are we unable to attain **השגת האל** until we have left the physical realm and have entered the realm of pure intellect. The extent to which we acquired the virtues, rational and ethical, during our physical life determines the extent to which we attain knowledge of God, both in life and after life.

In Shemoneh Perakim Maimonides subordinates the moral virtues to the rational virtues. One point in Shemoneh Perakim which proves this is in his description of prophecy. The prophet is the model of striving for **השגת האל**. But no one prophesies, according to Maimonides, until they have acquired all of the rational virtues, and most (but not necessarily all) of the ethical virtues. Maimonides cannot, therefore, be seen as placing ethics as primary in importance.

He is far more concerned with the intellect and the rational virtues which are attained via the intellect. If one's intellect is not developed and does not function, then moral education, for Maimonides, is of little consequence. The goal cannot be attained unless the intellect is developed.

That is not meant to dismiss moral education as unimportant. The importance of the מדות in Maimonides is proven by the fact that an immoral person cannot attain knowledge of God. In setting up a hierarchy Maimonides allows that the מדות, though secondary in importance, are necessary for attainment of the goal. They are not, in themselves, sufficient.

Likewise, the one who fails to comply with God's will, as expressed in the Torah, will fail in השגת האל. Hence Maimonides' detailed explication of the Law, in the Mishneh Torah. Obedience to the Law is also necessary for השגת האל. Maimonides has tried to show in Shemoneh Perakim that obedience to the Law is related to מדות. Since the soul is the source of all human action, and the מדות which one has acquired determine how one will act, then obedience to the Law is affected by one's moral habits. Maimonides raises this notion to greater clarity and importance than did any of his predecessors.

In and of itself, Maimonides' understanding of מדות, as presented in Shemoneh Perakim may be viewed as complete. Perhaps we might call it a system of morality or ethics.

But it does not function in a vacuum. It only constitutes a part of Maimonides' overall view of life. In essence, all three realms: the legal, the metaphysical and the moral, as well as the paths that each contains, must be joined together in the quest for השגת האל. While Shemoneh Perakim contains Maimonides' understanding of moral development, it does not constitute his sole guidelines for living. For Maimonides, the ethical qualities do not present the entire picture. Obedience to the Law and development of one's intellect are also important, vis-a-vis השגת האל. As has been noted, these other two paths or realms are represented by the major portions of Maimonides' work. The legal is found in his Mishneh Torah. The intellectual (or metaphysical) is found in the Guide for the Perplexed. All three direct the individual towards Maimonides' stated view of the goal of life, השגת האל. One, the metaphysical, as presented in the Guide, is most important for Maimonides. The other two paths are necessary, but are subordinate to the metaphysical path.

Another point must be noted. Maimonides has, in his development of a view of moral education, presented the reader with an overall picture of human nature. In doing so, he has developed a "psychology". The material presented in Shemoneh Perakim goes beyond mere description of the reasons why people act as they do. In developing what he calls a therapy for "illness of the soul", Maimonides presents a prescription for

the behavioral as well as ethical development and growth of the individual. The therapy can serve to do more than change moral habits. It can change one's understanding of human nature and human action. It is intended to change the way in which the reader acts.

I found Maimonides' presentation in Shemoneh Perakim appealing. The study of Maimonides' Shemoneh Perakim, and of the ethical-psychological material therein, allows the modern reader to encounter an approach to human nature different from current views.

In particular, I find Maimonides' reconciliation of human free will with God's knowledge and will helpful in understanding the rabbinic notion that "Everything is in the hands of heaven, except the fear of heaven". Maimonides offers a way in which one can allow for God's will and role in the world without denying human free will.

Furthermore, the concept of human free will takes on a new light given the perspective of Maimonides (and Aristotle) on the role of the soul in human action. Though the view of the soul as the source of all action is no longer widely held, it presents an interesting perception of the human being. The soul, which Maimonides saw as immortal, carries the essential moral qualities. It therefore, behooves the individual to undertake the care of their soul and its qualities. Such care necessitates controlling those actions over which one has

control. For Maimonides this precedes reaching the final goal of life.

A troublesome part of Maimonides' presentation is his positing the mean as the ideal in ethical (and all) action. Placed in the context of his view of the human soul, Maimonides' notion of moral habits is helpful in understanding how he develops his view that there is choice in human actions. However, I find the concept that compromise represents the ideal in all cases as difficult to accept.

There are few actions which are absolutely condemned by modern society. The most obvious example in this case is direct personal violence, whether it be inflicted upon another or upon oneself. Modern society tends to recognize virtue for most actions, under the stipulation of "in some situations".

It is not that we fail nowadays to see moderation as a virtue. Indeed, the majority of us struggle with moderation, whether it be in the case of sex, food, drink, in some cases drugs, or in any other such area of living. Moderation is, in some cases, seen as a virtue. However, such is not the case in all matters. An example would be the material amenities which are seen as making life pleasureable. Material success is, for many, viewed as a virtue. I cannot imagine many people accepting the notion of moderation in material success as the ideal for which we should strive.

This raises a distinction between Maimonides and modern society which must be noted. The pivotal point is the conception of the goal of life. Maimonides focuses on a goal which is attainable through the intellect. He is, for the most part, unconcerned with the physical world and its pleasures.

Nowadays we tend to view the goal of life differently from the manner in which Maimonides viewed it. For some, the search for God, or a sense of spirituality, is still a goal of living. However, the attainment of some perception of God, in the modern world, is generally sought on an other than purely intellectual level. Our striving for God is not Maimonides' השגת האל.

There are also those who deny the existence of God or any Divine Being. Some, such as Bokser, hold that the lack of concern for spiritual matters and a striving for a sense of the Divine presence reflects secularized society.¹⁸⁴ These thinkers feel that a spiritual God has been replaced by other deities, more material in nature.

There have been those who have posited what might be viewed as a revised formula for what Maimonides calls השגת האל. One example of a modern thinker whose writings might be viewed in this manner is Martin Buber. Buber bids us find God through encounter and through relationship. That calls for concern with our fellow human beings on a level

different from that posited in Maimonides. It involves ethics which lie in the realm of social living to a far greater degree than the ethics which Maimonides presents in Shemoneh Perakim. Maimonides does not deny human social existence, but does not place value on it as a goal. Maimonides' ultimate concern is with השגת האל. In a manner of speaking, so too is Buber's concern with a form of השגת האל. But Buber's form of השגת האל is through the dialogue with the זולת, the other. Through dialogue we can find what Buber calls the Eternal Thou, God. He raises human interaction to a spiritual level, to the level of encounter with God, rather than leaving it as subordinate.

In today's world, many seek ethics which will move us towards improved societal relations and improved personal relations. The search for spiritual meaning in society and in life are but a part of living and within that, of living an ethical life. Our sense of duty should include a sense of duty to some higher Being. And it should rest on the same Jewish foundations which Maimonides stresses. However, as I see it, the emphasis is different. I cannot see positing an ethics whose ultimate goal is the intellectual perception of God.

Maimonides' view of human nature, of morality and of the world in which he lived, as presented in Shemoneh Perakim should not be dismissed. They serve as a colorful example of

an alternative approach to life which can be instructive for the modern individual who is seeking to understand the world in which we live, the people with whom they live and themselves.

Maimonides' notions of moral habits, and of the manner in which we have control over our actions, can provide the means for beginning a serious exploration and implementation of ethical action.

Maimonides makes a strong case for the ethical imperative within the Law, specifically within Jewish Law. In laying out his three paths to the goal of **השגת האל**, Maimonides bids the reader of Shemoneh Perakim not only to strive for intellectual perfection, but also for moral perfection and for obedience to the Law. Interrelated as they are in the Maimonidean presentation, striving for such perfection and obedience demand the study and implementation of the teachings of that Law and of Jewish tradition.

Maimonides' ideas of the mean and purely intellectual attainment of knowledge of God may not be the ideals for modern Jews. But they can provide a model. His notion of

השגת האל, in a renewed and revised sense might be the glue which can begin to bring Jews together. A new, redefined sense of **השגת האל** can, if we seek it, be the force which will bring us together with our neighbors, our world, and ultimately, I pray, with God.

FOOTNOTES

1. Joseph I. Gorfinkle, The Eight Chapters of Maimonides, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), p. 3, among others.
2. Isadore Twersky, A Maimonides Reader, (New York: Behrman House, 1972), p. 1
3. Maimonides did not actually live in Cairo, but in a suburb of Cairo, Fostat. See Twersky, op. cit., p. 7
4. Abraham Joshua Heschel, Maimonides, (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1982), p. 16
5. Ibid, p. 16
6. Ben Zion Bokser, The Legacy of Maimonides, (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1962), p. 4
7. Twersky, op. cit., p. 3
8. Ibid, pp. 2-4
9. Ibid, p. 5
10. Bokser, op. cit., p. 3
11. Twersky, op. cit., p. 5
12. Ibid, pp. 5-6
13. Heschel, op. cit., p. 17
14. Ibid, pp. 22-23
15. Ibid, p. 25
16. Ibid, p. 34
17. Bokser, op. cit., p. 6
18. Ibid, pp. 7-8
19. Twersky, op. cit., p. 15
20. Bokser, op. cit., p. 9
21. Twersky, op. cit., p. 8
22. Yosef Kapach, Shemoneh Perakim, in מִסְנוֹת רַבֵּינוּ מֵשֶׁה בֶּן מִימּוֹן (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1977), p. 247, column B, lines 15-16

All subsequent citations from Shemoneh Perakim shall be listed as follows: SP, p. , col. , lines.

These citations refer to the Kapach edition as cited above.

23. Gorfinkle, op. cit., p. 10
24. Ibid, p. 4
25. Ibid
26. Twersky, op. cit., p. 15
27. Charles Butterworth and Raymond L. Weiss, Ethical Writings of Maimonides, (New York: New York University Press, 1972), p. 59
28. According to Gorfinkle, the Ibn Tibbon translation of Shemoneh Perakim was completed around 1202. See Gorfinkle, op. cit., p. 10)
29. The city in which Ibn Tibbon was born was Lunel. See Gorfinkle, op. cit., p. 22, see note 1.
30. Ibid, p. 22
31. SP, p. 247, A:20-23
32. SP, p. 247, A:24- B:3
33. SP, p. 247. B:3-12
34. SP, p. 247, B:12-13
35. Gorfinkle, op. cit., p. 5
36. Twersky, op. cit., p. 15
37. Gorfinkle translates השגת האל as "the attainment of the knowledge of God". Op. cit., p. 69; Butterworth and Weiss translate it as "the perception of God." Op. cit., p. 75
38. SP, p. 256, A:21-24
39. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1972 edition, volume 1, s.v. "Aristotle", p. 161
40. Ibid, p. 162
41. Ibid, vol. 3, s.v., "Psychology", p. 413
42. SP, p. 256, A:34- B:5

43. SP, p. 257, B:33- p. 258, A:1
44. Gorfinkle, op. cit., p. 10-11
45. Ibid, p. 11
46. Eliezer Schweid, עיונים בשמונה פרקים לרמב"ם, (Studies in the Eight Chapters of RAMBAM), (Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency, 1969), p. 61
47. SP, p. 247, A:5
48. SP, p. 247, A:7-10. It should be noted that שלמות is translated as "perfection" by Gorfinkle, Butterworth and Weiss, as well as by A. J. Heschel, in his Concise Dictionary of Hebrew Philosophical Terms.
49. Schweid, op. cit., p. 123
50. Gorfinkle, op. cit., p. 9
51. Ibid
52. See Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., translation notes, chapter 1, note 12
53. Schweid, op. cit., p. 76
54. SP, p. 258, B:10-11
55. R.L. Weiss, "The Ethics of Maimonides", Dimension, Summer 1967, p. 43
56. Schweid, op. cit., p. 74
57. SP, p. 266, A:29-31
58. SP, p. 266, A:32-B:3
59. SP, p. 260, B:5-6
60. SP, p. 266, B:6
61. R.L. Weiss, "Language and Ethics: Reflections on Maimonides' Ethics", Journal of the History of Philosophy, 9:4, p. 428
62. SP, p. 251, B:4-6
63. SP, p. 252, B:1-3
64. SP., p. 251, B:19-p. 252, A:4

65. SP, p. 252, A:6-7
66. SP, p. 252, A:14-17
67. Schweid, op. cit., p. 98
68. SP, p. 254, B:15-17
69. SP, p. 255, A:12-16
70. SP, p. 258, B:23-29
71. SP, p. 258, B:13-17
72. SP, p. 259, A:14-16
73. SP, p. 259, A:10-11
74. SP, p. 257, A:28-32
75. SP, p. 247, A:11-17
76. SP, p. 259, B:26-28
77. SP, p. 259, B:13-15
78. SP, p. 259, A:23-27
79. SP, p. 260, A:11-14
80. Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., pp. 14-15
81. SP, p. 259, A:27-29
82. SP, p. 260, A:33- B:3. The translation is from Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., pp. 82-83
83. See Schweid, op. cit., p. 140
84. SP, p. 250, B:3-4
85. SP, p. 256, A:31-34
86. See Schweid, op. cit., p. 37
87. SP, p. 257, A:4-7, translation from Buuterworth and Weiss, op. cit., p. 76
88. See Schweid, op. cit., p. 39

89. SP, p. 250, B:4-9, translation from Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., pp. 65-66
90. SP, p. 250, B:19-24
91. SP, p. 251, A:1-3
92. SP, p. 251, A:7-11
93. SP, p. 248, A:6-7
94. SP, p. 248, A:28-29
95. SP, p. 248, B:5-8
96. Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 19720, p. 165
97. SP, p. 247, B:17
98. SP, p. 249, B:2-9
99. SP, p. 247, B:17-20
100. Both Kapach and M.D. Rabinowitz note that this is most likely a reference to Hippocrates.
101. SP, p. 247, B:20-22
102. Encyclopedia of Philosophy, v. 7, c.v. "Psychology", p. 2
103. SP, p. 247, B:23- p. 248, A:5
104. SP, p. 248, A:15-16
105. SP, p. 248, B:13-16
106. SP, p. 248, B:21-23
107. SP, p. 248, B:24-25
108. SP, p. 248, B:25-30, translation from Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., p. 62
109. According to Kapach, they were Moslem thinkers. See SP, p. 249, note 19.
110. SP, p. 249, A:5-6

111. SP, p. 249, A:6-12. translation from Butterworth and weiss, op. cit., p. 63
112. SP, p. 249, A:12-13
113. SP, p. 256, B:24-31, translation from Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., p. 76
114. SP, p. 249, A:17-20
115. SP, p. 249, A:20-21
116. SP, p. 257, B:27-31
117. SP, p. 261, A:27-30
118. SP, p. 261, A:33-B:1
119. See Schweid, op. cit., pp. 51-52
120. SP, p. 261, B:1-3
121. SP, p. 261, B:10-18
122. SP, p. 261, B:25-27
123. SP, p. 261, B:27-31
124. SP, p. 262, A:16-17, 18
125. SP, p. 263, A:14-23, translation from Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., p. 88
126. Quoted by Maimonides in SP, p. 262, A:9
127. SP, p. 262, A:27-29
128. SP, p. 262, A:28-31
129. SP, p. 262, B:14-17
130. SP, p. 262, B:20-22
131. SP, p. 262, B:29-31
132. SP, p. 262, B:32-34
133. SP, p. 262, A:25-27
134. SP, p. 263, A:5-8

- 135. SP, p. 264, A:26-32
- 136. SP, p. 264, A:8-17
- 137. SP, p. 250, A:24-25
- 138. SP, p. 250, A:6-8
- 139. SP, p. 250, A:18-20
- 140. SP, p. 250, A:20-23
- 141. SP, p. 250, A:8-14
- 142. SP, p. 254, B:3-5
- 143. SP, p. 255, B:8-11
- 144. SP, p. 259, B:7-8
- 145. SP, p. 260, A:18-19
- 146. SP, p. 252, B:10-11
- 147. SP, p. 261, A:2-3
- 148. SP, p. 265, B:20-33
- 149. SP, p. 261, A:22-26
- 150. SP, p. 252, B:12-15
- 151. SP, p. 263, A:24-27
- 152. SP, p. 263, A:32-33
- 153. SP, p. 263, A:28-30
- 154. SP, p. 251, A:25- B:2
- 155. SP, p. 251, A:16-20
- 156. SP, p. 251, A:11-16
- 157. Guide For the Perplexed, III:27
- 158. SP, p. 254, B:33-34
- 159. SP, p. 249, B:14-17

160. SP, p. 249, B:24- p. 250, A:5
161. SP, p. 249, B:18-24
162. SP, p. 252, B:16- p. 253, A:1
163. SP, p. 253, A:2-3
164. SP, p. 253, A:3-11, translation from Butterworth and Weiss,
op. cit., pp. 68-69
165. SP, p. 253, A:17-18
166. SP, p. 253, A:18-23
167. SP, p. 253, A:23-25
168. SP, p. 252, B:4-7
169. SP, p. 252, B:7-9
170. SP, p. 255, A:27-30
171. SP, p. 255, B:6-8
172. SP, p. 253, A:31-32
173. Weiss, "The Ethics of Maimonides", op. cit., p. 43
174. Ibid, p. 46
175. Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., p. 14
176. Weiss, "Language and Ethics...", op. cit., p. 432
177. Butterworth and Weiss, op. cit., pp. 5-6
178. Gorfinkle, op. cit., pp. 10-11
179. Bokser, op. cit., p. 108
180. Schweid, op. cit., p. 165
181. Ibid, p. 179
182. Ibid, p. 169
183. Ibid, p. 166
184. Bokser, op. cit., p. 108

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