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MAIMONIDES'
EPISTEMOLOGY AND AUTHORITY

León Rogozinski Rogson

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

Referee, Prof. Dr. Alvin Jay Reines

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1972

DIGEST

This thesis consists of four chapters dealing with the Maimonidean concept of epistemology and authority.

The first chapter, Cosmological Considerations, delineates the structure of the Maimonidean Universe and how that structure affects the definition of perfection Maimonides proposes. Types of causation, the creation of the Universe and the superiority of ex-nihilo over eternality, the structure of the Universe, and the pervasiveness of the intellect are investigated in this chapter.

In the second chapter, Human Knowledge, the structure of the human soul and the process of intellection are studied. The various faculties of the human soul are examined, and their interrelations in the process of obtaining knowledge derived. The relationship of knowledge to the cosmological background of Chapter I is alluded to.

In the third chapter, Human Perfection, various types of perfections are investigated. Specific human types and their ability to obtain perfection are then considered. The problems of obtaining and disseminating perfections are dealt with and the relation between knowledge and providence explained.

In the last chapter, The Law and Its Authority, the authority of Scripture is examined. The basis for that authority is found to be internal, in terms of parallels between it and nature, and the basis of Mosaic and prophetic faith is derived from human perfection and the wholistic Unity of the Universe.

The Conclusion presents the author's reaction to the materials presented.

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CHAPTER I

COSMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Three distinct types of causation are identified by Maimonides: 1) corporeal causation, 2) incorporeal causation, and 3) special causation.

Corporeal causation is the action of body on body. This action is produced either by direct contact of the bodies or indirect contact through intermediary objects. A body heated by fire, for example, has either been in direct contact with the fire or has been heated through the medium of air which was in contact with fire. The action of the efficient cause (i.e., the object that is the cause) is inversely proportional to the distance between the objects. If a piece of wax is moved away from a flame, it will heat and melt less rapidly than it did previously. If it is moved towards the flame, it will heat and melt faster. The effect produced by the cause is gradual. A piece of wax in the proximity of fire does not melt evenly, nor all at once. Lastly, causation takes place when either the efficient cause is created or the spatial relationship between the objects changes. A piece of wax does not become warm until a fire has been lit nearby, or until it has been brought closer to an already existing flame.[1.]

Incorporeal causation is any causation that results in a change of form. The cause must be a form since "whatever passes from potentiality to actuality requires for that transition an external agent of the same kind as itself."[2.] Since the result is incorporeal (the bestowal of new form), the cause must likewise be incorporeal (the form bestowed).

This type of causation provides substance with its formal cause, that is, its character or structure, and is also capable of giving rise to new forms.

In regards to substance, the changes produced by incorporeal causation are instantaneous. There are no spatial relationships between cause and effect since such relationships are accidents of substance. There are no temporal relationships for the same reason. The timing of the action is determined exclusively by the state of preparation of the substance which is to receive form; the location of the substance is irrelevant. The causes, being incorporeal, are not themselves subject to generation and decay; hence, they are constantly available. As an example of incorporeal causation, Maimonides cites the work of an architect. An architect does not build a house in his capacity as a workman. It is for the workman to put together the substances necessary for construction and to located them in space. This corresponds to the preparation of matter to receive form. The architect is the man who holds the plan of the storehouse in his mind, a plan which causes the transition of itself into reality and its ultimate embodiment in the materials of a building.[3.]

Because of these characteristics, incorporeal causation is called emanation or influence. Like a spring which sends forth its own substance in a continuous stream and is able to water distant locations as easily as nearby ones, so incorporeal causes send forth their own forms continuously and are able to affect any substance anywhere, at any time, as long as these substances are ready to accept form.[4.]

In regards to Forms, incorporeal causation is the source of their existence. Incorporeal beings cannot be distinguished from one another except through their causal relationships. The hypothesis of a multiplicity of Intelligences, for example, is derived from the differing motions of the various spheres. Since the substratum of these spheres is identical, only the hypothesis of differing forms could explain their differing appearances and motions.[5] Why the first Intelligence should be the cause of motion of the uppermost sphere, or why it should be the source of existence of the second Intelligence which is identified with the second sphere is not clear. Since maimonides does not hold that the motion of the spheres is any less perfect as you progress from the outermost sphere to the moon, this grading of Intelligence in terms of causation seems the result of aesthetic parallelism.[6]

Corporeal and incorporeal causation cannot account for all perceived phenomena, nor can they account for the creation of the world or free will. Corporeal causation assumes matter. Incorporeal causation has no relationship to matter other than to give it form. Since God is incorporeal, He cannot be a corporeal cause. By incorporeal causation He could certainly have brought the Intelligences into being. But neither He nor the Intelligences could, by incorporeal causation, have brought matter into being. Furthermore, both types of causation are very mechanical in their nature. If the circumstances are such that either type of causation can take place, then it necessarily takes place. If God, or the Intelligences, were restricted to them, they could not

possess "free will" which is the ability to act or refrain from acting when the possibility of action exists. Lastly, mechanical causation is very predictable and homogeneous in application. Thus, anomalies, like star clusters, the different directions of motion in the spheres, etc.[7], go against our expectations of them.

To solve this problem, Maimonides postulates a special causation[8], one which might be termed "causation by will".

With regard to God, this causation by will enables Him to create the Universe in accordance with design and intent. It also allows Him to create matter as well as form. All anomalies apparent in nature can now be ascribed to the original creation of the Universe through special causation and to the inscrutable wisdom of the Creator. The problem of the existence of matter vanishes and a real meaning is provided to the assertion that God has "free will". Maimonides does not seem to believe that God uses His ability to cause by will often. It seems as if, having created the Universe, God is willing to let normal causation take its course in it.[9]

The Intelligences, unlike God, do not have the ability to create matter itself. They cannot, therefore, force matter to accept form. They can, however, withhold form from prepared matter. This must be attributed to special causation since it is the result of choice rather than mechanical process.[10] This is what Maimonides regards as a miracle. Whether or not this ever happens is irrelevant to the logic of the situation. If free will is to be postulated for the Intelligences, then this would be the way in which it is expressed.[11]

What free will or special causation may mean in regard to the spheres is not completely clear. We assume their influence on the sublunar world to be the result of corporeal causation through their motions, and we assume that motion to be circular and constant. How could free will be expressed other than by a change in motion? Maimonides does not explain this.

Maimonides deals with three theories concerning the creation of the Universe.[12]

The first theory, which he attributes to scripture and takes as his own, is that God existed before the creation of the Universe and is the cause of both matter and form. The term "before" does not imply the existence of time. Time is an accident of motion and requires a substratum for existence. Since God created the substratum, He existed before time.

The second theory, ascribed to Plato and the Platonic Schools, is that matter co-existed with God. Matter is the clay out of which God formed the Universe. Matter is inferior to God in quality but co-eternal with Him.[13]

The third theory is that of Aristotle. It assumes not only the co-eternality of matter, but the co-eternality of the heavens. The Universe, in its totality, has never been different from what it is, nor will it ever change. Time and motion are eternal. Even the sublunary world of generation and decay is eternal. Its materia prima is co-existent with God and merely combines with different forms to create transient beings.

Maimonides respects the third theory and uses it in his proof of the existence of God. The reasons for this approach are twofold: 1) The third theory harmonizes with the Universe as presently constituted, and 2) Utilizing this theory allows for acceptance of Aristotle's results without prejudice to ex-nihilo. Maimonides goes so far as to say that if the arguments brought forth by Aristotle were compelling enough, he would have no difficulty in harmonizing them with scripture.[14.]

Seven arguments are set forth by Aristotle and his followers in support of the eternity of the Universe.[15.] They are:

1) The eternity of motion: If motion had a beginning it must have passed from potentiality into actuality. Since such a transition implies motion, the motion of the transition must be eternal or we face an eternal regression.

2) The eternity of the first substance: If the first substance had come into being, it must have come into being from a previous substance - since creation means no more than the reception of a new form. But the first substance is defined as formless substance and hence we have a contradiction.

3) The eternity of the spheres: The circular motion of the spheres indicates that their substance contains no opposite elements. Since everything that comes into existence does so from its contrariety and passes away by the action of its contrariety, it is clear that the spheres are both indestructible and eternal.

4) The substratum of possibility: The actual production of a thing is preceded in time by its possibility and that possibility must have a substratum of which it is predicated. It is, therefore, clear that this substratum is eternal or we face an eternal regression.

5) God is wholly actual: If God produced the Universe from nothing, He must have been a potential agent before He was an actual one.

6) God is not subject to accidents: As was shown in the discussion of the various forms of causation, [16.] corporeal and incorporeal causation inevitably occur when the circumstances are propitious. Unless we wish to conceive God as being subject to accidents which could change His will or affect His ability to create, we must assume the eternity of His activity and hence the eternity of the Universe.

7) God's actions are perfect: If the Universe is perfect, nothing can be added to it to make it more so. It must, therefore, be eternal.

The first four arguments deal with the properties of the Universe. The last three with the philosophical conception of God.

The problem with the first four arguments is that they read back into the hypothetical situation prior to creation the same causal structure currently existing in the Universe. For example, in the second argument, Aristotle seeks to prove the eternity of the first substance by

defining creation as acceptance of a new form. While this is perfectly true in the created Universe, we have no way of ascertaining that it was true before creation. Everything produced comes into existence from non-existence and has properties so different from those its substance previously held that it is impossible to infer from current characteristics what the previous ones were. Who, for example, would guess by looking at an adult human being that he originated in an egg and a sperm? Who could define the properties of the egg and sperm from the properties of a foetus after conception? Just so, the method by which matter was itself generated is not comparable to the method by which matter, once created, exchanges forms, Ex-nihilo accepts the existing properties of matter and the causal relationships in the existing Universe, but it refuses to apply them before creation itself. The genesis of matter is not like the genesis of things produced out of it, nor is its destruction like theirs.[17.]

Maimonides' answers to the last three arguments, based on a philosophical concept of God, are illustrative of the care with which he refuses to go beyond nature.[18.]

Since the Active Intellect can act or not act without a change from potential to actual agent being attributed to him, why should this be denied to God? The argument that the Active Intellect does not act because the substance on which he is to act has not been sufficiently prepared is beside the point. Logically, an immaterial being can be shown to act or not act without a change of essence. We cannot presume

to know why God chose to create the world when He did. We have no information either about the situation then existing, or about God who acted as the efficient cause. Thus the fifth argument is refuted.

The true essence of the will is the faculty to conceive desires at one time and not another. If a being is affected by his environment, his will is often shaped by external circumstances and limited in its effectiveness. For God, of course, there are no obstacles, nor is His will shaped by external causes. His acts out of will, therefore, do not imply an external cause which affected His will, nor do they imply that some obstacle to the enactment of His will was removed. Since "will" is, in any case, only homonymously applied to God and man, we simply have no information on which to deny Him the ability to create the Universe ex-nihilo.[19] This refutes the sixth argument.

The discussion of the seventh argument leaves something to be desired. Instead of dealing with the perfection of the Universe itself, the real basis for the assertion of eternality in the argument, Maimonides deals with the perfection of God's actions as a result of His wisdom. Since we cannot understand the purpose of the Universe,[20] since we are completely incapable of comprehending His wisdom, how can we question it in regard to the timing of creation? We can assert God's perfection, but we cannot embody in that assertion the implication that His acts are predictable. This is not totally satisfying since it leaves open the question of whether a Universe created at a certain time is less than an eternal Universe. (If Maimonides merely meant to point

out that "perfection" is used homonymously with regards to God and the rest of the Universe he should have said so).

Besides refuting the arguments for the eternity of the Universe, Maimonides attacks the theory on the basis of two serious drawbacks which he finds in it.[21.]

First, if God is the necessary cause and the Universe the necessary effect, in what way can we say that He designed the Universe and willed it into being? God may be satisfied and delighted with that which necessarily derives existence from Him, but if this derivation is truly necessary how is His will involved? We delight in our senses, but this in no way means we have willed them into being. The whole notion of design and determination applies only to things not yet in existence, while there is still the possibility of them being other than the design. God is the necessary cause of the Universe, but the Universe only became the necessary result after God brought it into being.

Second, if a simple element can only produce a simple thing, while a compound element can produce as many things as it contains elements, and there are definite relations between cause and effect, then a number of questions arise. How can an Intelligence, which is a simple thing, produce the spheres which contain two substances and two forms?[22.] Why don't the substances of the spheres intermingle, seeing that they are all based on the same substratum (and hence should be able to interchange forms)? These and many other questions like these cannot be answered through an appeal to the immutable laws of nature.

They can, however, be answered by an appeal to the designing will of God which is the source of the creation.

Aristotle is correct "as far as things are concerned which exist between the sphere of the moon and the center of the earth. . . . But waht Aristotle says concerning things above the sphere of the moon is, with a few exceptions, mere imagination and opinion, . . .".[23] His position on the eternity of the Universe is no more demonstrable than ex-nihilo and is open to some severe criticism to which the latter is not. Since the question of the existence of God does not depend on the eternity of the Universe, however, we can accept his arguments as well as all of his findings concerning the sublunar world.

The Universe has three basic ingredients: 1) The First Intelligence, 2) Quintessence (or the Fifth Element) and 3) Materia Prima. The creative act of God gives existence to these three elements and endows each of them with their peculiar characteristics. Their interactions serve to explain all phenomena in the Universe save some of the peculiarities mentioned above[24] which are ascribed directly to the act of creation.

All the Intelligences are pure form and constitute a permanent part of the Universe.[25] God's creative act gave existence to the First Intelligence and provided it with an excess of being that allowed it to be the source and origin of the Second Intelligence. This process is repeated, one Intelligence being the source and origin of the next,until the Active Intellect is reached. The Active Intellect is the last in the series of pure Intelligences.[26]

Each Intelligence is a conscious entity, aware of its actions and selecting through free will the objects of its influence. Its choices are not like human choices, nor are the acts it takes as a result like human acts. Human choice is dependent on circumstances and hence temporary. Human actions are physical and hence have no permanence. The choices of the Intelligences are permanent, and their actions constant.[27] All the Intelligences "live, realize the Creator and possess a knowledge of Him that is exceedingly great - a knowledge corresponding with the rank of each but having no relation to the infinite greatness of the Creator."[28] Even the Active Intellect knows God with a knowledge that no being of matter and form could possess. "But none of them knows the Creator as He knows Himself."[29]

Quintessence, or the Fifth Element, combines with forms to produce the spheres.[30] The entire physical Universe consists of the first, outermost sphere within which the other spheres are to be found in concentric fasion.[31] It is the peculiar property of the Fifth Element that once it has accepted a form it does not seek to exchange it for another.[32] As a result, the spheres are a permanent part of the Universe.

The substance of the spheres is clear and transparent like glass. It is neither light nor heavy, nor does it have taste nor odor. The spheres are closely joined to one another and there is no space between them. As a result, the Universe is filled with matter and no empty space can be found in it.[33]

The spheres travel with circular motion. Each sphere revolves

at a constant rate, though the rates vary from sphere to sphere. The all-encompassing sphere completes its circuit in a day and causes everything in the Universe to participate in its motion. Most spheres travel East to West participating in parallel to the all-encompassing spheres.[34] Some, however, travel West to East.

The number of spheres is not completely determined. There are at least eighteen spheres and possibly many more. The transparency of the spheres makes counting difficult since two or more objects (like stars) can appear to be on the same sphere and yet be on different ones. The last sphere is the sphere which contains the Moon. The Fifth Element extends from the outermost sphere to the sphere of the Moon.[35]

The motion of the spheres is probably the most important source of information about the workings of the Universe that we have. From it a number of conclusions can be reached which would have been overlooked otherwise.

First. There are three types of motion: 1) motion by natural property, 2) motion by instinct, and 3) motion through the formation of an idea.[36]

Motion by natural property occurs only when an object has been displaced from its proper location. Such motion is rectilinear, directed towards the proper location of the object, and temporary, ceasing when the object has reached its proper location. Thus, a stone which has been thrown upwards will move downwards until it once again is at rest on the surface of the earth. Similarly, air bubbles trapped in water will seek to escape it and flow upwards until they reach air.

Motion by instinct causes an animate object, like an animal, to approach or retreat from an object, depending on whether this other object is agreeable or disagreeable. Thus, an animal will approach water when thirsty and take cover from the sun when it is hot.

Motion through the formation of an idea is purposeful motion for the attainment of a conceived goal. Thus, an architect conceives the idea of a house, and, when he desires to bring that idea into reality, organizes the necessary building project.

The motion of the spheres, being circular, can belong neither to the category of motion by natural property nor motion by instinct. If there was a proper place for the sphere other than the orbit it occupies, we would expect it to move in that direction. If any location was more agreeable than any other location, the motion would not be circular since in circular motion the sphere is constantly both moving away from where it has been and coming closer to its previous position. Therefore, the motion of the spheres proves them to be intellectual beings capable of forming ideas.

Second. The perception (or reception) of an idea by the intellect does not result in motion unless there is a will that desires to emulate that idea. The motion of the spheres thus indicates that they possess a will.

Third. Circular motion, being simple and perfect,[37] there is no change in the essence of the sphere nor in the beneficial effects of its motion. There are no opposing elements in its motion and no

properties by which it could come to rest. Thus, the motion of the spheres is perpetual and not subject to any change.[38.]

Fourth. Our very knowledge of the Intelligences depends on the motions of the spheres. Incorporeal beings cannot be ordered except causally, and they cannot be perceived except through their effects on substance. Hence, the motion of the spheres, being different for every sphere, implies the existence of forms in whose imitation they move. That these are not mere forms but organized Intelligences with will and the ability to perceive knowledge from God is not completely clear. Probably, since the motion of the spheres is perfect and simple, we can hypothesize a perfect and simple incorporeal entity after which the motion is fashioned, and this would imply the attributes of will, and the ability to possess a knowledge of God.[39.]

The spheres, like the Intelligences, are endowed with knowledge and intelligence. They perceive God through their associated Intelligences by means of their intellect. Their perception is thus less than that of the Intelligences, but, due to their superior substratum, superior to human knowledge. They too are conscious of their actions and select, by their own free will, the objects of their influence.[40.]

Materia prima combines with four special forms of the Active Intellect to become the elements earth, water, air and fire. Each element is found in its own place as long as no external force acts upon it. When moved out of place it seeks it as soon as the external force has ceased operating. This motion is linear in nature and either centrifugal

or centripetal depending on the direction in which the element was moved.[41] The elements are dead having neither perception nor spontaneous motion. The true nature of materia prima is its property of always being disposed to take on new forms. Thus, each element is slowly transmuted into the other elements, and the rotating process wherein earth becomes water, water becomes air, and air becomes fire and vice versa can be compared to the motion of the spheres wherein each part returns periodically to the same location. As a result of this process corruption, destruction and generation take place. All change comes from matter since, having taken one form, it constantly seeks to take on another.[42]

The existing order of the sublunary world depends on forces emanated from the spheres. These forces serve to produce things by preparing substance to accept form. Due to the constancy of their action and the eveness of their effects, they also serve to perpetuate species and keep individuals alive for a time. These forces are:

> "(a) the force which effects the mixture and the composition of the elements, and which undoubtedly suffices to form the minerals;
>
> (b) the force which supplies every growing thing with its vegetative functions;
>
> (c) the force which gives to each living being its vitality, and
>
> (d) the force which endows rational beings with intellect."[43]

Besides these, the motion of each of the four elements is affected by the motion of a particular sphere or set of spheres. The moon clearly

affects water, as is clear to anyone who has observed the tides. The sun clearly affects fire, as is seen by the increase of heat when the sun is closest (at noon) and its diminution when the sun gets further away. The spheres of the planets affect the air. This explains the variety in the motion of the air and its changes in pressure. The sphere of the stars affects the motion of the earth, which explains its slowness in mixing and combining with other elements.

There are some problems with this analysis. If we assume that the spheres can only act as corporeal causes, then it is not at all clear how they could provide for anything other than mixture and composition of elements. Since only the sphere of the moon is in actual contact with the elements, it must be the medium through which forces from other spheres are transmitted to the elements. But if other spheres affect the motion of the sphere of the moon, the sphere's motion could not be simple, as Maimonides seems to hold.[44] Furthermore, how does motion translate into vegetative functions, vitality, and even Intellect? There are no clear answers to these problems.

Maimonides may have meant to say that through the combination of elements matter is made ready to receive a variety of forms. Since some of these created entities possess vegetative functions, others vitality, and others intellect, all three functions could be ascribed to the influence of the motion of the spheres.[45] Unfortunately, this would not explain how any sphere's motion, other than that of the moon, affects the elements of the sublunar world.

The Universe as a whole is a single, intellectual, living organism whose body is composed of the spheres and the sublunar world, and whose sould, or motive power, is supplied by the Intelligences. Like the human body, it consists of principal parts, the spheres, which can be compared to the heart and other primary organs, and non-essential parts, the sublunary world, which can be compared to arms and legs and the rest of the subordinate parts of the human body which cannot exist without control by the principal organs. Everything in the Universe is interdependent. If any of the principal parts were to perish, so would the rest. 46.

Within the Universe, every sphere is an intellectual, living organism whose soul if supplied by its related intelligence. Every intelligence is an intellectual, living organism whose being and actualized intellect is supplied by the intelligence which immediately precedes it. Only the First Intelligence has God as its immediate cause. Only it perceives Him directly through His emanations. In the sublunary world, man is an intellectual, living organism. Due to his temporary existence and the imperfection of his nature, he does not have direct access to knowledge at all times but must prepare himself before his potential intellect can be actualized.

The Universe, both in its entirety and parts, demonstrates Knowledge, Awareness and Life. God, who established it and set it in motion, is Knowledge, Awareness and Life all at once.

The Universe and its parts seem engaged in a conscious imitation of God. The whole purpose of the Universe seems to be the perception

and appreciation of God both in thought and deed. There being nothing on which the Universe as a whole could act, this is expressed in the internal arrangement of the parts. The Intelligences imitate His creative activities by providing form to the spheres and serving as the content of the spheres' intellect. They also imitate His creative activities by serving as the basis for life of the intelligence immediately beneath them. The only intelligence which is different is the Active Intellect. There is no Intelligence to which it can supply existence, and its creative activities are limited to the forms of the sublunary world and to providing content for the intellect of man. The spheres imitate God by their conscious simplicity of motion, by their actualized intellect, and by their influence on the sublunary world. Only the sublunary world is not a living, intellectual organism. But even here, man, who is part of that world, is a microcosm and can share in the Universal imitation of God.

Even the nature of the whole process indicates the thoroughness of the Universe's imitation:[47.]

> "The nature of the influence which one part of the Creation exercises upon another must be explained as follows: A thing perfect in a certain way is either perfect only in itself, without being able to communicate that perfection to another being, or it is so perfect that it is capable of imparting perfection to another being. . . . The creative act of the Almighty in giving existence to the pure Intelligences endows the first of them with the power of giving existence to another, and so on. . . . Besides producing other Intelligences, each Intelligence gives existence to one of the spheres. . . . In this manner the elements receive certain properties from each sphere and a succession of genesis and corruption is produced."

God's excess of perfection is the creative force which generates the Universe. At each stage in the Universe, the created individual being has more than enough perfection for itself and uses that excess to continue creation by giving existence or form or by affecting others. The whole process ends in the sublunar world with only enough perfection left to give one species, man, the ability to participate in the process actively.

Free will is also an essential part of the Universe. God acts not out of the necessity of His excess perfection but out of desire, design and will. Every created being, whether Intelligence, sphere or man, has consciously determined the object of its work. For the spheres and the Intelligences this decision process is permanent; for man it is a daily affair in his striving to achieve perfection or, having achieved it, pass its conclusions on to his neighbors.

Knowledge, the desire to possess it to as great a degree as possible, and the desire to express it to the best of one's ability is a basic fact in the Universe. Benevolence, the desire to do well for those not as perfect as oneself, is a basic fact of the Universe. The striving to achieve perfection through knowledge and express that perfection in self actualization and benevolence is a uniting strand in Maimonidean philosophy.

[1] Samuel Ibn Tibbon (trans.), Moreh Nebukhim, by Moses Maimonides (Jerusalem: , 1960), Vol. II, 12.

[2] M. Friedlander (trans.), The Guide of the Perplexed of Maimonides (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company), Vol. II, 4, p. 12. [No publishing date was found in the volume, this printing contains Friedlander's notes as well as his translation.]

[3] Tibbon II, 4.

[4] Tibbon II, 12.

[5] Tibbon I, 73. See Maimonides' discussion on the Seventh Proposition of the Mutakallemin.

Tibbon II, Introduction. See the explanation of Proposition XVI.

[6] It is possible to argue that, since each sphere contains all the ones beneath it, the causal relationships of the Intelligences are determined.

Suppose I_1 is the Intelligence which provides form to Sphere S_2 and I_2 is the Intelligence that provides form to Sphere S_1. Further assume that I_2 depends for its existence on I_1 and S_2 was included in S_1.

Then, if the substratum for S_2 is S_1, I_2 is causally prior to S_1. Yet, though I_1 is causally prior to I_2, it must wait until S_1 has received form for I_2 before it can bestow form upon it to create S_2. One can argue that such causal crossing is not permissible.

The problem is that Maimonides seems to think of the spheres as if they were like the skins of an onion. Each is in contact with the next, and each is separate and unique through the form it has acquired. Their substratum, however, is Quintessence itself, unmodified by previous forms.

[7] Tibbon II, 18-25. In III, 14 Maimonides hypothesizes that the spheres and the sublunary world were created for different purposes. Clearly, if the spheres and the Intelligences were created for the sake of the sublunar world, then the more perfect was created for the sake of the less perfect, and this is impossible.

[8] Tibbon II, 15-24. Mostly from the discussion in II, 18.

[9] Tibbon II, 20.

[10]Tibbon II, 7 and 32.

There are two types of action involved here.

First, an Intelligence could refuse to impart form to a certain substance. Being outside space/time, such a decision would be permanent and mean that no form would ever be imparted on that substance by that Intelligence. Or the Intelligence could decide the exact opposite, in which case whenever the substance was sufficiently prepared it would receive form. This type of decision could be classified as incorporeal causation as it becomes a mechanical part of the nature of the Universe.

Second, an Intelligence, by exercising free will, could decide not to affect a particular substance at a particular time. This would be what Maimonides considers a miracle. Such action could not be classed under incorporeal causation since it is not mechanical in nature.

How such action avoids the implication that the Intelligence involved is at least aware of time is not explained. How it could be aware of time without in some sense being involved with it is also not explained.

[11]Tibbon II, 25 and 32.

[12]Tibbon II, 13.

[13]Maimonides does not comment on this theory, probably because in refuting arguments 1, 2 and 4 (pp. 6 &7) he has disproved the theory.

[14]Tibbon II, 25.

[15]Tibbon II, 14.

[16]supra. pp. 1-5.

[17]Tibbon II, 17.

It is interesting that Maimonides agrees that these arguments of Aristotle do prove something. They prove that there is no way to argue for creation ex-nihilo on the basis of the created Universe. You cannot prove either creation or eternality using the data furnished by the Universe as it is. At least not while using the usual demonstrative methods. Maimonides does seem to feel that in prophecy creation ex-nihilo becomes apparent.

[18]Tibbon II, 18.

[19]Tibbon II, 18.

[20]Tibbon III, 13 and 25. Maimonides explains in detail the absurdity of demanding a reason for the creation of the Universe.

[21]Tibbon II, 19 and 22.

[22]Tibbon II, 21. The substance and form of the sphere and the substance and form of the stars fixed in that sphere.

[23]Tibbon II, 22, p. 108.

[24]See above pp. 3, 10.

[25]Permanent in the sense that once created they are not subject to decay or destruction.

[26]Tibbon II, 4 and 5.
Moses Hyamson (trans.), Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge, by Moses Mimonides (Jerusalem: Boys Town Publishers, 1965), "Laws concerning the basic principles of the Torah", Chap. 2, ¶5.

[27]Tibbon II, 7. See note 9.

[28] Hyamson,Chap. 2, ¶8.

[29]Hyamson,Chap. 2, ¶8.

[30]Although Maimonides does not explicitly state it, it is clear that the Intelligences are the source for the formal cause of the spheres. Maimonides does not mention forms as existing independent of the spheres. Furthermore, he compares the relationship between the elements and the Active Intellect to the relationship between the spheres and the Intelligences (Tibbon II, 4). Since the spheres, through their motion, are the efficient cause of the motion of the elements and their combinations (Tibbon II, 10), Maimonides could not be comparing the motion of the elements to that of the spheres. Since the only activity of the elements other than motion is the acceptance of form, it is the relationship between the Active Intellect and the forms of the elements and the relationship between the other Intelligences and the forms of the spheres that must have been referred to. This is probably what Maimonides means when he saws that the Intelligences give existence to the spheres (Tibbon II, 11).

[31]The Universe looks like a series of circles of decreasing radius arranged so that no two circumferences intersect. Since the spheres are not perfectly concentric, their substance must have a measure of elasticity to allow for the uniform motion of their neighboring spheres.

[32]Tibbon I, 72; II, 11.

[33]Hyamson II, 2, 3; Tibbon I, 72.

[34]Tibbon I, 72. There seems to be some contradiction in these assertions. How can a sphere going the opposite way participate in the motion of the first sphere?

[35]Tibbon I, 72.

[36]Tibbon II, 4.

[37]Since there is no converse for circular motion (except direction of motion which Maimonides seems to ignore), the motion is simple and perfect. There is no way in which circular motion could either be interrupted or affected.

[38]Tibbon I, 72; II, 4.

[39]Tibbon II, 4 and 11.

[40]Tibbon II, 4 and 7; Hyamson III, 9.

A discussion of the stars and their role in nature seems unnecessary to our purpose. They are also conceived as alive, intelligent and aware of God. Their awareness, too, is greater than man's. Maimonides does not place them in relation to the spheres. It is not clear how they, as separate from the spheres, affect the sublunar world, but they are somehow connected with the species of plants.

[41]See the discussion on linear motion, p. 13.

[42]Tibbon I, 72.

[43]Tibbon I, 72, 297; also II, 10.

[44]Tibbon II, 4.

[45]Tibbon I, 72; II, 1.

[46]Tibbon I, 72; II, 1.

[47]Tibbon II, 11, 55.

CHAPTER II

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

Two structures are involved in obtaining and retaining the knowledge available to man, the human soul and the human intellect. Often, the processes by which these structures obtain knowledge seem to overlap and it is then a matter of interpretation to determine whether a process belongs to one or the other structure or is really common to both. In general, the human soul processes and abstracts knowledge from the environment while the human intellect, trained and readied by the soul, obtains real knowledge through its union with the active intellect, the Tenth Intelligence.

Maimonides uses the term soul in a great variety of ways. The soul is the principle by which objects move when their motion is not determined by the natural property of their substance.[1] The soul is both the potential intellect with which man is born and the actualized intellect of man that remains after death.[2] The soul is the active intellect, the external source of ideas which actualizes the human intellect.[3] In terms of an organized exposition of the soul and its contents, the Moreh has much detail and little structure. Only in the Eight Chapters does Maimonides give a structural overview of the human soul which can then be augmented by the details of the Moreh.[4]

Maimonides, like Aristotle,[5] posits a faculty psychology. The soul demonstrates certain operative qualities for which a permanent capacity for action must be assumed. Such capacities are called

faculties and reside in various bodily organs. Since these faculties are abilities possessed by organs, their perfection depends on the constitutional perfection and substantive purity of the organs in which they reside. No one afflicted with cataracts can have perfect vision. No one whose brain is imperfect can have a perfect imagination. Medicine may help an organ to work better, but if the condition is congenital, or if the illness has progressed too far, medical aid is unable to bring the organ to perfection.[6.]

There are five faculties in the human soul: 1) the nutritive faculty, 2) the perceptive or sensitive faculty, 3) the imaginative faculty, 4) the appetitive faculty, and 5) the rational faculty.[7.]

The nutritive, or growing faculty, has seven distinct functions: 1) to attract nourishment, 2) to retain it, 3) to assimilate it, 4) to repulse or secrete it, 5) to cause growth, 6) to procreate, and 7) to differentiate between nutritive juices that are necessary for sustenance and those which are to be expelled.[8.]

The goals of the nutritive faculty are the preservation of the individual organism through growth and sustenance, and the preservation of the species through procreation. This faculty is common to all living creatures. Some of its functions pertain to both the entire organism and some to its separate parts. Thus, each animal ingest and digests what is proper to it. The processed food is then attracted to the various portions of the body in accordance with their needs. These portions retain the food, assimilate it to their substance, and repulse those ele-

ments which they cannot use. The process is completed when the collected waste is excreted from the body.[9.]

This faculty acts neither through knowledge or will. It acts blindly, like a natural force, whenever and wherever circumstance permits it. It has no regard nor interest in the welfare of the body. As a result, although essential to life, the faculty is the cause of much physical pain and illness. Eating too much and accumulating fatty tissue, or eating an unbalanced diet, are probably the types of injurious activities Maimonides wishes to point out.[10.]

The faculty of sensation consists of the five senses. Three of them, seeing, hearing, and smelling, act at a distance and are not dependent on immediate contact. Two, tasting and feeling (or touching) depend on immediate contact. All the senses except touch reside in particular bodily organs. Touch extends over the entire surface of the body.[11.]

The senses are passive. They receive impressions from without and temporarily acquire the corporeal qualities of the objects they perceive. Thus, the eye in apprehending a red object becomes, in some sense, red, the tongue in tasting a sweet object becomes, in some sense, sweet. Since the nature of apprehension is by necessity partial (one cannot see all the faces of a cube, for example), common sense[12.] steps in and uses past experience to extrapolate from partial data and complete the apprehension of the objects before the senses.[13.]

The purpose of the senses is to acquaint man with his environ-

ment so that he can perceive what is beneficial and injurious to him. Maimonides believes in the adequacy of the senses. The knowledge they provide, while limited and partial, is the source of certain and acceptable data which is used by the rational and intellectual faculties to achieve real knowledge. In this, Miamonides might be termed a "naive realist".[14.]

The imaginative faculty retains and processes sense data. Among its functions are: 1) separating sense impressions into their component parts and 2) combining these parts into artificial constructs.[15.]

Sense data, while present to the senses, is corporeal in nature.[16.] Before it is stored in the image memory, the data is dematerialized and completed.[17.] As stored in the image memory, images are the most immaterial particulars found in nature. The imagination is the highest faculty to deal directly with corporeal sensation. The image memory that it creates is the data used by the rational and intellectual faculties.[18.]

The imagination processes the images it contains by separating them into component parts. Thus, out of a horse, the imaginative faculty may separate head, tail, trunk, legs, etc. After this process is completed, the resultant parts are recombined with other parts already in the image memory to produce artificial constructs. Thus, out of a man and a horse, the image of a centaur may be created. Even the qualities and sizes of objects may be intermixed in this fashion. Thus, an iron ship may be imagined floating in air, and a human being phantasized as being larger than the earth.[19.]

The imagination does not abstract. It does not compare new sense data with what is stored in the image memory and derive common properties or distinctinctions. It merely holds both the original images and their separate parts. It can, therefore, produce nothing whose parts were not previously sensed nor can its phantasy serve as a test for the reality of any object.[20.]

The activity of the imagination is somewhat restricted during wakefulness. The data from the senses must be stored and the stored data made available to the common sense and rational faculties so that they can determine the situation a person is in and how that situation could be altered in accordance with the dictates of the appetitive faculty.[21.]

Only during sleep, when the sensitive, appetitive and rational faculties are dormant, can the imagination proceed to fully use its ability to combine the contents of the image memory. This is why daydreams are less vivid than dreams.[22.]

Like the appetitive faculty, the imagination has neither knowledge nor will concerning its activities. Although it can be regulated by the appetitive and rational faculties, it cannot be suspended.

The uncontrolled imagination, with its random combination of images, is the cause of much error in the thought of man. For this reason it has been called the evil inclination.[23.] On the other hand, the controlled imagination, when its combinatorial ability is regulated by the rational faculty, enables man both to achieve knowledge of the universe and to transmit that knowledge in an effective way to his fellow human beings.[24.]

The appetitive faculty is the faculty by which all human motion is determined. Its main activity is to desire or loathe. This activity determines whether an object is pursued or avoided, whether fear or courage, love or hate, cruelty or compassion, are felt by man. The organs of locomotion and manipulation, the senses through which one perceives, even the heart through which one is bold or timid, are all controlled by this faculty.[25.]

This faculty is the faculty of will. The rational faculty and the intellect may analyze data and obtain knowledge, but knowledge by itself is not sufficient to produce activity; the appetitive faculty provides the energy and direction of human activity. All the faculties of the soul are subservient to this one. The senses which provide information are dependent on it for their location in the environment. The nutritive faculty is dependent on the food gathering activities determined by this faculty. The imagination phantasizes about that which the appetitive faculty is concerned with. Even the rational faculty is provided by this faculty with the problems which it is to analyze and solve. As a result, ethical virtues, which depend on the interactions between individuals and between individuals and their environment, are all related to the appetitive faculty. The nutritive, sensitive, and imaginative faculties can function properly or improperly; only the appetitive and rational have ethical value attached to the way they function.[26.]

The rational faculty is peculiar to man. It enables him to understand, reflect, acquire scientific knowledge, and discriminate

between proper and improper action. Three types of function can be found in the faculty: 1) abstraction, 2) heuristic analysis, and 3) logical derivation.[27.]

In abstraction, the rational faculty examines the content of the image memory and derives the various forms exemplified there. Thus, from the images of numerous trees, the form "tree", a universal totally devoid of matter, may be inducted. This activity is essential for the organization of our knowledge of the universe and for the preparation of the potential intellect towards its actualization.[28.]

The heuristic function examines experience to achieve knowledge of effective action. If the task is to learn a trade, it will seek to uncover the methods employed by tradesmen. If the task is to perform a certain act, it will examine the means available to achieve it, and estimate their probability of success. In this , the rational faculty can influence the appetitive function by determining the feasibility and probable consequences of desired acts.[29.]

In logical derivation, the rational faculty applies the syllogism to previously accepted axioms and the contents of the image memory. If the images chosen are objects whose nature is unchangeable (say, the stars, spheres, etc.), the result is scientific knowledge (astronomy, cosmology, etc.). If the images are not permanent, the result is prediction concerning their future changes and interactions. Logical derivation produces knowledge of direct and indirect causation (as, for example, the derivation of the existence of Intelligences from the motion

of the spheres, the existence of God as first cause, etc.). This aspect of the rational faculty can direct the imagination in its combinatorial process and aids the abstractive aspect in its preparation of the potential intellect to receive forms.[30]

The five faculties of the soul as enumerated by Maimonides are in ascending order of perfection. The nutritive faculty adapts substance to substance. The food it processes is material and the organs into which the processed food is assimilated are material. The senses abstract qualities from substance. The objects they perceive are material, but they do not acquire additional substance from them. Rather, like wax takes on the shape of an iron seal without becoming iron, the senses take on those qualities which each of them is suited to taking without taking on the actual substance of the object perceived. The imagination processes the qualities acquired by the senses to construct images which are even further from corporeality than the physical qualities present in the senses. It is the highest faculty which deals with particulars. The appetitive faculty uses the image memory of the imagination to determine inclination. Its place is somewhat indeterminate since it uses the heuristic functions of the rational faculty and is responsible for bodily motion. The rational faculty uses the particular images of the imagination to abstract general concepts and forms that are totally incorporeal. Thus, the nutritive faculty is wholly corporeal in its work; the sensitive faculty is necessary as a source of materials with which the imagination constructs its image memory, and the imaginative

faculty is needed by the rational faculty as a source of images from which the rational faculty abstracts universals. At each stage the faculties are more and more removed from corporeality. Since corporeality is the source of all imperfection, at each stage the faculties are more and more perfect.[31.]

Some of the soul's faculties have their origin in the motion of the spheres.[32.] Since the forces which supply growing things with their vegetative functions and living things with their vitality are produced by the motion of the spheres, the nutritive faculty and the appetitive faculty seem to be a result of that motion. Whether the perceptive faculty, which is necessary before motion is possible, and the imaginative faculty, which is sometimes the source of goals for the appetitive faculty are included under vitality is not clear. The rational faculty, being a part of man's definition, clearly belongs to the form of man and is the result of the action of the Active Intellect. Even here, however, there seems to be some influence on the part of the spheres.[33.]

Maimonides himself points out that his discussion of the soul is not clear without recourse to the peripatetic philosophers that preceded him.[34.] In the discussion on the soul materials are, therefore, included from Aristotle,[35.] from an extremely useful note by Munk on the position of Maimonides' predecessors on the intellect,[36.] and some of Friedlander's notes on the Moreh.[37.]

Maimonides' main definition of the intellect and its activity goes as follows:[38.]

> "Man, before comprehending a thing, comprehends it in potentia; when, however, he comprehends a thing, e.g., the form of a certain tree which is pointed out to him, when he abstracts its form from its substance, and reproduces the abstract form, an act performed by the intellect, he comprehends in reality, and the intellect which he has acquired in actuality, is the abstract form of the tree in man's mind."

The following is an examination of this definition divided into its various parts.

"Man, before comprehending a thing, comprehends it in potentia . . ."

By comprehending in potentia Miamonides means that the mind is potentially whatever is thinkable, though it is actually nothing until it has thought. What it thinks must be in it in the same sense as characters may be said to be on a writing slate before anything was written on it. It is the essence of a writing tablet to take on characters and it is the essence of the mind to take on thought.[39] The mind can also be compared to matter. Just as matter has an ever present potentiality to acquire new forms, so the mind has an ever present potentiality to acquire the intelligibles. It is because of this that the mind as potency is called the hylic intellect.[40]

According to Arab Aristotelians (and probably Maimonides), the theoretical reason which is the highest faculty of the rational soul obtains by abstraction the general forms of the particular images in the imagination or the actual forms of the intelligences.[41] This is a gradual process. By obtaining these forms, the rational faculty progresses through three stages: 1) the hylic intellect, 2) the intellect in action, and

3) the acquired intellect. According to some of these philosophers, including Maimonides,[42] the hylic intellect is pure disposition, a mere faculty with which man is born, a faculty which perishes with man.[43]

Maimonides seems to hold that the hylic intellect is a tabula rasa with the potential of obtaining intelligibles. This empty slate is of a most complicated construction, being the rational faculty itself after it has abstracted universals from the particulars of the image memory. The forms which this hylic intellect is ready to acquire depend on the forms the rational faculty has been able to abstract or deduce. It is this preliminary preparation which makes the actualization of the intellect a slow and continuing process.

". . . when, however, he comprehends a thing, . . .when he abstracts its form from its substance, and reproduces the abstract form, an act performed by the intellect, he comprehends in reality,..."

There are two elements in the process of obtaining knowledge: 1) obtaining form from substance, and 2) reproducing the abstract form. The first element has already been dealt with above. The second element, reproducing the abstract form, is new. This reproduction is achieved by the intellect itself, an intellect which is identical to the form abstracted.[44] The question naturally arises as to where this intellect that reproduces itself comes from? Since it is a purely abstract form it is not the result of the rational faculty which being corporeal can have no incorporeal effects. Since it is an abstract form, the answer can only be the Active Intellect, the Tenth Intelligence, which according to Maimonides is the source of all the forms of the sublunary world.[45]

The intellect which reproduces itself is the intellect in action, the second of the three stages of development mentioned above. According to Munk, this intellect is the intellect that knew how to abstract form from matter, i.e., obtain forms from the particulars of the image memory. This is somewhat puzzling since the abstractive faculty was previously allocated to the rational faculty, and since the intellect in action, being incorporeal, can have no other relation to matter than giving it form. What seems to happen is that the preliminary abstraction of the rational faculty does not give true and complete knowledge of the object abstracted. It merely prepares the hylic intellect so that it can accept the abstract form from the Active Intellect. Since that form is constantly being emanated from the Active Intellect,[46.] the form now incorporates itself into the hylic intellect making it actual. In this way we can speak of a form abstracting and copying itself.

This situation is akin to a common computer problem. A data bank, consisting of a set of dossiers and a computer which searches for them in accordance with certain keys, is coupled to a problem solving computer. In order to obtain a particular dossier, the computer merely passes the appropriate key through a linked portion of memory, and receives the complete dossier through that same memory. In a given situation, the computer processes data inputed to it and prepares a key in linked memory. The data bank finds the key, searches its files for the appropriate dossier, and replaces the key with it. The dossier is now available to the computer for problem solving.[47.]

The rational faculty would be the problem solving computer and the data bank would be the Active Intellect. When the rational faculty has sufficiently prepared the hylic intellect (i.e., produced the key to the right dossier of forms), the real and complete abstract form appears bringing the hylic intellect (or communications region) to actuality (making it a useful part of the memory of the problem solving computer). ". . . and the intellect which he has acquired in actuality, is the abstract form . . . in man's mind."

The last stage of the intellect is the acquired intellect. This is the intellect in action which, in some way becomes the property of man (". . in man's mind"). Man can now identify with it without further effort or preparation. Once the intellect has acquired all the intelligibles it is complete. Man can then totally identify with them and through them with the Active Intellect.[48.]

It is not clear that Maimonides would agree to the proposition that the actualized intellect is directly accessible to the rational faculty without further effort. In his introduction and in his discussion on prophecy he maintains that true knowledge is both difficult to obtain and fragile when attained. "At times the trust shines so brilliantly that we perceive it clear as day. Nature and habit then draw a veil over our perception and we return to a darkness almost as dense as before."[49.] Physical and psychological problems can interrupt the process and cause one who has prophesied to cease.[50.] It may be that the rational faculty itself or the imagination is the problem rather than the acquired intellect,

but it is clear that perceiving even previously attained knowledge requires both preparation and the right circumstances. That the actualized intellect grows through acretion whenever a new form is created is implied in its imperishability. If Maimonides felt that only one form could exist in the acquired intellect at any one time there would be little solace in its being what remains of a human being after death.[51.]

The preconditions for attaining intellectual perfection, that is, all the human knowledge man can obtain, are threefold: 1) physical perfection, 2) mental preparation, and 3) moral righteousness.[52.]

The need for physical perfection is evident from the description of the intellectual process. The hylic intellect is dependent on the faculties of the soul for preparation, and these faculties are corporeal. If either the sensitive, the imaginative, or the rational faculties are impaired the hylic intellect cannot be prepared in full measure. If the sensitive faculty is defective, the imaginative faculty cannot create a proper image memory from which the rational faculty can abstract ideas. A blind person would have no real notion of the movement of the spheres and hence would be deprived of the knowledge of their existence and the existence of the Intelligences.[53.] A person with a defective imagination would derive distorted images from the senses from which the rational would have more than the usual difficulty in abstracting ideas. Lastly, a person with an inadequate abstractive faculty would be unable to use the image memory to full advantage.[54.]

The rational faculty must be brought to its highest state of per-

fection through mental preparation, which consists of the orderly study of the trivium and quadrivium.[55] To go into the final studies of physics and metaphysics without adequate training is paramount to intellectual suicide. Therefore, to teach a beginner metaphysics is like feeding a baby steak. The child would surely die,not because the food was unfit, but because he was not developed enough to digest it. Similarly, anyone studying metaphysics before they are ready is bound to become confused and reach decisions which will lead to idolatry.[56] Care must also be taken that the rational faculty not be strained. Just as a strained eye becomes unable to see even that which it can normally see clearly, just so the strained rational faculty will not be able to perceive what was in its perceptive range previously.[57] Lastly, the limits of knowledge must be established so that one does not exceed them. Those who trespass the limits of knowledge not only fail to become perfect, they become exceedingly imperfect. Their imagination unrestrained by reason leads them into false beliefs and degrading habits.[58]

The need for moral perfection stems from the total concentration of the soul required by the intellectual process which leads to knowledge. If one's character is such that it could be swayed away from this pursuit, then the difficulties in it would insure that he would be swayed. Even external circumstances, such as poverty can prevent a man from spending the time required to achieve knowledge.[59] How much more then a person whose desire for luxury or lustful cravings are paramount? To achieve knowledge then a person must be pure and

his passions balanced. His desires must aim at obtaining knowledge, and there must be an absence of the lower desires and appetites.[60.] If a man is too powerful, his heart is very warm, he is sure to be passionate even if he tries to counteract his temperament by training. If he is too well endowed sexually he will not easily evade sin, whatever his exertions. If he is too rash or easygoing and the condition is not rectified he will lack patience or interest in the pursuit. Such a person can never achieve perfection in knowledge.[61.] Man's intellect is inversely related to the strength of his bodily forces. Old age is the most suitable time to acquire thorough knowledge. When stricken with age, man's knowledge and love of God increases so that his soul departs in great delight.[62.]

Notes to Chapter II.

[1]Tibbon,II, 4.

[2]Tibbon,I, 41, 68, 70.

[3]Tibbon,I, 70.

[4]Hyamson, Chap. I.

[5]Richard McKeon (ed.), "De Anima", The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, Random House, 1941), pp. 535-606.

[6]Joseph I. Gorfinkle (trans.), The Eight Chapters of Maimonides on on Ethics (Shemonah Perakim) (New York, Columbia University Press, 1912), Chap. I. See the discussion on the appetitive faculty.
Tibbon,II, 32, 36.

[7]Gorfinkle, Chap. I.

[8]Tibbon,I, 72; Gorfinkle, Chap. I.

[9]S. Munk (trans.), Dalalat Al Hairin Le Guide des Egares(Osnabruck, Otto Zeller, 1964), Vol. I, p. 367, n. 5.

[10]Tibbon, I, 72.

[11]Gorfinkle, Chap. I.

[12]De Anima, II, 12.

[13]Tibbon, I, 46.

[14]Tibbon, I, 46, 47; Gorfinkle, Chap. I.

[15]Tibbon, I, 73; II, 36; Gorfinkle, Chap. I.

[16]See above p. 27.

[17]See above p. 27.

[18]Alvin Jay Reiner, Maimonides and Abrabanel on Prophecy (Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1970), Chap. 5.
H. A. Wolfson, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophical Texts", The Harvard Theological Review, XXVIII (1935).

[19]Gorfinkle, Chap. I; Tibbon, I, 73 - on Proposition X.

[20]Tibbon, I, 73.

[21]Tibbon, II, 36.

[22]Tibbon, II, 37.

[23]Tibbon, I, 35.

[24]See next chapter, the discussion on how the prophet and the philosopher are their perfection of energy.

[25]Tibbon, I, 46; Gorfinkle, Chap. I.

[26]Gorfinkle, Chaps. I, II, V;
Tibbon, I, 26, 46; II, 4;
De Anima, III, 10.
Maimonides does mention the sensitive faculty as a faculty that has virtues attached to it. This is mostly on account of the sense of touch. Since he does argue, however, that the senses do not be themselves produce motion or have desire, he must mean that the sense of touch has an inordinate place in the decision-making process of the appetitive faculty.

[27]Gorfinkle, Chap. I. Gorfinkle outlines the rational faculty as follows:

rational faculty { practical activities { mechanical - learning a trade
intellectual - problem solving
speculative activities - the sciences

[28]Gorfinkle, Chap. I;
Tibbon, I, 68; II, 36;
See p. 9ff for discussion on this point.

[29]Gorfinkle, Chaps. I, II;
Tibbon, I, 53.

[30]Gorfinkle, Chaps. I, II.

[31]Tibbon, I, 68;
See Munk, Part I, p. 304, n. 1.

[32]See above p. 16ff.

[33]The spheres are the source of the intellect in man (see note 34). If the rational faculty is the substratum of that intellect, then the spheres and the Active Intellect must have co-operated in the creation of that faculty.

[34]Tibbon, I, 68. See also the last portion of this chapter.

[35]De Anima. See books II and III.

[36]Tibbon, I, 68; Munk, I, 68, pp. 304-308, n. 1.

[37]Tibbon, I, 68.

[38]Friedlander, I, 68, 254.

[39]De Anima, III, 4, 429b-430a.

[40]Friedlander, I, 68, p. 254, n. 2.

[41]See note 36 above. The theoretical reason seems to be the equivalent of the abstractive and logical functions of the rational faculty. Also see pages 7 and 8 of this chapter.

[42]Friedlander, I, 68, p. 254, n. 2.

[43]Munk, I, 68, 304-308, n. 1.
Munk offers three opinions:
1) The hylic intellect is pure disposition.
2) Since Aristotle argues that the hylic intellect must be impassable (De Anima, III, 4), a separate substratum must be postulated which is mere potency - this is attributed to Temistodes.
3) A medium position somewhere between 1) and 2) attributed to Averroes.

[44]Friedlander, I, 68, pp. 254-55.
". . . the intellect is not distinct from the thing comprehended. . .".

[45]Friedlander, I, 68, p. 254, n. 3; p. 256, n. 2.

[46]Tibbon, II, 12.

[47]An example of such a system is the airline reservation system in use throughout U.S. Two computers are involved. One maintains a log of all flight arrivals and departues, delays, passenger lists, etc. The other is a customer service computer. Given the origin and destination of a desired flight plus the approximate time of departure (or arrival), the customer service computer prepares a key which it passes to the data file system. The data file pulls the appropriate information from its storage and passes it to the customer service computer which in turn types the information on the reservation desk console.

[48]See note 36 above.

[49]Friedlander, Introduction to Part I, p. 8.

[50]Tibbon, II, 36 - last portion of the chapter.

[51]Tibbon, I, 70.

[52]Tibbon, II, 36.

[53]It is interesting that Maimonides, while mentioning the imagination and the rational faculty in his discussion of preparation for prophecy, does not mention the sensitive faculty.

[54]Tibbon, II, 37 - in the discussion of the various types of individuals that result when either the imagination or the rational faculty are imperfect.

[55]In the introduction to Part I, Maimonides mentions the quadrivium before the trivium (mathematics before logic) while in Chapter 34 of Part I he insists that logic be the first topic studied. The quadrivium consists of: arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy. The trivium consists of: grammar, rhetoric and logic.

[56]Tibbon, I, 33.

[57]Tibbon, I, 32.

[58]Tibbon, I, 33 - the story of Pardes and the positions of Akiba and Acher.

[59]Tibbon, III, 51.

[60]Tibbon, II, 36.

[61]Tibbon, I, 34; II, 8.

[62]Tibbon, III, 51.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN PERFECTION

Two types of perfection are discussed by Maimonides: 1) teleological perfection and 2) essential perfection.

Teleological perfection is perfection in terms of an external goal. If there is any discernable purpose for man's existence, if he participates in a process by which the Universe benefits God or achieves perfection, then his functional excellence in that process could be termed teleological perfection. The question is whether such goals can be discerned for mankind or for the Universe as a whole.

Mankind is affected by the Universe. The spheres influence man's environment and grant him some of the faculties of his soul. The Active Intellect provides him with the form of his species and actualizes his intellect. But the effects are all one way. Man, who is the least perfect of intellectual beings, is incapable of affecting the supralunar world.[1]

The Universe as a whole was created by God, but again the activity is one way. The Universe does not affect God. To have teleological perfection, however, the Universe must in some sense benefit its creator. God's transcendence makes such perfection impossible.

The traditional position of man-centered naive faith is that the Universe was created for the sake of man and that man exists to serve God or to become more perfect. To argue that the Universe was cre-

ated for the sake of man is to maintain that the more perfect was created for the sake of the less perfect, which is absurd. Furthermore, if man was created to serve God, what is the purpose of serving God? God does not become more perfect by that worship. Lastly, what is the purpose of man's perfection? God again is unaffected by it. Thus the naive position of a man centered Universe is overthrown and teleological perfection denied on the grounds that God's purposes are unavailable to our examination.[2.]

The Universe and man were created by God's will and cannot be questioned.[3.] The only purpose we can ascribe to the Universe is its continuation, its mere existence, in accordance with God's will. Perfection in terms of directed activity to achieve an external goal is impossible to the Universe as a whole.

Essential perfection is the degree to which man can fulfill the elements of his definition. Man, the rational animal, can be judged by the extent to which he is rational, since this is the specific difference which sets him apart from other animals. Such perfection is internal, unrelated to any overall purpose which man may or may not have. If God does have a purpose for man, however, then becoming essentially perfect will facilitate that purpose since God must have designed the form of man with that purpose in mind.

The purpose of man is to attain essential perfection. Maimonides discusses and comments on four types of perfection proposed for man:[4.]

1) perfection of property, 2) perfection of body, 3) moral perfection, and 4) perfection of the intellect.

Perfection of property consists in wealth, authority and power. These perfections are incidental to man. They can be taken from him. They have no positive effect upon his character, but on the contrary open him to pernicious influence. To strive after property is to strive after imaginary, transitory things. Even if one can achieve them throughout life, they do not give him any essential perfection. Therefore, perfection of property is not the proper perfection of man.

Perfection of body consists in the perfection of shape, constitution and form of man's body. This too is not man's aim since it is perfection as a living being, a perfection any animal may also have. Besides it is a futile perfection since in any one element of it man cannot compete with animals. No matter how strong man is, a mule is stronger; however far he may see, an eagle sees farther. A perfect body is useful to man, since imperfections can limit his intellectual capacity.[5] But, except as a supportive perfection, a perfect body is of no profit to the soul and hence is not a proper perfection for man.

Perfection of morals is the highest degree of excellence in man's character. Most laws aim at this kind of perfection. But morality is not the ultimate aim of man since it refers to relations between men rather than the perfection of each individual himself. A person on a lonely island has no use for this type of perfection since he lacks anyone with whom to exercise it. Since man is a social animal, since he could

not live without society, since he needs the instruction of others to achieve intellectual perfection, moral perfection is a necessary concomitant of man's highest perfection, a goal well worth striving for.[6]

The true perfection of man is the possession of the highest and most developed intellectual faculties. The possession of such knowledge as leads to metaphysical beliefs concerning God--this perfection belongs to the possessor alone, it grants him immortality,[7] it is his essential perfection. Man, the rational animal, becomes truly man when the acquisition of the intellect in action makes him truly rational. The true aim of man is the attainment of this perfection.

The law is the means by which man can acquire moral and intellectual perfection. The rules and regulations of the law determine his way of life and provide moral guidelines. The beliefs implicitly and explicitly expressed in the law provide man with traditional true beliefs and guideposts to the intellectual propositions which philosophy and study must demonstrate. In this way, law is an important and indispensable tool for the perfection of man.[8]

Maimonides divides mankind into the elect, who have achieved some measure of perfection, and the masses, who lack intellectual perfection altogether. Among the elect, three different methods of attaining perfection are discussed and three types of men categorized: 1) the philosophers, 2) the prophets, and 3) Moses--a type of man which has only once occurred. Each of these types (except the mosaic type which is a singleton) has gradations, both in the extent of their achieved per-

fection (that is the content of their acquired intellect) and the energy which their perfection bestows upon them (their ability to impart a part of their perfection to others). Among the masses, two different failings are discussed and two types of men classified: 1) the notables, those whose rational faculty is weak but whose imaginative faculty is strong, and 2) the rest of mankind, those whose rational and imaginative faculties are weak. The discussion which follows deals with the elect first and then with the masses.

The elect are people who have achieved some intellectual perfection. Through preparation, their rational faculty has been perfected in the preliminary sciences and their hylic intellect been brought to the point where it can accept some forms from the Active Intellect.[9] They possess an acquired intellect and therefore are the only sublunar entities with an imperishable soul.[10]

Philosophers have rational and imaginative faculties adequate for the preparation of the hylic intellect and its consequent actualization into the acquired intellect. Their perfection is one of comprehension, their goal to acquire as much knowledge as possible of the Universe and God. Their rational faculty is supreme. They set down self-evident truths and propositions and through the use of the syllogism seek to derive information which is not self-evident. The scope of their knowledge is severely restricted by the moderate nature of their imagination and intuition. Sense data is the eventual source of all their knowledge, and, hence, their knowledge is restricted to the sublunar world and

those phenomena of the spheres, like their motion, which are apparent from earth.[11.]

Prophets have superlative rational and imaginative faculties. Their imaginative faculty is so perfect, and their rational control over it so great, that it can help the rational faculty in its preparation of the hylic intellect.[12.] Thus, when asleep or in a trance,[13.] the time when the imagination is most active, they are able to intuit truths which overlap and exceed those derived from normal philosophical axioms. The axioms implicit in these full-fledged truths represent new premises from which our knowledge of the Universe and God may be extended.[14.] The truths themselves represent feats of discursive reasoning from both old and new axioms which are also very difficult or impossible to philosophers with their less developed imagination.[15.]

Moses is a unique phenomenon. His rational faculty was so superior that without the aid of the imaginative faculty he could achieve prophetic premise and gestalt intuitions.[16.] Moses, as a result, prophesied while awake, there being no need for the imagination to work at peak efficiency. The truths he uncovered were direct, they were not masked by the allegorical garb bestowed on regular prophecy by the imagination.[17.] His derivations were much like those of a philosopher. He put down his premises, applied them to the particulars of his image memory, and derived conclusions. The major difference between him and philosophers was the quality of his premises and the range and perfection of his image memory. Moses, because of his unique form, was

the only prophet qualified to proclaim the law. No one before him and no one after him can alter his work, because his work is perfect and any alteration can only decrease its perfection.[18]

The goal of prophecy includes that of philosophy but goes further. Besides acquiring scientific knowledge of the Universe, the prophet acquires and reveals laws which are to regulate society and promote morality. Maimonides derives the need for such laws from man's social nature,[19] and the impetus for their creation from the essential benevolence of perfection.[20]

The implication is that law making, that is, the establishment of moral and conventional law, is a task for only the most perfect of human beings. Philosophy may study the law, may explain each type of law in terms of human needs and goals,[21] but there is no precision in moral judgment itself except through intuitive prophetic grasp. Therefore, philosophy is incapable of establishing the law. Even normal prophecy is incapable of establishing or amending the law except under particular circumstances and for short periods of time.[22] Only the highest prophecy ever achieved can establish scripture so that once established it is permanent and imperishable.

Philosophers and prophets are people who have achieved some measure of intellectual perfection. The extent of the knowledge they acquired, and the degree of energy that knowledge has imparted them further differentiates among them.

Perfection of attainment is the degree to which the acquired

intellect has been developed. Given the substantive nature of the soul, the degree of preparation it can impart the hylic intellect varies. Thus, the quality of a philosopher's learning, or prophetic knowledge can vary. Some would-be philosophers never achieve metaphysical knowledge or do not achieve as much metaphysical knowledge as others.[23] If traditional knowledge were not provided through scriptures, only very few would achieve perfection through the slow process of unaided self-teaching. Even with the law and the aid of other philosophical writings, the process of attaining metaphysical knowledge is difficult and involves lengthy preparation.[24] Clearly, then, some of those who start after metaphysical knowledge never complete the task.

For prophets, too, there are various degrees of achievement. Maimonides mentions eleven degrees of prophecy.[25]

The first two degrees are merely steps toward prophecy. They are characterized by the action of the "Holy Spirit" which encourages perfect men to perform physical and intellectual acts of utility to their fellow men. That which encouraged Moses to slay the Egyptian task-masters and led him to interfere in favor of the seven daughters of Reuel (Jethro), that which gave David the courage to conquer the lion, the bear and Goliath, was the "Holy Spirit".[26] Similarly, that which encouraged David to compose psalms, Solomon to compose Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs was this spirit. The person obtaining this influence must be ready for it and must have performed the preliminary studies which prime the hylic intellect to receive it. If the influence results in

physical activity, the people influenced belong to the first degree of prophecy. If the influence results in intellectual activity, such as writing scientific, philosophical or poetic works, the people influenced belong to the second degree of prophecy. These degrees do not entitle their possessors to the title of "Prophet" since they do not insure their ability to predict the future correctly.[27.]

The next five degrees of prophecy belong to the class of prophetic dreams. In the third degree of prophecy, the prophet sees an allegory in a veridical dream.[28.] By the seventh degree of prophecy, the message is not allegorical but clearly expressed, and the author of the message appears to be God. Thus, Isaiah says: ". . . I saw the Lord seated on a throne. . . Then I heard the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for me?"[29.]

The last four degrees of prophecy belong to the class of prophetic visions. As in the case with prophetic dreams, the vision is first allegorical with the author not apparent in the vision; then, by the highest degree, both the vision and the author of that vision are clearly perceived. In neither type of prophecy is God perceived, although through the action of the imaginative faculty God sometimes may appear as a part of a veridical dream.

Perfection of energy is the degree to which the knowledge of either prophet or philosopher can be expressed in benevolent influence. Some individuals may be perfect to the point that they are able to actualize their intellects while others can do this and share the results of their

perfection with others as well. Thus, a philosopher may be perfect only to the extent of research and self-actualization while another philosopher may be prompted to teach others and publish the results of their research.[30] Thus, some prophets may be perfect only to the point of knowledge, while others, like Jeremiah, are forced to teach and exhort their fellow men even at the risk of their lives.[31] Maimonides quotes Jeremiah[32] and Amos[33] on this point:

> Jeremiah: "I am reproached and mocked all the time
> for uttering the work of the Lord.
> Whenever I said, 'I will call him to mind no more,
> nor speak in his name again',
> then his word was imprisoned in my body
> like a fire blazing in my heart,
> and I was weary with holding it under,
> and could endure no more."
>
> Amos: "The Lord has spoken
> who shall not prophesy?!"

These quotations prove that the prophets involved, indeed all the prophets mentioned by the Bible, had an exceeding perfection of energy which forced their benevolent intervention into human affairs even at considerable risk.

Perfection of energy is the way man participates in the Universal imitation of God. Just as God's overabundance of perfection created the Universe, so every intellectual part of the Universe engages in creative activities. The Intelligences, the spheres, and now man, are all shown using the superfluity of their own perfection to affect those less favorably endowed than themselves.[34] For man, this perfection is expressed in two ways. Philosophers teach and show others the way to philosophical

perfection. Prophets create laws (Moses) and exhort the masses to keep these laws and maintain a good human society. They, like philosophers, lead those who are capable to metaphysical knowledge.[35.]

So far the elect, those few members of humanity who can achieve some measure of perfection, have been discussed. The bulk of mankind, due to insufficient rational or imaginative faculties (or both), or due to insufficiencies in their temperament, or due to circumstances, are incapable of achieving any measure of perfection at all.[36.] Maimonides divides this group into two types: 1) the notables, and 2) the masses.

The notables are characterized by a weak rational faculty and a strong imagination. Statesmen, diviners, charmers, magicians, etc. all fall under this category.[37.] They are often deluded and confused individuals who, having had a true dream by mere chance, fancy themselves prophets and treat their own fancy as true knowledge. Often they are power-hungry and deliberately plagiarize true prophets to give their own rantings a better foundation. Not all such people are injurious to others. Kings who accept the legislation of prophets and enforce them on their subjects are a positive force on their society. Even those who arrogate to themselves the right to pick and choose which prophetic legislation they will enforce and the right to add legislation of their own are only injurious to the extent they deviate from prophetic law.[38.]

Among the mass of the unenlightened, three groups are deline-

39.
ated: 1) those who have no religion at all, 2) those who possess a false religion, and 3) those who possess a naive religion.

Those who have no religion at all, neither one based on speculation nor one based on tradition cannot be called human at all. They are irrational beings, below mankind but above the monkeys since they possess the form and shape of man and therefore have mental faculties superior to the apes.

Those who possess religion, belief and thought, but happen to hold false doctrines, either through being misled by others or through mistakes in speculation, are worse than those who have no religion at all. They have a tendency to spread errors and mislead the pious. It may be necessary to kill them in order to protect mankind.

Those who possess a naive religion are the mass of mankind. They observe the divine commandments and have true opinions but are ignorant in philosophy. They devote themselves exclusively to the study of practical law. They believe traditionally in the true principles of faith. They learn the practical worship of God. They are uninterested in or incapable of the philosophical treatment of the law, and they do not endeavor to establish their religion by proof. Though neither their rational nor imaginative faculties qualify them as an influence on mankind individually, as a group they are essential to the establishment of a society in which the elect can flourish.

Man is a fragile creature. Left alone in a hostile environment he is helpless and would soon perish. In an organized society he is the

pinnacle of perfection in the sublunar world. In such a society he has the leisure to indulge in the only task worthy of man, the achieving of intellectual perfection.[40] The masses are the "hewers of wood and carriers of water", the menials whose work is essential to keep the body in good repair and the mind free for more important tasks. Their perfection is one of industry and regulated belief. Incapable of knowledge, they can at least achieve true belief through the leadership of the law and the prophets.[41] Though debarred from the highest perfection, they can achieve perfection of morals which is also a perfection only possible to man.

The proper perfection of man has been technically defined as man's intellectual perfection. In terms of man's life, however, perfection is the effect of intellectual perception upon character, the re-alignment of man's goals and values in accordance with discovered fact. Religion is defined as this re-alignment and the true perfection of man is the religious life, a life which actualizes man's intellect while harmonizing his soul with the Universe through belief.

Maimonides distinguishes four gradiations of belief: 1) verbal belief, 2) understood belief, 3) assent belief, and 4) investigated belief. The first two types of belief are superficial repetitions of formulas which may or may not be understood by the person who verbalizes them. The third type involves both an understanding of the propositions and a wholehearted acceptance of their truth. The last type involves the careful research of the propositions until their truths have been proven and then a

whole-hearted acceptance of the discovered truth. Belief at the very least is assent to an understood proposition; at best, it is assent to a proposition which through an investigative process has been shown true and become part of the acquired intellect.[42.]

The implications of this position are very great. Religion becomes propositional theology when the naive claim: God exists--becomes the proposition "God exists", a proposition which is investigated through scientific and logical means. Arguments are put forth, the meaning of the terms involved explained, and after it is discovered that "God exists" has a correspondence with nature the proposition itself is believed true. Right thinking, not right asserting, becomes the basis for religious life.[43.] Religion ceases to be a matter of inheritance but becomes a personal task. If religion is not true for the religionist, it just is not his religion at all. Man's intellectual perfection becomes man's religion since only to the extent that he has acquired knowledge can be truly believe at all.

For the elect, those who in some measure acquire intellectual perfection, such a religion is possible. But such a religion is totally unavailable to the masses. Here, just as in the matter of man's perfection,[44.] however, some content can be discerned for the religion of the masses as well.

Metaphysics, the propositional belief about God and the Universe, is the greatest perfection possible to man. Yet, if the goal of man were to make everyone achieve it, not only would the enterprise be bound to fail, but it would actually befuddle most people and lead them astray

from what perfection they are capable of achieving through the rantings of their overstrained rational and imaginative faculties.[45] The aim, therefore, is to obtain what perfection one is able to, given the limitations of the faculties of the soul. If true belief is impossible for the majority of mankind, true opinion is not. The law was created and constructed in such a way as to serve the young, the women, and the common people. Since all of them were incapable of comprehension through research, tradition was constructed to provide them with all the truths the elect must establish for themselves. Hints were included to guide the elect on their own road, but these hints were hidden so as not to confuse the ignorant.[46]

True belief, therefore, is obtainable only by the elect. Scriptures are written on two levels so that the uneducated may comprehend it to the measure of their faculties and the feebleness of their apprehension, while the educated may unlock its secrets and push forward to real truth.[47] The uneducated is, therefore, granted assent belief in accordance with his limitations, while the elect can push further to investigated belief. In this way the perfection of energy possessed by Moses and the prophets is given an important and benevolent end, namely, allowing those not as perfect as they to attain as much perfection as their nature allows.

Obtaining perfection is not merely a theoretical goal of man without practical effects upon his life. Perfection is the means by which man places himself under divine protection, although providence for

Maimonides is not the interference of the divine in the sublunar world, but the aligning of the sublunar world to the divine design. Divine providence is connected to divine intellectual influence. Those benefited by the latter are under the influence of the former.[48] (Other beings, whether human or animal, come under the laws of nature as described by Aristotle and are, therefore, subject to all the accidents of nature.[49]) It is the intensity of divine intellectual influence that inspired the prophets, guided the good of their actions, and perfected the wisdom of the pious. The ignorant and disobedient to the law do not come under divine influence and are subject to the normal perils of nature.[50]

Maimonides' position on providence seems very modern. Through knowledge man can learn the design of the Universe and manipulate it to his own advantage. If you know meteorology and can predict a storm, you don't embark on a ship and subject yourself to the perils of a storm at sea. The more you know about the environment, the more you can circumvent the perils implicit in it.

Providence is God's design of the Universe.[51] God knows how he constructed it and, therefore, is aware of its workings even if He is not observing it. Just as a good artisan who has built a clock does not gain new knowledge of now clocks work by observing his handiwork and, therefore, does not care to look at his work as an observer, so God need not possess the knowledge of observation to know precisely how the Universe works. Man, who can only observe his design in action, acquires knowledge by observation. The more we learn from that observation,

the better we are at dealing with the Universe. the problem with most theories of providence is that they insist in God's omniscience being akin to observational knowledge so that the difference of past and future apply to God's knowledge the way it applies to ours. God's design extends beyond the physical Universe to include human interaction. A well regulated society, that is, a society aligned to God's design, will be its own reward. Those who think they can perform evil and yet elude God's
52.
punishment are deluding themselves.

Man as a living organism is subject to the laws of nature. He must die and can suffer as a result of natural calamities. But the more he knows the more he can ameliorate the effects of nature and, in this sence, by aligning his life to God's design, he can lead as good and fruitful a life as circumstances and his own means allow. The final benefit to those who can actualize their intellect is that through the process of study they obtain an acquired intellect that is imperishable. In this way they attain immortality and in the same process lead a good life.

The masses, by aligning their opinions to the beliefs of the elect, can share in this good life. Just as modern man does not need to know meteorology to listen to a forecast and wear a raincoat when the weatherman predicts rain, just so he can listen to the elect, the political scientist, the psychologist, the philosopher, and the prophet and lead a balanced and religious life. The elect are the experts in the Maimonidean system. The masses are the consumers who enjoy the benefits of the elect's work.

Notes to Chapter III

[1]Tibbon, III, 13.

[2]Tibbon, III, 13; I, 70.

[3]Tibbon, III, 14.

[4]Tibbon, III, 54.

[5]See end of Chapter II, above.

[6]Tibbon, III, 54; II, 10; I, 72.
One of the reasons given by Maimonides to explain man's possession of an intellect is his need for a society wherein his basic needs are satisfied. Only through the intellect can such a society be organized. Only in such a society can the intellect be actualized.

[7]The acquired intellect, being a subject of the Active Intellect, shares the latter's immortality. Man acquires access to portions of the Active Intellect; it is his achievement that is permanent.

[8]Tibbon, III, 54.

[9]See Chapter II for a description of Intellection.

[10]See note 7 above.

[11]Tibbon, II, Introduction, 15, 24.
Also Chapter I, pp. 6-10, for Maimonides' critique of Aristotelian argument for the eternity of the Universe on the grounds that he goes beyond our knowledge of the sublunar world.

[12]Maimonides is not too clear as to how the imagination can help the rational faculty to prepare the hylic intellect. He seems much more interested in the imagination as a parable builder. See Alvin Jay Reiner, "Maimonides' Concept of Mosaic Prophecy", HUC Annual 1969-70 (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1970).

[13]See Chapter II.

[14]See Reiner, "Maimonides' Concept", for a description of premise and gestalt intuition.

[15]See note 14 above.

[16]Tibbon, II, 39.

[17]Hyamson, Chap. VII, p. 6.

[18]Tibbon, II, 39.

[19]Tibbon, I, 72; II, 40; III, 27.

[20]Friedlander, II, 39, p. 187.

[21]Tibbon, III, 26 - 49 - gives detailed explanation of the fourteen types of law.

[22]Hyamson, Chap. VII, p. 14.

[23]Tibbon, I, 34.

[24]Tibbon, I, 31 and 35.

[25]Tibbon, II, 45.

[26]This "Holy Spirit" is probably identical with the Active Intellect.

[27]See Chapter IV on how prediction is employed as proof of prophecy by Maimonides.

[28]This is the first degree of prophecy in which the person who experiences it may properly be called a prophet.

[29]Isaiah 6: 1-8, The New English Bible (Oxford: University Press, 1970).

[30]Tibbon, II, 37. Maimonides points out that a prophet does not write a book for his own sake. He already knows its contents. He writes out of benevolence, for the sake of others.

[31]Tibbon, II, 37.

[32]Jeremiah 20:8-9, The New English Bible.

[33]Amor 3:8, The New English Bible.

[34]See above, Chapter I, pp. 18-20.

[35]Tibbon, II, 32. Maimonides mentions that the "sons of prophets" were constantly engaged in study so that they could eventually become prophets themselves.

[36]See above note 5 this chapter.

[37]Tibbon, II, 37. The weakness of their rational faculty may be due to lack of training.

[38]Tibbon, II, 40.

[39]Tibbon, I, Introduction.

[40]Tibbon, I, 72, 34; II, 51. See also end of Chapter II.

[41]Tibbon, I, 34.

[42]Tibbon, I, 50.

[43]Friedlander, III, 51, pp. 284-5.

[44]See above pp. 2-5.

[45]Tibbon, I, 33.

[46]Tibbon, I, Introduction. See the example of the golden apple covered with silver filigree.

[47]Tibbon, I, Introduction.

[48]Tibbon, III, 17.

[49]Tibbon, III, 17.

[50]Tibbon, III, 18.

[51]Tibbon, III, 21.

[52]Tibbon, III, 19. See the discussion on Psalm 82.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAW AND ITS AUTHORITY

Maimonides is very clear on the authorship of the Law. Moses, and Moses alone, is its creator. The prophets who preceded him used their personal authority to organize and control society but did not claim divine authority for their dictums. Abraham, who received a large measure of prophetic inspiration, used it to train his fellow man and lead him through instruction to the truths he perceived. The methods he used were both philosophical argument and kindness. Through those methods he taught that there was only one God who created the entire Universe and who is the only entity that deserves worship. All the prophets and sages before Moses (Eber, Methuselah, etc.) taught as preachers and pedagogues; none of them claimed to have been sent by God to deliver a message or a set of laws.[1] The prophets who followed him warned and exhorted the people to keep Mosaic law. They threatened evil to those that neglected it and promised blessings to those who followed it. None of them proclaimed a new law, or in any way abridged or expanded the laws of the Pentateuch.[2]

The Law is perfect. Any other compendium of rules when compared to the Law will be found to be imperfect. Like any perfect production, the Law is equibalanced. Any changes in it would cause it to contain something too much or too little, thus rendering it imperfect. The Law is also complete, nothing has been reserved for future revelation or legislation.[3] Maimonides, in this way, does away with the Christian

and Moslem contentions that a new Law supplanted the old and carries the same authority as the old.

Mosaic prophecy is the source of the Law. Unlike any other prophecy, Mosaic prophecy is purely rational and does not depend upon the imaginative faculty. If the Law were Mosaic prophecy itself, it would have to be a totally rational, didactic document. The Law is clearly not such a document. Its parables, figures, and anthropomorphisms relegate it to the ranks of imaginative literature. A good portion of the Moreh deals with these imaginative parts and shows how to extract the basic rational apprehension of reality hidden behind the phantasy.[4.]

Although not Mosaic prophesy, the Law is dependent on that prophecy for its perfection. Moses, through his prophetic gift, apprehended the essence of divine governance over nature. He applied the esoteric principles so discovered to the particulars of his imagination to construct a work useful to the entire Israelite nation. Such work could not have been constructed by any other prophet since the others' apprehension of reality and their grasp of Providence would have been inferior to that of Moses. For the same reason, no prophet would risk amending the Law for fear that he would be affecting that work negatively.[5.]

There are two reasons for the imaginative nature of the Law: 1) the need to satisfy a total community, and 2) the nature of particular law.

First. Not all men have great intellectual gifts. The majority of mankind cannot be brought to metaphysical knowledge. Only true

opinion, rather than true belief, is possible to women, children, and the ignorant. Even true opinions are difficult to implant.

People are very much inclined to believe in fables, regardless of their truth content. They would much rather listen to an interesting account which contains no true information than engage in logical deduction which, though difficult, leads to truth.[6] To teach them true opinion, Moses was forced to create imaginative tales and use language, which would entice the masses spending time acquiring his message. The use of allegories, figures, and anthropomorphisms are pedagogical devices by which the simple-minded are induced to acquire as much true opinion as their limitations allow.[7]

For the elect such language represents a barrier between them and the truth of Scriptures. One of the major purposes of the Moreh is to explain these stories, figures and terminology so that what is useful to the masses be useful as well for the elect rather than a stumbling block which may cause them to reject their faith.

The acquisition of knowledge, even by the elect, is a temporary and fragile achievement:[8]

> "We are like those, who, though beholding frequent flashes of lightning, still find themselves in the thickest darkness of night. On some the lightning flashes in rapid succession, and they seem to be in perpetual light, and their night is as clear as the day. . .[Some perceive the prophetic flash at long intervals. . .] By others only once during the whole night is a flash of lightning perceived. . .There are some to whom the flash of lightning appears though in varying intensity; others are in the condition of men, whose darkness is illuminated not by lightning, but by some kind of crystal or similar stone . . . and to them even this small amount of light is not continuous,. . ." and there are some who who receive no light at all.

For those who never receive the light at all, true opinion constitutes the only possible acquisition of knowledge, but even those who perceive some kind of light find themselves mostly in darkness. True opinion, as found in the Scriptures, serves to remind them of their flashes of intellection and to guide them to the apprehension of new and more complex knowledge than they have achieved before. This true opinion is easily remembered once the code of the Law is sufficiently understood.

If the Law were dry and didactic, it would require an act of intellection to be understood: ". . . at one time the explanation will appear lucid, at another time obscure; this property of the subject [Natural Science and Metaphysics] appears the same both to the advanced scholar and the beginner."[9] Through parables and figures, however, the results of research are available to the elect even when they are not functioning at peak efficiency.

Second. The laws, statutes, and commandments are the result of applying general principles to particular situations. To simply state principles and expect individuals to apply them correctly and uniformly is to grossly underestimate the ability of mankind.

Man cannot take radical change. Ingrained notions and habit patterns are impossible to break all at once. A thoroughgoing and far reaching program must be established. Only such a program, starting at the level of attainment and defect of the general population and leading gradually towards perfection has any hopes of success.

As an example, Maimonides points to the Scriptural system of sacrifice. Moses was faced with a nation which routinely and at every possible location worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars. He could not eradicate sacrifice altogether. Instead, he restricted the sacrificial cult to a select group, the priests, to a particular place, the sanctuary, and to a particular divine being, God. In this fashion he transformed a pernicious behavior pattern which led to idolatry into a beneficial program which led to the belief in the existence of a single deity.[10.]

To have done otherwise, to have attempted to eradicate the sacrificial cult altogether, would have been both futile and ill-advised. If a contemporary prophet were to declare that prayer, fasting, and reliance on God are idolatrous and that the only true worship of God is incorrect thought rather than action, he would not be believed and whatever faith people had would be weakened by his assertion. The same would have happened to Moses, if he had tried to proscribe all sacrifices.[11.]

Some people argue that God could have made His primary objective a direct command and then provided man with the capacity to obey it. This, however, would be a miracle that God has never willed nor will ever will. If He did interrupt the normal workings of nature in this manner, He would vitiate the mission of the prophets and the Law.[12.]

Therefore, in order that all mankind, both the elect and the masses, should profit from the Law, and in order that the particulars of the Law be correctly applied, the Pentateuch had to be an imaginative work.

Maimonides rejects the supernatural character of the Sinaitic revelation. Moses and the Israelites did not share a common experience. Moses perceived the essence of divine providence. The Israelites perceived a loud noise coming from the sky which Moses interpreted as being the first two commandments. It was only with respect to these two commandments that the Sinaitic experience could be termed the same for Moses and the Israelites. The reason for that is not that they both heard the same moise, but that the two commandments, dealing with the existence of God and His Unity, are statements which can be established through the syllogism. "Whatever can be established by proof is known by the prophet in the same way as by any other person."[13] Abrabanel aptly points out that if this was the case at Sinai, the Israelites would not have witnessed a miracle at all and would not have been particularly impressed by the phenomena.[14] Maimonides would probably agree with him.

Maimonides does not seem to believe that any miracle occurred at Sinai. He does not attack the description of the miracles probably because they serve a very useful exoteric aim. That aim is to supply apparently public, empirical and indirect evidence for the authenticity of Moses and the Law. This evidence is much like the evidence provided in a trial by witnesses. It is a deposition by six hundred thousand eyewitnesses that the Law is divine in origin and Moses the appointed author of that Law. Such evidence is convincing on a common sense level and leads to strong belief in the veracity of the Law. Thus, it strengthens the authority of the Law over Israel and facilitates its goal of establishing a

just society, enforcing morality, and promoting the intellectual perfection of man. If not precisely true, the belief in the miraculous origin of the Pentateuch is clearly a most useful doctrine.

From a philosophical viewpoint, however, external evidence is not sufficient. A work, to be divine, must be internally perfect. Only such internal evidence can conclusively show the work to be authoritative. The evidence for miracles is indirect, the evidence of the Law itself direct.

Maimonides is quite careful to deny the existence of miracles wherever possible. Miracles are a suspension of natural law and such a suspension indicates imperfection in planning on the part of the Creator. Even when he admits that extraordinary events seem to have taken place, he argues that they they take place through natural laws in accordance with the design God imparted to them at the time of creation.[15.]

The parallels between the Law and nature are crucial to the establishment of the Law's authority. God created the Universe in accordance with design.[16.] If the Law is parallel to nature both in goal and method, then it can claim to be a part of God's design. It is one of Maimonides' principal theses that:[17.]

> ". . . the Law follows Nature, and in some respects brings it to perfection; for Nature is not capable of designing and thinking, whilst the Law is the result of the Wisdom and guidance of God, who is the author of the intellect of all rational beings."

Nature itself is the result of design.[18.] It is designed to perpetuate the species of the sublunar world and to allow for the perpetuation of the process of generation and destruction. Its design, however is too

broad and unspecific to regulate man's activities. Being the product of the Active Intellect, it is rigid and conforms to the abstract needs of species rather than the specific needs of the species' members. Thus, the same force which leads to the even distribution of heat throughout the world, a distribution essential to life, leads to the creation of hurricanes which are not at all conducive to the well-being of particular living things.[19]

Man has a unique advantage and liability. The only creature capable of intellectual activity, he is also the only being who could not survive without that activity. Man alone, without a society, is a prey to the elements and to other animals. Only through society can man survive, and only through the creation of laws can society come about. The Law, therefore, is natural in two ways. First, it aids Nature in attaining its goal of preserving all species; second, it is the result of a natural activity of man, namely, intellection.[20]

The ideal law which best serves to order society is not implicit in nature, but it is available from the same source as nature. The essential parallelism of the Maimonidean universe is once more apparent from this situation. The First Intelligence is the cause of existence of the Second Intelligence and provides it with the ability to provide for the Third Intelligence and the Second Sphere.[21] The Active Intellect, in creating the sublunary world, creates mankind. In being the source of abstract ideas for the elect it is the means by which they can benefit those not as perfect as themselves. By "bringing nature to perfection", Maimonides

means brining the process of benevolence, the way each intellectual being in the Universe affects those not as perfect as himself, to an end.[22.]

In a certain way the Law is even superior to nature:[23.]

> "God knew that the judgments of the law will always require an extension in some cases and curtailment in others according to the variety of places, events and circumstances."

Therefore, the Synhedrion and the prophets were given the right to establish by-laws to protect the Law (i.e., make a fence around the Torah) and keep it from too frequent infraction. They were also allowed to abrogate some portions of the Law for a time in order to accommodate it to special situations. "By this method the Law will remain perpetually the same, and will yet admit at all times and under all circumstances such temporary modifications as are indispensable."[24.] The Law is less rigid than nature. Through accommodation it can avoid the type of excess so common in natural phenomena. Maimonides does not give examples of such modifications. The Prosbul and the interdiction of multiple marriages by Rabbi Gershom come immediately to mind.

The goals of nature are twofold: 1) To preserve the sequence of generation and destruction, and 2) To produce in that sequence the most perfect of individuals possible to any given species.[25.] In parallel, therefore, the aims of the Law must be twofold: 1) The preservation of the species of man, and 2) The production of the most perfect human beings possible. Maimonides maintains this parallelism and claims that: "The general object of the Law is twofold: the well being of the soul, and the well being of the body."[26.]

The well being of the soul is the well being of those organs by which man, through training, can achieve the perfection of mind that is most proper to his species. The well being of the body assures the uninterrupted production of human beings and the consequent preservation of the process of generation and destruction. The attainment of these two goals is, therefore, common to both the Law and nature, although the subjects over which the Law and nature rule are different.

The laws of nature are immutable. They are not capricious rules instituted to fit particular circumstances. One would, therefore, expect that the Law too would be immutable rather than dependent on circumstance.[27] This too is specifically claimed by Maimonides:

> "It is also important to note that the Law does not take into account exceptional circumstances; it is not based on conditions which rarely occur. Whatever the Law teaches, whether it be of an intellectual, a moral, or a practical character, is founded on that which is the rule and not on that which is the exception. For the Law is a divine institution, and [in order to understand its operation] we must consider how in nature the various forces produce benefits which are general, but in some solitary cases they cause also injury."

Maimonides spends twenty-five chapters deriving the reasons for the commandments in the Pentateuch.[28] In them he not only finds the two parallels already mentioned, tut some parallels in detail that are also interesting.

In terms of structure, each commandment has a cause, in so far as its general character is concerned, and serves a certain object. Its details, however, need not have an ulterior motive. Any activity

must have specific acts. The activity itself serves a purpose and has a cause, but the specific acts may be arbitrary. Thus, it makes sense to ask why we sacrifice, but to ask why we sacrifice a lamb instead of a ram is nonsense. If we did sacrifice a ram instead of a lamb we could ask the same question supplanting lamb by ram and vice versa. "Divine Wisdom demanded . . . that there should be parts [of the Universe] which have no certain objects; and as regards to the Law, it appears impossible that it should not include matter of this kind."[29.]

Nature caters to the necessities of its charges. Mammals, when young, are in need of soft food. Therefore, as adults, females develop breasts and milk with which to feed their young. The brain of man is too soft to control the joints. Therefore, nerve tissue hardens as it descends the spinal column, combines with muscle when it exits the spinal column, and becomes sinew strong enough to move limbs by the time it attaches itself to bone. Similarly, many of our precepts are organized in terms of the needs of man.[30.]

Man is a naturally social being who seeks to form communities. Man is the most complex of sublunary beings and the well being of the communities he forms demands able leadership to regulate man's actions and uniform legislation to counterbalance his natural variety. "It being the will of God that our race be permanently established, He, in His Wisdom, gave it such properties that men can acquire the capacity of ruling over others. Some persons are, therefore, inspired with theories of legislation, such as prophets and lawgivers; others possess the power

of enforcing the dictates of the former, and of compelling people to obey them and to act accordingly."[31.]

The Law is not merely natural in method and goal, it is natural in terms of production. It is the way divine providence is extended to man.[32.] "The Law, though not a product of Nature, is nevertheless not entirely foreign to Nature."[33.]

The congruence of the Law and Nature is thorough. The source of the Law is implicit in the Form of man and the impetus for its creation is a part of the perfection of both man and the Universe. Moses, the most perfect example of man possible, created a divine and natural Law whose sanction is the very intent of the Deity as expressed in the Universe's design. The Law possesses a superior claim to authority over all mankind.

The authority of the Law to direct the workings of society and determine the meaning and content of morality is determined by an internal analysis of its congruence with nature. Nature has the authority of power, since none can transgress its workings, and the moral authority of implementing God's design for the Universe. The Law, being patterned after nature, shares its moral authority by being the means through which man achieves his portion of the divine design. The authority of the prophets is determined by the fitness of their lives, the relation of their message to the Law, and their ability to offer proof of prophecy.

A prophet, in Maimonidean thought, must be an ascetic individual who through arduous study has mastered the philosophical arts.

His entire life must show a unitary concentration on the attainment of knowledge. His physical nature must be subdued as far as is possible and he must shun the pleasures of the sense of touch, especially "the pollution of sexual intercourse".[34] If in all other respects he indicates that he is a prophet, but uses his position to gratify carnal appetites, he is no prophet but an impostor who has plagiarized others for his own aggradizement. A meek, moral, and studious life is a necessary prerequisite for any prophet.

This rule serves a dual purpose. For the masses it represents a rule of thumb through which they can avoid exploitation. If personal gratification is ruled out for prophets, there is little incentive for false claims of prophecy. Furthermore, though the masses cannot judge the philosophical attainments of their fellows, they are perfectly capable of passing moral judgment on the life style of their fellows. Piety insures the benefolence of prophets and their message. For the elect, a pious life of study and the mastery of philosophical knowledge insures the fitness of the individual to receive the prophetic gift. Without that fitness prophecy, which is a natural phenomena, is impossible.[35]

The message of the prophet must be in agreement with the Law. The Law is perfect, any addition or substraction from it renders it imperfect. If the message of a prophet is intended to alter the Law permanently, that message cannot be prophetic and the claim to prophecy must be rejected. Moses produced the entire Law, nothing is left out which may be added in the future, and nothing is superfluous so that it

may be deleted. Conformity with the Law is one of the tests of prophecy which both the masses and the elect can carry out.

If someone claims to be a prophet and possesses both the philosophical knowledge and the moral qualities required for prophecy he has the presumption of truth. It would still be a difficult matter to prove beyond reasonable doubt that he was a prophet and not simply a philosopher whose imagination has become overactive. If his pronouncements do not go against the Law or against known fact, they would be acceptable, but need not be prophetic.[36.]

The two ways men have proven themselves to be prophets are: 1) through a miracle, and 2) through correct prediction.

In accordance with his hostility to miracles, Maimonides does not demand wonders as a proof of prophetic mission.[37.]

The only proof a prophet need give is correct prediction, and even this is restricted to correct prediction of favorable events. A prophet achieves knowledge of principles which are available to the common man. His perfect imagination provides him with a very full and accurate knowledge of the current state of affairs. By combining his principles and facts the prophet can make predictions about the future with a degree of certainty and accuracy not possible to other men. If his predictions come true then he is accepted as a prophet, provided he also fulfills the necessary conditions prescribed above. This is no more miraculous than the ability of the Gallup Poll to predict who the next president of the United States will be on the day before election, or the ability of an

astronomer to predict the location and time of a solar eclipse. The man difference between prophecy and science is that prophecy can intuit principles beyond science and then apply them scientifically to achieve results beyond normal human knowledge.[38] Repeated correct prognostication provides public empirical evidence of the prophetic character of the person who claims to be a prophet.[39]

The reason why this accuracy of prediction only refers to favorable events is the effect of an unfavorable prediction on the prophet's audience. If the prophet predicts disaster, people may repent and change their behavior to avoid that disaster. The success of his mission should not adversely affect his role. Favorable predictions, on the other hand, are not likely to cause people to change their behavior so as to avoid them. Therefore, ". . . if the prophet, in the name of God, assures good fortune, declaring that a definite event would come to pass, and the benefit promised has not been realized, he is unquestionably a false prophet; for no blessing decreed by the Almighty, even if promised conditionally, is ever revoked."[40]

The object of the Law provides a hint as to whether the Law itself is prophetic or subprophetic. If a particular law seeks to establish good order in the state, to free it from all mischief and wrong, but does not deal with philosophical problems, or contains no teaching for the benefit of man's logical faculties, or is not concerned with the existence of sound or unsound opinions, then the law is purely political and not prophetic. If a man claims to be a prophet but produces laws of this

type only, then he is probably not a prophet but belongs to the class of notables.[41] If, on the other hand, the laws he promulgates do all that was mentioned but also improve the state of faith, create correct notions of God and the Universe and lead by instruction to an accurate knowledge of the World, then the law can be considered prophetic if its author has merited the perfection of prophecy and has offered proof of having received it.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1]Tibbon, II, 39.

[2]Tibbon, II, 39.

[3]Tibbon, II, 39.

[4]Most of the first fifty chapters of Part I of the Moreh and scattered chapters elsewhere.

[5]Tibbon, II, 39.

[6]Tibbon, I, 33.

[7]Tibbon, I, 33. See Chapter II above for the difficulties encountered by those seeking to achieve knowledge.

[8]Friedlander, I, Introduction, pp. 8-9.

[9]Friedlander, I, Introduction, p. 10.

[10]Tibbon, III, 32.

[11]Tibbon, III, 32.

[12]Tibbon, III, 32.

[13]Friedlander, II, 33, p. 167.

[14]Tibbon, II, 33.

[15]Friedlander, II, 33, p. 168.

[16]See Chapter I, pp. 6-11.

[17]Friedlander, III, 43, p. 211.

[18]See note 15 above.

[19]Friedlander, I, 72, p. 301.

[20]Tibbon, II, 33-40.

[21]See the latter part of Chapter I.

[22]See note 21 above.

[23]Friedlander, III, 41, p. 200.

[24]Friedlander, III, 41, p. 201.

[25]Tibbon, III, 13.

[26]Friedlander, III, 27, p.129.

[27]Friedlander, III, 34, p. 161.

[28]Tibbon, III, 25-49.

[29]Friedlander, III, 26, p. 127-128.

[30]Tibbon, III, 32.

[31]Friedlander, II, 40, p. 190.

[32]See Chapter III, pp. 56-59.

[33]Friedlander, II, 40, pp. 189-190.

[34]Tibbon, II, 40.

[35]See Chapter III, pp.49-53.

[36]Hyamson, Chap. VII, ¶7.

[37]Hyamson, Chap. X, ¶1.

[38]See Chapter III.

[39]Hyamson, Chap. X, ¶2.

[40]Hyamson, Chap. X, ¶4.

[41]Tibbon, II, 40. See also Chapter III, pp. 53-54.

CONCLUSION

Maimonides saw salvation in the actualization of the Intellect. Through that actualization man not only achieves union with the basic structure of reality but achieves the only type of immortality possible to man. This is an immortality of process and influence. Man can read about the exploits of great men, but this is not the same as living through their experiences. It is different with abstract knowledge. Not only is the knowledge itself unchangeable, but the experience of that knowledge, the basic "aha!" experience which comes after such tortuous preparation, is the same for all men. In the eternal widening of our horizons of knowledge, in the research preceding the apprehension of old and new ideas, and in the final attainment of those ideas, we share intimately in the experience of our predecessors and successors. In this way we give our predecessors a kind of immortality and achieve that immortality ourselves. This search for knowledge and this acquisition of ideas is the true and proper role of man, the basic goal of his existence.

Mankind is divided into two species. Those who can achieve intellectual union with ideas represent the elect, the true man who in thought attains immortality. Those who cannot achieve this perfection represent the lower species, the masses, whose purpose is merely to support the existence and activities of the elect by participating in society. The only perfection of the masses is a social perfection, the attainment and exercise of moral righteousness and true opinion.

The Law is the basic constitution of society. It is a model of divine providence as apprehended by Moses and applied to the Israelite society of his time. It is a program by which Jews could achieve maximum perfection. The Law's authority rests on the perfection of its author and its intrinsic oneness with divine design. The impetus that led to its creation is the benevolence of perfection which pervades the Universe.

Maimonides views the Universe as a closed system containing two intrinsic movements, benevolence and the search for perfection. Benevolence is the gracious sharing of perfection through which God creates both matter and form. Benevolence is the reason which causes the Active Intellect to give form to the sublunar world and causes the spheres to influence it through their motions. Benevolence is the reason the elect strive to create a perfect society rather than manipulate their neighbors to attain maximum personal gain. The striving for perfection is the incessant search of the masses for true opinion and of the elect for true belief. This striving is the reason the spheres move in circular orbits to emulate the perfection of their associated Intelligence. It is the reason each Intelligence shares in the knowledge of the one that gave it birth. God is at one end of this system, man at the other. Man closes the system of the Universe by combining both the upward search for perfection and the downward granting of benevolence in one species with no overflow.

Man is a microcosm. In the relations between the elect and the

masses, the upward and downward movements of the Universe are paralleled. In Mosaic Law divine providence is paralleled. Through the effort of man the entire Universe is brought to a state of static perfection.

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