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THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART IN
ACADIC AND MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHIC LITERATURE

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PREFACE

The conflict between free will and determinism is irreconcilable. Both freedom and determinism are mutually exclusive ideas. If freedom is a reality, then man's actions are not controlled by an external force. Similarly, if man's behavior is determined by his God, his environment, or his genetic composition, then freedom cannot exist. In human experience evidence is found for both positions. Thus, the problem remains unresolved.

This issue has been pondered in different forms throughout human history. Certainly for the rabbis, the issue was extremely important. The Jewish tradition sought to embrace both sides of the dilemma. The rabbis rooted the essential concepts of Judaism, the commandments, sin, and reward and punishment, upon the capacity of man to choose between righteousness and evil. On the other hand, salvation depended upon God's power to act in human history. Therefore, the rabbis endorsed the paradox that man's freedom does not mitigate God's power.

This tension between God's greatness and man's autonomy serves as a unifying theme of this thesis. The rabbinic and philosophical discussions of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart narrow the area of study. Focusing this inquiry upon God's relationship to Pharaoh emphasizes the divine-human tension present in the free will-determinism controversy. If Pharaoh's behavior was controlled by God, he could not have acted autonomously, and his punishment, the plagues, could not be justified. This subject is examined from several perspectives: the Midrash, the Commentaries, and the philosophical writings of Saadia Gaon, Judah Halevi, Moses Maimonides, Hasdai Crescas, and Gersonides.

I would like to thank Rabbi Leonard Kravitz for his support and his assistance. Rabbi Kravitz served my family's congregation during my childhood and adolescence. During those formative years and during my residence at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, he deeply influenced my life. He has taught me that the maturing of Jewish commitment requires patient nurturing and that true personal growth cannot develop at the speed of Jonah's gourd. I thank him for the encouragement and the support which has enabled me to love the tradition of our people.

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Chapter I

THE MIDRASH

The Midrash is not noted for its philosophical consistency. Indeed, agadic thought is always fluid and frequently contradictory. This flexibility is evident in the treatment of the Midrash on the subjects of free will and the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Many agadic statements emphasize the authority and power of God, while others stress man's free will. Though these assertions may be logically contradictory, the rabbis argued that both positions were true. These different thematic concerns provided the categories into which this chapter is divided. The first section includes an evaluation of rabbinic statements which emphasizes God's involvement in human affairs. The second section includes passages which are essentially descriptive, and in which there is little philosophical content. The final section includes midrashim which stress man's power to control his actions.

The rabbis generally did not apologize for God's power. God is the lord of the universe. He acts directly in human history. This approach is evident in a small passage from the Yalkut Shemoni which emphasizes divine responsibility for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

'When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go.' (Exodus 13:15)
Perhaps it is possible to interpret that Pharaoh did it by himself.
However, Scripture teaches, 'God hardened Pharaoh's heart.' (Exodus 14:8) ¹

God's control of human activity is stressed in another midrash. According to the rabbis, Pharaoh and the Egyptians were frequently ambivalent about pursuing Israel. When Pharaoh's will weakened, and he decided

to give Israel her freedom, the Egyptians became more militant. Similarly, when the Egyptians became lenient, Pharaoh became belligerent. When both agreed that Israel should be released, God intervened and hardened their hearts. Obviously, God wanted Pharaoh and the Egyptians to refuse to grant Israel her freedom.

'When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt.' (Exodus 13:15) This verse teaches that when the Egyptians weakened themselves, Pharaoh hardened himself. We learn this also from the verse, 'I hardened the heart of Pharaoh.' (Exodus 7:2) Also, when Pharaoh softened himself, the Egyptians hardened themselves. We learn this from the verse, 'I have hardened the heart of Egypt.' (Exodus 14:17) When both were weakened, God hardened their hearts. We learn this from the verse, 'I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants.' (Exodus 10:1) 2

'I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants.' (Exodus 10:1) From this you learn that when Pharaoh was weak, the Egyptians hardened themselves, and when the Egyptians were weak, Pharaoh hardened himself. When both were weak, God hardened their hearts. 3

There are two parallel versions of this midrash. One is quoted from the Mechiltah; the second is found in Midrash Ha'gadol Shemot. The passage from the Mechiltah includes Biblical proof-texts with each phrase of the agadic argument. The other passage does not. The agadic phrases in each version are the same (except for the references to God's name). Also, in both midrashim the reflexive tense is applied. However, the failure to inject proof-texts in the passages found in Midrash Ha'gadol Shemot gives this midrash a different emphasis. The proof-texts stress that God is the source of Pharaoh's refusal to release Israel. Without the Biblical references, the hardening appears to be a reflexive action. Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their own hearts. The difference in interpretation is only subtle, because both versions of the midrash stress that God intervened when Pharaoh and the Egyptians were willing

to grant Israel her freedom. In the two instances, God wanted them to act in a particular manner. When they were not predisposed to follow His will, He was prepared to direct their behavior.

The indecisiveness of Pharaoh is supplemented by another midrash which assigns reasons for God's action. The first section of this midrash is concerned with Pharaoh's ambivalence toward pursuing Israel.

'God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued.' (Exodus 14:8) His heart was divided - pursue or not pursue. ⁴

It is not directly stated that God forced Pharaoh's mind in a particular direction. However, immediately following this section of the midrash is a rabbinic discussion of the Egyptian pursuit which leaves no doubt as to God's responsibility for Pharaoh's action. In this part of the midrash the hardening of Pharaoh's heart becomes a model for discussing the punishment which befalls any nation which persecutes Israel. The humiliation of the Egyptians and their leader is a lesson for other nations. Pursuing Israel results in similar disasters. In addition, the midrash also presents a comparison of the two nations. Egypt is portrayed as an evil and despicable country, deserving punishment; whereas Israel is described as a praiseworthy and righteous nation, meriting victory.

'He pursued after the children of Israel.' (Exodus 14:8)
In order that another nation would not pursue after her, Scripture teaches that 'the children of Israel went out with a high hand.' (Exodus 14:8) Scripture teaches that the Egyptians, who were pursuing Israel, were despised, cursed, and scornful, whereas Israel was glorified, exalted, praiseworthy, lauded, honored, and offering of songs, great praises, exultations, honor and thanks to Him who fought the war, as it is said, 'Let the high praise of God be in their mouths and a two-edged sword in their hand.' (Psalms 149:6) 'Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, Thy glory be above all the earth.' (Psalms 57:6) 'O Lord, Thou art My God, I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name, for Thou hast done wonderful things, even councils of old in faithfulness and truth.' (Isaiah 25:1) ⁵

A similar midrash stresses that Pharaoh's heart is hardened not just to humiliate Egypt, but ultimately to glorify Israel and to exalt God's name. The demise of Pharaoh becomes a symbol of the fate of all nations which enslaved Israel. Therefore, the defeat of the wicked nations and the triumph of Israel enhances the recognition of Israel and her God.

'I will work a sign among them.' (Isaiah 66:19) This verse teaches that when the Holy One, blessed-be-He, punishes the nations of the world, His name is exalted in the world, as it said, 'He broke the fiery shafts of the bow and the shield, the sword and the battle.' (Psalms 76:4) 'In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel.' (Psalms 76:2) 'I will get honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.' (Exodus 14:4) 6

'I will get honor upon Pharaoh, and all his hosts.' (Exodus 14:4) When the Holy One, blessed-be-He, punishes the wicked, His name is exalted in the world, as it says, 'I will work a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud that draw the bow, to Tubal and to Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the nations.' (Isaiah 66:9) Similarly, 'And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will cause to rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone, Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself, and I will make Myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord.' (Ezekiel 38:22-23) Similarly, 'O Lord, my strength, and my stronghold, and my refuge, in the day of affliction, unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say: 'Our fathers have inherited nought but lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit.' (Jeremiah 16:19) Similarly, 'Thus saith the Lord: The labor of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, in chains they shall come over; and they shall come over; And they shall fall down unto thee; they shall make supplication unto thee.' (Isaiah 45:14) Similarly, 'And saviours shall come upon Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.' (Obadiah 1:21) Similarly, 'The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations are perished out of His land.' (Psalms 10:16) Similarly, 'Let sinners cease out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Hallelujah.' (Psalms 104:35) Similarly, 'The Lord preserveth the strangers; He upholdeth the fatherless and the widow; but the way of the wicked He maketh

crooked. The Lord will reign forever, Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Hallelujah.' (Psalms 146:9-10) ⁷

Moreover, if God did not rescue Israel, Pharaoh would say that God did not have the power to bring her out of Egypt. This would imply that Pharaoh is stronger than God. To avoid a diminution of His name, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. ⁸

Pharaoh's wickedness is frequently listed by the rabbis as a reason for God's actions. This interpretation enables the rabbis to balance free will with God's involvement in human affairs. As a man who has freely chosen to sin, Pharaoh deserves punishment. In order to insure that Pharaoh would receive his retribution, God controls Pharaoh's actions. This theme is stressed in several midrashim. 'I will harden his heart.' (Exodus 4:21) - to exact retribution from them.⁹ In a similar vein, other midrashim note that regarding the first five plagues, the Biblical text mentions only that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. No reference is made to God. The implication of this vague phrasing is that Pharaoh was responsible for his own actions. Since Pharaoh adhered to his wicked ways during the first five plagues, God was justified in withholding the possibility of repentance in order to afflict him with a complete punishment.

'I hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants.' (Exodus 10:1) The verse teaches that He withheld repentance from them in order to punish them, as it says, 'I might show these My signs in the midst of them.' (Exodus 10:1) ¹⁰

'And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh.' (Exodus 9:12) God saw that he did not relent after the first five plagues. Therefore, even if Pharaoh wished to repent, He would harden his heart in order to exact a complete punishment from him, as it is written, 'The Lord spoke to Moses: I will harden Pharaoh's heart.' (Exodus 7:3) ¹¹

The rabbis understood the theological difficulties of locking the gates of repentance. Indeed, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart becomes a point of attack for anti-Jewish minim. In response to these arguments, the rabbis contended that the withholding of repentance is one of God's punishments for the sinful. When a man repeatedly refuses to change his evil ways after several warnings, God is justified in hardening his heart to insure that he will receive his well-deserved punishment.

'For I have hardened His heart.' (Exodus 10:1) R. Jochanan said: Does this not provide heretics with ground for arguing that he had no means of repenting, since it says, 'For I have hardened his heart?' To which R. Simon b. Lakish replied: 'Let the mouths of the heretics be stopped up.' 'If it concerneth the scorers, He scorneth them,....' (Proverbs 3:34) When God warns a man once, twice, and even a third time, and he still does not repent, then does not God close his heart against repentance, so that He should exact punishment from him for his sins? Thus, it was with the wicked Pharaoh, since God sent five signs to him, and he took no notice. God then said: 'Thou hast stiffened thy neck and hardened thy heart; I will add to thine uncleanness.' Hence, 'For I have hardened his heart.' (Exodus 10:1)¹²

The second section of this chapter includes agadic statements which are essentially descriptive. As in the previous midrashim, Pharaoh is portrayed as a wicked man. He has rejected repentance, and is deserving of punishment. However, these passages balance the tension between God and man because their authors avoid direct statements about free will and determinism. In one midrash, Pharaoh is described as a fool. A fool's idle words tire and provoke God. They are more bothersome than the weight of stone and sand.

'And the Lord said unto Moses: Go unto Pharaoh; For I have hardened His heart.' (Exodus 10:1) It is written: 'A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's vexation is heavier than both.' (Proverbs 27:3) ...What is the meaning of a 'a stone is heavy?'

When one sees the mountains and the hills, does he not say, 'How did God create these?' What is the meaning of 'the sand is weighty?' Because it bears the whole weight of the sea whose waters are borne by the sand below. God said, 'This may appear heavy in the sight of man who thinks it is a great burden to Me, but really it is not, because it says, 'He faileth not, neither is he weary.' (Isaiah 40:28) With what do I become weary? Only with him who provokes Me with idle words, as it says, 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.' (Malachi 2:17) Hence, 'A fool's vexation is heavier than them both.' 13

Another midrash which falls into this category describes Pharaoh as a fool and his heart as a liver. The rabbis believed that the liver was the seat of all anger. Therefore, a man whose heart is as heavy as a liver is overwhelmed by anger, and unable to act righteously. Underlying the theme of this midrash is the rabbinic interpretation of the root **ל**. This root means either "liver" or "heavy".

'Pharaoh's heart was hardened....And the Lord said unto Moses: Pharaoh's heart is stubborn.' He is angry. Just as the liver is waxed anger, so has the heart of this man become stubborn. He does not understand being a fool. 'Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.' (Ecclesiastes 7:9) So shall Moses chastise Pharaoh with a rod, as it says, 'And the rod which was turned into a serpent shall thou take in thy hand.' (Exodus 8:15) 14

The above midrash only describes Pharaoh as an angry man, who is unreceptive to the demands of ethical conduct. A similar agadic statement moves subtly to the God-pole of the dialectic tension by emphasizing that God causes Pharaoh's heart to become as a liver. The contrast between these two midrashim demonstrates the balance present in the free will-determinism debate.

'For I have hardened his heart.' (Exodus 10:1) What is the meaning of 'hichbadite'? God made his heart like a liver which had been cooked twice. It had come to resemble brass. So also was the heart of Pharaoh made like a liver, and he could not receive the words of the Holy One, blessed-be-He. Hence, 'For I have hardened his heart.' 15

Pharaoh's foolishness and anger is compounded by his hypocrisy.

Like other wicked men, he begs for forgiveness in times of trouble, and returns to evil ways when out of danger. This midrash compares Pharaoh to Nebuchadnezzar, who praises God when in pain and curses Him when the tension is relieved. There are two versions of this midrash. In one rendition, the hypocritical repentance of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar becomes a model of the behavior of all nations except Israel. Israel is unique in that she praises and glorifies God in times of trouble as well as in times of prosperity. In the second version, the behavior of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar demonstrates the acts of all wicked men, not the character of foreign nations.

'And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart....' (Exodus 9:34) This is the way of the wicked; every time they are in distress, they humble themselves and say, 'arise and save us.' As soon as the distress passes, they return to their corrupt ways and they deny God by saying, 'It is not Him.' (Jeremiah 5:12) When Nebuchadnezzar was in distress he said, 'Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise extol, and honor the King of Heaven; for all His words are truth! (Daniel 4:34) Rabbi Samuel bar Nachmani said, 'Were it not that the Holy One, blessed-be-He, judged the thoughts of man, it would be fitting that Nebuchadnezzar would bless God with this verse as David had praised Him in all of the psalms. David wrote psalms; Nebuchadnezzar said 'praised'. David said 'Glorify the Lord, O Jerusalem.' (Psalms 148:12) Nebuchadnezzar said 'extolled.' David said, 'I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast raised me up.' (Psalms 30:2) Nebuchadnezzar said 'honor.' David said, 'Thou art clothed with glory and majesty.' (Psalms 104:1) As soon as he saw himself in greatness, he became boastful, as it says, 'The king spoke and said, 'Is not this great Babylon which I have built for a royal dwelling - place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' (Daniel 4:27) God said to him, 'Evil one you are still boastful,' as it says, 'While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven: O, King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from thee.' (Daniel 4:28) Thus it is with all the nations of the world (other rendition - evil ones) when they are in distress they humble themselves, and when the distress has passed, they return to their corrupt ways. However, Israel is different. In times of distress she prays and cries out, and when the pain has passed, she gives praise and thanks to the Holy One, blessed-be-He, regarding the goodness with which He has rewarded her. Thus, it says, 'I will mention the mercies of the Lord and praise the Lord,

according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great
goodness toward the house of Israel. (Isaiah 63:7) Also, He shall
build me a house.' (I Chronicles 17:12) 16

Another similar midrash emphasizes that in times of difficulty, Pharaoh recognizes his guilt. However, when the pressure is relieved, he views himself as completely innocent. 17 The emphasis of these midrashim is not upon divine action, but upon Pharaoh's evil nature. Simple forms of chastisement have no effect upon his behavior. These passages do not openly state that special divine measures are justified, but the description of his deeply rooted evil character makes the hardening of his heart a logical inference.

Moving to the man-pole of the dialectic tension, emphasis is placed upon Pharaoh for his sins and punishment. One midrash stresses that a man who initiates a sin simultaneously initiates the punishment. The responsibility for the punishment rests upon the sinner. Accordingly, the men and the animals of the generation of the flood, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, the unfaithful woman, and Pharaoh, were all responsible for the punishment that befell them. This theme is one aspect of a Kal V'chomar argument. Just as a sin brings a corresponding punishment, a good deed brings a corresponding reward.

'I will get Me honour upon Pharaoh and upon all his hosts.'
(Exodus 14:4) Pharaoh initiates a sin and from him the punishment arises. A similar text says, 'He blotted out every living substance which was upon the face of the earth, both man and cattle(Genesis 7:23) Whoever begins the sin, from him comes the punishment. A similar text says, 'They smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great.' (Genesis 19:13) He who initiates the sin, initiates the punishment. A similar text says, 'If thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee besides thy husband, then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman: the Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to fall away, and thy belly to swell; (Numbers 5:20-21) He who initiates the sin, initiates the punishment.

Also here it says, 'I will get Me honour upon Pharaoh.' (Exodus 14:4)
Pharaoh initiated the sin, and so he initiated the punishment.
Is this not a light and heavy argument? Which quality is greater?
He who begins with a commandment, takes his reward first.¹⁸

Similarly, another midrash emphasizes that Pharaoh is like other wicked people who sin against God. The generations of the flood and the dispersion, as well as the inhabitants of Sodom, all hardened themselves against God. Therefore, they must have endured their punishment.¹⁹

Chapter II

THE COMMENTARIES

The Commentary literature includes the same ideas expressed in the Midrash. Therefore, thematically, the boundary between the Midrash and the Commentaries is difficult to define. However, the study of the Commentaries permits the construction of a vivid picture of the personal manner in which each rabbi viewed the Jewish tradition. This personal perspective frequently includes a selection of midrashim or Biblical verses which buttress the commentator's own position. This selection process is more clearly evident in those commentators who have attained some knowledge of philosophy, like Ibn Ezra and Nachmanides. Instead of just reflecting the wide scope of opinions found in rabbinic literature, these commentators express an opinion usually based upon logic and supported by passages selected from the Midrash and the Bible.

Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac) wrote in France in the latter part of the eleventh century. His fame was so wide-spread that many legends arose about his life. He supposedly was a direct descendent of the tanna Jochanan Ha-Sandalar. Also, he supposedly traveled throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. These stories were probably not true. Rashi did study in Prague and later returned to his birthplace, Troyes, in southern France, where he served as a rabbi. His three daughters subsequently married scholars. Rashi's family played an important role in the spreading of Jewish learning throughout the medieval world.

Rashi's reputation spread because of the popularity of his commentaries. His goal was to present the simplest interpretation of the

Biblical text. To assist in revealing the peshat, Rashi frequently summarized the general rabbinic interpretation of a verse. Unlike other commentators with philosophical leanings, Rashi rarely declared the superiority of one rabbinic view over others. Separating various interpretations with the technical term, "Davar Achehr," Rashi enables the reader to choose the rendition he likes best.

As a reporter of the rabbinic tradition, nearly all of his commentary regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is a direct quote or a concise summary of other agadic interpretations. Following the style of the Midrash, Rashi does not endorse a free will or a determinist position. Accordingly, he mentions passages which are obviously in conflict. Like the Midrash, Rashi's comments can be thematically divided into various groups. Some passages emphasize God's responsibility, while others stress the role of man.

Several of Rashi's comments are placed near the God-pole of the dialectic tension. In one passage, Rashi concisely summarizes the common rabbinic view that Pharaoh is ambivalent about pursuing Israel. However, God forces him to follow.

'God hardened Pharaoh's heart.' (Exodus 14:8) He was undecided about whether or not he should pursue. He hardened his heart to pursue.²⁰

Also placed near the God-pole is another comment which stresses God's desire to increase His recognition among the nations of the world. Since Pharaoh sins and rebels against God, and the nations are not prepared to repent, God simply seeks to demonstrate His power. The comment also states that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart instructs Israel to

observe God's commandments. Moreover, Rashi notes that Pharaoh did not repent after the first five plagues, and as a punishment God prevents him from repenting during the last five plagues. Rashi's comment is a direct quote from Tanhuma.

Since he dealt wickedly and offered resistance against Me, and it is manifest before Me that there is no delight among the nations to set (their) whole heart to repentance, it is better that his heart be hardened in order to increase through him My signs, and you will recognize My might. And thus is the method of the Holy One, blessed-be-He: He brings evil upon the nations in order that Israel should harken and fear, as it is stated, 'I have cut off nations, their corners are desolate,....' (Zephaniah 3:6-7) I said, 'Surely thou wilt fear Me, Thou wilt receive correction.' Nevertheless, as regards the first five plagues it is not stated, 'And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh,' but 'And Pharaoh's heart was hardened.'²¹

Rashi also notes the midrash in which the name of God is glorified with the punishment of His enemies.

'And I will get Me honor through Pharaoh.' (Exodus 14:4) When the Holy One, blessed-be-He, avenges Himself of the wicked, His name is exalted and honored. Similarly, Scripture states, 'I will plead against him,' and afterwards, 'Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself, and I will make Myself known.' (Ezekiel 38:22-23) Scripture also states, 'There He broke the fiery shafts of the bow;' and afterwards, 'In Judah is God known.' (Psalms 76:2-4) And Scripture states, 'The Lord hath made Himself known; He hath executed judgement.' (Psalms 9:17)²²

Several of Rashi's statements can be placed near the man-pole of the dialectic tension. These emphasize Pharaoh's responsibility for his punishment. One passage, quoted from Tanhuma, notes that the man who sins initiates his own retribution.

'Through Pharaoh and through all his host,' (Exodus 14:4) (Because) he began to transgress and with him the evil began.²³

Basing another comment upon a Talmudic passage, Menachot 85a, Rashi notes that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is a magical act. Israel brought

magic into an Egypt which was already filled with deception.

'Pharaoh's heart was hardened.' (Exodus 7:22) By means of witchcraft you do so. **You** bring straw (even) into Ofrayim, a city which is all (abundant with) straw; thus you bring witchcraft into Egypt all of which is (full of) sorcery.²⁴

Rashi also makes several grammatical observations on the phrase "the hardening of Pharaoh's heart."²⁵ These comments are of minimal importance, considering the philosophical nature of this project. However, their presence in his commentary reflects Rashi's concern for the simple understanding of the Biblical verse.

Ibn Ezra was a Spanish rabbi of the eleventh century. Scholars have divided his life into two periods. Before 1140, he lived in Cordova. Through his intellectual achievements, especially in poetry, he attained a degree of fame and notoriety. In 1140, he left Spain in pursuit of his son who had converted to Islam. In this later period he became a wanderer, residing in Italy, northern Africa, and perhaps Egypt and Palestine.

Unlike Rashi, Ibn Ezra added a philosophical perspective to his commentary. He clearly understood the intellectual trends of his time. This awareness is implied in Ibn Ezra's description of Pharaoh as an ignorant fool who lacked the acumen to understand God's demands. Obviously, nothing is more intolerable to a philosopher than stupidity. However, it is important to note that Ibn Ezra's comments regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart do not demonstrate a consistent philosophical position. Though he stresses man's free will, he also mentions in emphatic terms the importance of divine control. Either Ibn Ezra is reflecting the duality of the Midrashic approach, or he is expressing a hidden doctrine.

It is possible that Ibn Ezra believed in determinism, but couched his heterodox opinion among traditional free will statements. More evidence, however, would be necessary to confirm such a hypothesis.

The tension in Ibn Ezra's commentary is demonstrated clearly in his interpretation of Exodus 7:3. Embracing a free will position, Ibn Ezra notes that God gave man the wisdom to determine right from wrong, as well as the power to act righteously and to sin. Following this clear statement, he refers the reader to his comment on Deuteronomy 5:26. In this passage he states that all actions and movements are linked to God. In contrast to the clarity of his previous statement in support of free will, Ibn Ezra vaguely notes that man's ability to change his behavior depends upon the strength of general principles.

'And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.' (Exodus 7:3) Some ask, 'If God hardened his heart, what is his transgression? What is his sin?' The answer is that God gave wisdom to man, and planted in his heart the capacity to receive the divine power to increase his goodness or to decrease it through sin. This I will explain in the section, Key-t'say and in the verse 'Oh that He would give such a heart as this always,' (Deuteronomy 5:26) The reason for the phrase, 'I hardened his heart' was 'in order to multiply My signs and My wonders.' 26

'Oh that He would give.' (Deuteronomy 5:26) It is not written, 'Oh that He would give to me,' but 'He would give to them.'...Understand that the root of all actions and movements are divine decrees. All things are found under heaven. Their strength and their generations are according to the divine arrangement with roots going downward, according to their complications and their daily and periodic movements. Changes will occur as the Book of Creation has written. The parts will receive from general principles according to their geneology. Through the power of the general principles men alter slightly their geneology. This is the reason for the phrase, 'God hardened Pharaoh's heart,' and afterwards 'He hardened his heart, he and his servants.' (Exodus 9:34) 27

The remaining passages in which Ibn Ezra deals with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart can be placed along the entire dialectic tension.

Most of the passages emphasize Pharaoh's responsibility for his sin. Pharaoh's wickedness, according to Ibn Ezra, is that he permits himself to become a fool. In one comment, the implication of the hardening process is that Pharaoh forgets the previous plagues. The passage clearly implies that Pharaoh bears the responsibility for the failure to remember these catastrophes.

'I hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he pursued after them. (Exodus 14:4) 'I hardened' as if he forgot the plagues that were afflicting (them) for Israel's sake. 28

In a similar vein, Ibn Ezra placed special emphasis upon Pharaoh's false repentance.

'When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail and thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the children of Israel go.' (Exodus 9:34-35) ... (Even though in the past) he gave thanks and said, 'This time I sinned.' The reason for the phrase, 'His heart, he and his servants' was because he had said, 'You and your servants I know that you will not fear the Lord God.' 29

In another instance, Ibn Ezra avoids stressing God's role in the hardening process even though He is mentioned in the Biblical text. He notes that if a man wants to become evil, the option is always open to him.

'The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.' (Exodus 10:20) 'The Lord hardened' - According to the rabbis, if one desires to become impure, the way is open to him. 30

In another passage Pharaoh hardens his own heart when he sees that his magicians can duplicate Aaron's snake trick.³¹

Also placed near the man-pole of the dialectic tension is a fascinating midrash which discusses the confusion in Pharaoh's palace. Ibn Ezra contends that Pharaoh did not deny God when he refused to

release Israel. Rather, Pharaoh was confused by the name of God employed by Moses. Pharaoh's magicians advised him that the plagues were only an accident and not an action in support of Israel. If Moses had said

אֵל אֲדֹנָי instead of אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי, Pharaoh would have prayed to God for help. The passage implies that God was responsible for the plagues, but not for the confusion in Pharaoh's court.

The magicians said to Pharaoh, 'It is the finger of God'; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened.' (Exodus 8:15) He saw that they were able to duplicate Aaron's action regarding the staff and the plagues of blood and frogs, but now they were unable to do so. They said to Pharaoh, 'This plague did not come for Israel's sake in order to let them go, but it is a plague of Elohim, arranged according to the stars of the future of the land of Egypt.' Already I have explained that Pharaoh did not deny the Creator, but only the name that Moses mentioned to him.' His hand did not touch us. It is an accident from heaven upon us.' Therefore, Pharaoh's heart was hardened. As I explained, they said, 'It is the finger of Elohim.' They did not say the finger of Adonai. He is the God of Israel to whom Pharaoh spoke in the midst of the plague of frogs, as it is written, 'They entreated to the Lord.' (Exodus 8:4) This is the name (Moses) mentioned in the last plagues. ³²

Pharaoh hardened his own heart by foolishly placing too much confidence in the advice of his magicians.

Several passages in Ibn Ezra's commentary can be placed near the God-pole of the dialectic tension. One infers that God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart discouraged him from praying. The implication is that God's control of Pharaoh was so great that his desire to pray was weakened. "'He hardened Pharaoh's heart.'" (Exodus 9:12) Therefore, he did not desire to pray."³³ A second passage stresses that God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to demonstrate His power. In this comment, Ibn Ezra consciously contrasts the flexibility of Pharaoh's court to Pharaoh's personal resistance.

'The Lord said to Moses, 'Come to Pharaoh for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants in order to show My signs in their midst.'" (Exodus 10:1) It mentions the phrase 'the hearts of his servants'

because he softened their hearts with the plague of locusts. The reason for the phrase, 'I have hardened his heart' was 'in order to show My signs in their midst.' ³⁴

Like Rashi, Ibn Ezra also makes several grammatical observations in his commentary. However, they do not relate to the philosophical nature of this project. ³⁵

Moses Nachmanides (Ramban) was a Spanish commentator of the thirteenth century. He made a living as a physician, but had also acquired an extensive knowledge of rabbinics and philosophy. Nachmanides was a conservative scholar who revered the teachings of past generations and who opposed allegorical interpretations of the Bible. This combination of traditionalism and respect for Maimonides' knowledge of halacha enabled him to mediate a compromise in the Maimonist-Anti-Maimonist controversy. His greatest work was his commentary on the Torah. It is characterized by agadic and Cabalistic interpretations. Also with his commentary are attacks upon Maimonides' Aristotelian interpretation of Biblical verses and Ibn Ezra's hostility to Cabala.

Nachmanides also maintains the tension between free will and determinism. In supporting this balance, Nachmanides relies heavily upon the teachings of the Midrash. Like Ibn Ezra, he selectively chooses Midrashic texts which support his position. In defense of God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart, Nachmanides argues (as does Maimonides) that God is justified in closing the gates of repentance if a man is sufficiently sinful. If a man is warned three times, God could ethically withhold repentance. Nachmanides emphasizes that Pharaoh hardens his own heart during the first five plagues. Since he is warned in each instance and refuses to change his evil ways, repentance could be withheld. Moreover, when Pharaoh finally

did consent to release Israel from slavery, he acted for the wrong reason. Rather than recognizing Israel's need to serve God, Pharaoh wanted to remove the painful burden of the plagues.

'I will harden Pharaoh's heart.' The rabbis said in Midrash Rabbah: 'God revealed to Moses that He was destined to harden Pharaoh's heart in order to bring judgment upon him for he caused them to work in cruel bondage.' It is also stated there (in Midrash Rabbah): 'For I have hardened his heart.' (Exodus 10:1) Rabbi Yochanan said, 'This provides a pretext for the heretics to say that God did not allow Pharaoh to repent.' Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said, 'The mouths of heretics be closed! Only, 'if it concerneth the scorners, He scorneth them.' (Proverbs 3:34) When He warns one on three occasions and he does not turn from his ways, He closes the door of repentance on him in order to punish him for his sin. Such was the case with wicked Pharaoh. After the Holy One, blessed-be-He, sent him five times (the request to let His people go) and he paid no attention to His words, the Holy One, blessed-be-He, said to him: 'You have stiffened your neck and hardened your heart; I will double your defilement.'

The rabbis (in the above Midrash) have thus discussed the question which all ask: 'If God hardened his heart, what then was Pharaoh's sin?' For this there are two explanations, and both of them are true. One is that Pharaoh in his wickedness had unjustifiably perpetrated such great evils against Israel that justice required that the ways of repentance be withheld from him, as is so indicated in many places in the Torah and in the Writings. He judged according to his wickedness which he had originally committed of his own will. The second explanation is that half of the plagues came upon him because of transgressions, for in connection with them it is only said: 'And Pharaoh's heart was hardened;' (Exodus 7:13,22; 8:15) 'And Pharaoh hardened his heart.' (Exodus 8:28; 9:7) Thus Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go for the glory of God. But when the plagues began bearing down upon him and he became weary to suffer them, his heart softened and he bethought himself to send them out on account of the onslaught of the plagues, not in order to do the will of his Creator.³⁶

Nachmanides notes that some commentators believe that the Egyptian magicians hardened Pharaoh's heart during the first five plagues, and God caused Pharaoh's resistance during the last five plagues.³⁷ Nachmanides rejects this interpretation. He believes that during the first five plagues Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Since Pharaoh ignored God's warnings, God was justified in hardening his heart during the last five plagues.

Nachmanides mentions two other reasons for God's hardening of

Pharaoh's heart. Both ideas are developed in the Midrash. The first stresses that God wants to show His authority. With such a display of power, both Egypt and Israel would recognize and remember His greatness.

'God said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants.' (Exodus 10:1) The Holy One, blessed-be-He, informed Moses that it is He who has hardened their hearts, in spite of their fear of Him during the hail and their confession of sin. And He explained to him, 'The reason I have hardened their hearts is that I might set in their midst these signs that I wish to do among them, so that the Egyptians will know My power, but not in order that I can punish them more on account of this hardening of heart, also that you and all Israel should recount during the coming generations the power of My deeds, 'and you shall know that I am the Eternal,' (Exodus 10:2) and whatsoever I please, I do in heaven and on earth.³⁸

Another reason Nachmanides gives for God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart is His desire to humiliate Egypt. After the death of the first born and the splitting of the sea, Pharaoh and the Egyptians were willing to release Israel. In both instances, God hardened their hearts, and they pursued Israel.

'I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and He will pursue after them.' (Exodus 14:4) Because Pharaoh feared them during the plague of the first born,... he was not disposed to pursue after the Israelites, even if they were to flee, and he would rather have Moses do with them as he pleased. Therefore, it was necessary to state that God hardened his heart to pursue after them.... After the Egyptians saw that the sea had split before the children of Israel, and that they walked in the midst of the sea upon dry land, which is the most outstanding wonder of wonders, how could they be disposed to come in after them to harm them! This was indeed madness on their part. But it was He who turned their counsel into foolishness and strengthened their hearts to enter the sea.³⁹

According to Nachmanides, God hardens Pharaoh's heart only after he repeatedly refuses to repent. By stressing Pharaoh's sins as the cause of God's action, Nachmanides maintains the tension found in the Midrash between God's control and man's responsibility. Since Pharaoh'sinned, punishment is justified.

Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno was an Italian commentator who lived in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. His expertise in many areas was extensive. He was a noted physician, legalist, and rabbinic scholar. Though he spent most of his life in Rome, he did wander throughout Europe during his later years. Before he died, he established a Talmudic academy in Bologna. His commentary on the Torah demonstrated a respect for the simple meaning of the Biblical text and a reluctance to employ mystical interpretations. He read and clearly understood the previous commentaries on the Bible.

In his comments upon the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, he also adheres to the same God-man tension found in the Midrash and the Commentaries. He asserts that there is no contradiction between Pharaoh's free will and God's control. Like the other commentators, Sforno emphasizes the dual nature of the hardening process. Through sinful action, Pharaoh hardens his own heart. He repeatedly ignores demonstrations of God's authority and refuses to release Israel. For example, even though the cattle owned by Israel thrives during the plagues while the Egyptian livestock perishes, Pharaoh refuses to recognize God's power.

'Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not so much as one of the cattle of the Israelites dead, but the heart of Pharaoh was stubborn and he did not let the people go.' (Exodus 9:7) Regarding the phrase 'not so much as one of the cattle of the Israelites died, but the heart of Pharaoh was stubborn,' this was obviously a wonder without doubt only related to God. No one with all his senses would be able to doubt it. 40

Pharaoh also witnesses the superiority of Aaron's acts over the tricks of the Egyptian magicians. Pharaoh simply chose to ignore it.

'And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Pharaoh's heart is stubborn, and he refuseth to let the people go. (Exodus 7:14) 'Pharaoh's heart is stubborn' even though he saw the difference between the miracles you

performed and the acts of the magicians.⁴¹

Similarly, Pharaoh observes the destruction of his crops by the hailstones, and the power of Moses' request that the plague cease.

'But the wheat and the smelt were not smitten; for they ripened late. and Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread forth his hands unto the Lord; and the thunder and hail ceased.' (Exodus 9:32) He saw how great was the wickedness of Pharaoh and his servants. Though the wheat and smelt were not smitten, Moses prayed. Pharaoh saw that it had ceased. However, the prayer (of Pharaoh) was false. Therefore, by other means that which had escaped destruction also perished. Nevertheless, Pharaoh continued to sin. He hardened his heart deliberately.⁴²

While emphasizing Pharaoh's sinful behavior, Sforno also recognizes the role of God in the hardening process. In one passage, which is an extension of a comment made by Nachmanides, Sforno stresses God's desire to demonstrate His authority in order that Pharaoh would make true repentance.⁴³ Thus, for Sforno, true repentance is the ultimate goal of the plagues. His emphasis is subtly different from Nachmanides and Maimonides, who assert that the gates of repentance were closed by God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Sforno asserts that if Pharaoh truly wanted to repent, there were no stumblingblocks before him.

'I hardened Pharaoh's heart.' (Exodus 7:3) God desires the repentance of the wicked, not their death, as it says, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' (Ezekiel 33:11) He increased His signs and His wonders in order to lead the Egyptians to repentance by causing them to know His greatness and His mercy, through signs and wonder, as it says, 'But in every deed for this have I made thee to stand to show thee My power. (Exodus 9:16) Related to this was the desire that Israel should see and fear, as it says, that I might show these My signs in the midst of them, and that you may tell....(Exodus 10:1) There is no doubt that without the hardening of the heart, Pharaoh would have released Israel, but not with repentance or humility to God. He would not have compassion upon a rebel, unless he recognized His greatness and His goodness. However, if he is simply unable to bear the pain of the plagues, as when his servants said, 'Know thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?' (Exodus 10:7) This was not general repentance,

but if Pharaoh had desired to humble himself before God and to turn to Him in complete repentance, there was nothing restraining him. God said, 'I have hardened Pharaoh's heart' so that he would strive to bear the plagues, and not release Israel because of fear of the plagues, in order that I might show My signs in his midst and that they may recognize My goodness and Egypt might turn in true repentance. ⁴⁴

Sforno recognizes that there are other reasons for hardening Pharaoh's heart aside from God's desire to encourage Pharaoh's repentance. God demonstrates His power in order that Israel would marvel at His greatness and in order that some of the Egyptians, other than Pharaoh, might make repentance.

Moses realized that in spite of all this (the plagues), Pharaoh had not harkened. Moses thought that all occurred for nought because Pharaoh was unable to bear (the plagues) and would not harken. Therefore, God said to him, 'Even though he hardened his heart, and I have already hardened his heart with boils, this was done to increase My signs in Egypt, in order that some of them would make repentance and in order that Israel would tell their future generations. They would recognize My goodness and My greatness. ⁴⁵ Therefore, it appeared proper, even though Pharaoh has not harkened.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is thus a divine action whose purpose is to enhance God's image before Israel and the Egyptians.

God said to Moses, 'He will not harken to you.' (Exodus 11:9-10) God told Moses that the reason for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, 'for the Lord hardened his spirit,' (Deuteronomy 2:30) was in order to increase His wonders and in order that Egypt and Israel would recognize His greatness. ⁴⁵

Chapter III

SAADIA

Saadia (892-942) was one of the first Jewish philosophers. As the head of the academy at Sura in Babylonia, his influence was felt throughout the Jewish world. He defended the rabbinic tradition against the Karaite movement. Also, he composed a Hebrew grammar text and a lexicon, and translated the Bible into Arabic. His most important contribution was in the field of Jewish philosophy.

His book, Sefer Emunot Ve-Daot, The Book of Beliefs and Opinions, was an attempt to reconcile the teachings of Judaism with the conclusions of philosophy. The organization of Sefer Emunot Ve-Daot follows the Kalam model. Like the scholars of this rationalist school, Saadia divides his book into two sections. In the first part, he proves the unity of God with arguments based upon philosophy, revelation, and sense perception. In the second part he discusses the implications of God's justice. He argues that the reality of God's justice assumes the existence of human free will. If God is not just, He could capriciously control man's behavior. Since this assumption is not true, man must freely determine his actions. Aside from this organizational model, Saadia is flexible in dealing with philosophical themes.

He denied the atomism of the Kalam and substituted Aristotelian views on natural science; in his psychology he combined Platonic and Aristotelian elements. Even where he agreed in principle with the tenets of Kalam, he frequently developed these notions in an independent fashion.⁴⁷

As a philosopher, Saadia's discussion of free will follows a

logical sequence. Saadia's first concern is proving the superiority of man over other creatures. Without such a distinction all animals, including man, might be worthy of free will. To the superiority of man, Saadia offers arguments from revelation and logic. Beginning with the proof based upon revelation, he notes the Biblical statements which emphasize man's uniqueness and free will.

After this preliminary observation let me now proceed again and say that our Lord has informed us through His prophets that man has been shown preference by Him above all His creatures in His statement, 'And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air.' (Genesis 1:23) God has furthermore (told us) that He (to act upon it), and has given him freedom of choice, but enjoined him to choose the good. Thus, Scripture says, 'See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, (Deuteronomy 30:15) which it follows up later with the remark, 'Therefore choose life.' (Deuteronomy 30:19)⁴⁸

Saadia's philosophical proof of human superiority emphasizes man's wisdom. Man's capacity to think enables him to remember the past, to predict some future events, and to improve the quality of his life.

Afterward, employing the speculative method, we inquired into what it could have been that distinguished man, and we found that his distinction above the rest of creation was due to the wisdom, Scripture says, 'He that teacheth man knowledge.' (Psalms 94:10) By means of this wisdom he is able to retain all the events of the past and foresee many of the eventualities of the future, and achieve the subjugation of the animals so as to make them till the soil for him and transport to him its harvests. By means of it, too, he succeeds in extracting water from the depths of the earth to the point where it flows on its surface. Nay, he makes himself water-wheels by means of which the soil is automatically watered. By dint of this wisdom he is furthermore able to build the most exquisite dwellings, wear the choicest garments, and prepare the most delicious foods. By means of it he becomes capable also of leading hosts and armies and of exercising governmental authority in such a way that men will allow themselves to be bound and ruled thereby. By means of it moreover, he attains to the knowledge of the disposition of the heavenly spheres and the course of the stars and the measurements of their masses and their distance and all the rest of their attributes. ⁴⁹

Having proven the superiority of man, Saadia concludes that only man is worthy of receiving the commandments and accepting the responsibility for observing them. In obligating himself to the commandments, man becomes the center of creation.

In view of the above mentioned considerations, it is only right that man should be subject to commandments and prohibitions and reward and punishment, seeing he is the axle of the world and its foundation. ⁵⁰

The second stage of Saadia's discussion of free will is a refutation of possible objections to the conclusion that man is superior to all other creatures. The first objection is that physically man might be considered too weak for such a great responsibility. Saadia argues that man's body may be fragile, but the capacity of his soul is endless and eternal.⁵¹ Second, Saadia considers the shortness of man's life as a possible defect. To such an objection Saadia argues that God has blessed man with eternal life in the world-to-come.⁵² The third objection is that man is not made of pure substances. Saadia counters that to believe that man should be constructed of pure elements is to demand that "man should have been created as a star or an angel."⁵³ Such a stipulation logically demands man's non-existence. Fourth, Saadia considers the sicknesses that shorten man's life. He argues that they keep "man away from sin and render him submissive to his Master, and introduce balance into his affairs."⁵⁴ Fifth, Saadia contends that pain may reflect man's fragile nature, but it also instills fear of divine punishment.⁵⁵ Sixth, Saadia notes that urges and appetites used in extreme may lower the quality of life, but when applied properly are beneficial to man.⁵⁶ Seventh, Saadia argues that the pain of hell was created to torment man, but it is balanced with the delights of man's possible reward.⁵⁷ Finally, the four types of execution are painful, but they serve as a deterrent against sin. Having considered

these objections, Saadia concludes that any doubts of man's superiority reveal God's wisdom.

Having proven that man is superior to other animals, Saadia asserts, in the third stage of his presentation, that man is endowed with free will. If this freedom is to be authentic, Saadia deems that it must possess several characteristics. The acts which God desires man to perform cannot be the only choices. Otherwise, freedom would be an illusion. Moreover, logic demands that the ability to choose must precede the act. If free will is granted after the act, then the act would immediately be undone. True freedom demands that man have the option to pick between various alternatives. It is essential that a man not be held responsible for an action if his behavior is controlled by another force. Therefore, for Saadia, Pharaoh must be free to sin, and the hardening of his heart does not mean that God compels him to transgress.⁵⁸

After the aforementioned let me say next that the Creator, magnified be His majesty, does not in any way interfere with the actions of men and that He does not exercise any force upon them either to obey or disobey Him.⁵⁹

In the fourth stage, Saadia introduces proofs of the reality of free will which are based upon sense perception, reason, and revelation. His first argument depends upon man's senses. Man feels that he is free.

I find that a human being feels conscious of his own ability either to speak or remain silent, or to take hold of things or desist from them, while at the same time he is not conscious of the existence of any other power that might at all prevent him from carrying out his will.⁶⁰

His arguments based upon reason emphasize that if man does not possess free will, then there can be no justification for God's revealing the

commandments.

If God were to exercise force upon His servant, there would be no sense to His command or His interdict. Also if God were to force him to perform some act, it would not be proper for Him to punish him for it.⁶¹

Moreover, if men are forced to act in a particular way, the righteous and the wicked men should receive a reward; they both follow God's will. His argument from revelation consists of quotations from several Biblical verses which stress free will, for example, Deuteronomy 30:19 or Malachi 1:9.⁶²

In the fifth section of his discussion, Saadia refutes possible challenges to the belief in free will. The first issue Saadia raises is the implication of God's foreknowledge.⁶³ Saadia contends that man makes many decisions before arriving at the choice God knows. God is cognizant only of the last action. Therefore, for Saadia, God does not have foreknowledge of all things. If God has complete foreknowledge, then everything is eternal.

Its untenability is made clear by the realization that if God's foreknowledge of anything could be the cause of its coming into being, then all things have to be eternal, having existed always since God has always known them. What we profess, therefore is that God has foreknowledge of things as they are actually constituted. Furthermore he is cognizant of what man's choice will be before man makes it.⁶⁴

A second challenge Saadia discusses deals with God's reasons for revealing the commandments to virtuous men who certainly would not sin. Several explanations are offered. Even the virtuous man needs to be educated. Also, to receive a just reward, a man must observe a commandment. Without observance he would not be rewarded. Also, if a man is rewarded for an act which is not commanded, he could be punished

for an act which is not forbidden. If this is true, then God would not be just. Finally, the repetition of commandments arouses man's concern to follow God's will.

A third challenge Saadia discusses is God's reason for sending prophets to unbelievers who certainly would reject their message. Six answers are given. If sinners were not warned about their idolatry, they would have a good alibi for maintaining their evil ways. Second, reward and punishment have to be based upon deeds, not upon God's foreknowledge of events. Third, just as proofs of God's existence are valid in the Jewish and Gentile worlds, so prophets had to be sent to both. Fourth, even if a commandment is ignored, the sender must be regarded as wise. Fifth, the worth of the commandments cannot be judged by its acceptance or rejection. Sixth, just as all men are equal in ability, so too, there are no distinctions with regard to the commandments.⁵⁵

In all these areas, Saadia maintains that man exerts freedom over his actions. Even though God may encourage a particular type of behavior or may know beforehand the end result, man ultimately retains the power to make all decisions.

In the next section of Sefer Emunot Ve-daot, Saadia deals with Biblical passages which challenge belief in free will. Here Saadia specifically discusses the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. The endorsement of free will is so central to Saadia's philosophy that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart cannot weaken his free will. To reconcile these and other difficult verses, Saadia argues that the writing of the Bible would be

an impossibility without an extension of the accurate meaning of words. Without such literary license the Bible would have been devoid of meaning. Emphasizing this concern, Saadia attempts to reconcile the Biblical text with the conclusions of philosophical inquiry.

My next step is to append to the statement I have made all those verses of the Bible that throw uncertainty and doubt on our theory about the compulsion (exercised by God on man). However, on account of the large number of such verses by reason of the extension of meaning to which language lends itself - for, as I have noted in the treatise on the unity of God, unless there existed the possibility of an extension of meaning in language, nothing more than the barest reference to substances would have been within its competence - I have seen fit to indicate the various ways in which they are to be interpreted so as to harmonize with reason. 66

Saadia assigns the verses dealing with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart to a category unrelated to free will. In several instances in the Bible, God assists men who are struggling with calamities. God supports them in order that they would endure the pain without dying. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is God's method for insuring that Pharaoh would endure all the punishment he deserved. Saadia argues that men who read predestination into the Biblical text are distorting its meaning.

The third (class of Biblical passages) consists of (those which present God as) giving courage to men when they are struck by a devastating calamity or (when they receive a) report of such a disaster, in order that they may not die therefrom. Hearing of such Scriptural utterances, the advocates of predestination thought that they implied a hardening of the hearts in order to keep them from becoming subservient to God. (What) especially (misled them was) the fact that Scripture itself ascribes this to hardening the heart, by reason of the fact that the soul has its seat in it. Instances hereof are such utterances of Scripture as: 'And I will harden Pharaoh's heart' (Exodus 7:3), and 'And I will make strong Pharaoh's heart' (Exodus 14:4), and 'For I have made heavy his heart' (Exodus 10:1) Similarly does Scripture say in regard to Sihon: 'For the Lord thy God hardened his spirit' (Deuteronomy 2:30)

Now Pharaoh needed a bolstering of the spirit in order not to die from the plagues (that befell the Egyptians), but remain alive until the rest of the punishment had been completely visited upon him. That

was made clear to him by God when He said: 'Surely now I had put forth My hand, and smitten thee, etc. But in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, etc. (Exodus 9:15,16)⁶⁷

Chapter IV

JUDAH HALEVI

Judah Halevi was a physician, philosopher, and poet who lived during the latter part of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries. In his poetry and in the Kuzari he expressed a deep love for the land of Israel. Unhappy with life in Toledo, he began a journey to the Holy Land. Evidence indicates that he was well-received in Egypt, but does not clearly confirm that he reached Jerusalem. According to legend, Halevi was killed by an Arab horseman near the gates of the Holy City.

Halevi's approach to free will is not characterized by the philosophic clarity found in Saadia's writings. While knowledgeable in the methods of logical inquiry, Halevi emphasizes experience, rather than rationality, as an indicator of truth. Saadia's goal was to harmonize the teachings of revelation and philosophy. Therefore, Saadia dealt carefully with the philosophical and religious interpretations of free will. Halevi contends that the doubts raised by philosophy can only be reconciled by the recognition of the absolute truth of revelation. Such revelation cannot be challenged if its reception is an observed experience and its transmission is through an uninterrupted tradition. Accordingly, Halevi's principal concerns in the Kuzari are to establish the authenticity of the revelation at Mt. Sinai and its accurate transmission to the present. Therefore, free will for Halevi becomes a secondary concern, whereas for Saadia its establishment was primary. Halevi does not even discuss the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in the Kuzari.

Halevi, like the thinkers who preceded him, maintains a dialectic tension between man's freedom and God's power. He recognizes man's ability to control his own behavior, but in a seemingly contradictory manner, links all of man's actions indirectly to God. Thus, God is connected to all events. Either they are direct expressions of His will or products of divine intermediary causes. Examples of the actions which are the direct expression of His will are the establishment of characteristics which distinguish one animal or plant from another, and the choosing of a people to be worthy of receiving the Divine Influence.

I gave thee the example of the creation of the plant and animal, and I told thee that the form which distinguishes one plant from another and one animal from another is not a natural force (but a work of God, called nature by Philosophers.)... It was found that cohabitation was followed by the birth of a child; man, however, does but plant the seed in the soil prepared to receive and develop it. The calculation of proportions which gave the human form belongs exclusively to the Creator. In the same manner is the determination of the living people worthy to form the seat of the Divine Influence God's alone.⁶⁸

The primary aspect of direct divine acts is the intention inherent within the action. The effect of heating and cooling may be ascribed to nature, but acts demanding intelligence are connected to God.

Forming, measuring, producing, however, and all that shows an intention, can only be ascribed to the All-wise and Almighty. There is no harm in calling the power which arranges matter by means of heat and cooling, 'Nature,' but all intelligence must be denied it. So must the faculty of creating the embryo be denied to human beings, because they only aid matter in receiving human form from its wise Creator.⁶⁹

Actions which are not attributed directly to God are indirectly linked to Him. These acts are connected to God through intermediate causes. They fall into three categories: natural, accidental, and arbitrary. Natural causes arise out of the order of creation and usually lead to a particular action. Accidental causes are not related to a direct divine decision or

to the order of creation. Arbitrary causes are connected to man's free will decisions. All actions which are linked to intermediate causes, even those based upon free will, are connected indirectly to God.

Effects are either of divine or of natural origin; either accidental or arbitrary. The divine ones issue forth actively, having no other causes except God's will. The natural ones are derived from intermediary, preparatory causes, which bring them to the desired end, as long as no obstacle arises from one of the other three classes. The accidental ones are likewise the result of intermediary causes, but accidentally, not by nature or arrangement, or by will power. They are not prepared to be brought to completion and standstill, and they stand apart from the other three classes. As regards the arbitrary actions, they have their roots in the free will of man, when he is in a position to exercise it. Free will belongs to the class of intermediary causes, and possesses causes which reduce it, chainlike, to the Prime Cause.⁷⁰

Free will is not impaired by its indirect connection to God.

Indeed, the indirect connection instills man with the ability to control his own actions. Therefore, intermediate causes enable man to avoid becoming a marionette manipulated solely by God's will.

All these cases, however, can be reduced indirectly to God, but not as immediate issues of the Prime Will, otherwise the words of a child, and mad people, the speech of an orator, and the song of a poet were the words of God. Far be this from Him.⁷¹

According to Halevi, experience teaches that only an idiot would reject preparing for war when endangered, or finding food when hungry. If man believes that all actions are rigidly determined by God, he would not prepare for immediate needs and future events. Free will, Halevi contends, enables man to influence events. However, these events are still linked to God.

The Rabbi: Only a perverse heretical person would deny the nature of what is possible, making assertions of opinions in which he does not believe. Yet from the preparations he makes for events he hopes for or fears, one can see that he believes in their possibility, and that his preparations may be useful. If he believed in absolute necessity, he would simply submit, and not equip himself with weapons

against his enemy, or with food against his hunger. If he, on the other hand, thinks that either preparation or the omission of it is necessary in accordance with the nature of it, he admits intermediary causes, as well as their consequences. He will encounter his desire in every intermediary cause, and if he is just and not perverse, he will find himself placed between himself and his desire to obtain achievable objects, which he can pursue or abandon as he likes. Such a belief is not incompatible with a belief in Divine Providence, but everything is led back to Him in various ways, as I am going to explain.⁷²

Moreover, Halevi argues that man's experience confirms that he is free.

If man is controlled by external forces, his "language, then, would be as little free as the beating of his pulse."⁷³ Man's experience teaches that this contention is not true.

The logical consequence of Halevi's discussion of free will is a separation of certain actions from God's will. However, by emphasizing the role of intermediary causes, Halevi refuses to make such a logical philosophical step.

If all incidents would be the result of the original will of the Prime Cause, they would, each in its turn, be created anew every moment. We might then say that the Creator created anew the whole world this very moment. The servant of God would be no better than the wicked, as both would be obedient, and only do that for which they are fated. ...The objection made against those who assert that some matters are removed from the bounds of Providence by human free will is to be refuted by what was said before, viz. that they are completely outside the control of Providence, but are indirectly linked to it.⁷⁴

Moreover, God's foreknowledge does not limit man's free will. Man's security depends upon his positive action to secure weapons and food. If knowledge is a causal agent, God would control man's actions.

The excuse of a slothful person who tells the energetic one that that which shall be must be, he is told: 'Quite so; but this argument should not prevent thee from taking the best counsel, preparing weapons against thy enemy, and food for hunger, as soon as thou art aware that both thy safety and destruction depend upon intermediary causes...'⁷⁵

For the knowledge of events to come is not the cause of their existence, just as is the case with the knowledge of things which have been. This is but a proof that the knowledge belongs to God, or the angels, or the prophets, or the priests. If this knowledge were the cause of

the existence of a thing, many people would be placed in paradise solely for the sake of the divine knowledge that they are pious even if they have done no pious act. Others would be in Gehenna, because God knows them to be wicked, without their having committed a sin.⁷⁶

Halevi does not comment directly upon the verses mentioning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. It is difficult to infer the content of his position. The flaw in Halevi's approach to free will is his insistence upon relating all events to God. Since Halevi recognizes the importance of free will, he certainly would argue that Pharaoh had sinned, and deserved to be punished. Halevi's avoidance of the issue demonstrates that his concerns rested with other aspects of Jewish thought.

Chapter V

MOSES MAIMONIDES

Moses Maimonides (Rambam) lived during the thirteenth century. He was born and raised in Cordova. When he was thirteen years old, the city was conquered by the Almohades, who demanded the exile or the conversion of the Jewish population. His family subsequently wandered throughout Spain. They temporarily lived in Fez. However, when oppression of the Jews increased there, they moved to Egypt. In Cairo, Maimonides became a famous physician. His most noted religious writings are a Commentary on the Mishnah, the Mishnah Torah, and The Guide to the Perplexed. The Mishnah Torah established his fame as a legal authority, while The Guide to the Perplexed enhanced his reputation as a philosopher.

Maimonides' approach toward free will exemplifies the tension found in the Jewish tradition. Though an Aristotelian and a rationalist, Maimonides does not give up divine omniscience or man's free will. His solution is an emphasis upon God's transcendence. Since human knowledge does not resemble God's, man cannot draw conclusions about God's attributes. Maimonides could only assert that divine omniscience, whatever its qualities, does not conflict with man's ability to control his actions.

Maimonides believed in free will. Without it, Jewish law would lose its viability, the distinctions between righteousness and wickedness would become meaningless, and concepts of reward and punishment would lack substance. Maimonides' strong endorsement of free will is found in the Shmonah Prakeem, the Mishnah Torah, and The Guide to the Perplexed.

Were a man compelled to act according to the dictates of predestination, then the commands and prohibitions of the Law would become null and void, and the Law would be completely false, since man would have no freedom of choice in what he does. Moreover, it would be useless, in fact absolutely in vain, for man to study, to instruct, or attempt to learn an art, as it would be entirely impossible for him, on account of the eternal force compelling him, according to the opinion of those who held this view, to keep from doing a certain act, from gaining certain knowledge, or from acquiring a certain characteristic. Reward and punishment, too, would be pure injustice, both as regards man towards man, and as between God and man....This theory is, therefore, positively unsound, contrary to reason and common sense, subversive of the fundamental principles of religion, and attributes injustice to God (far be it from Him!) In reality, the undoubted truth of the matter is that man has full sway over all his actions. If he wishes to do a thing, he does it; if he does not wish to do it, he need not, without any external compulsion controlling him.⁷⁷

Man has become the only being in the world who possesses a characteristic which no other being has in common with him. What is this characteristic? It is that by and of himself man can distinguish between good and evil, and do that which he pleases, with absolutely no restraint.⁷⁸

Free will is bestowed on every human being. If one desires to turn towards the good way and be righteous, he has the power to do so. If one wishes to turn towards the evil way and be wicked, he is at liberty to do so.⁷⁹

I say then: It is a fundamental principle of the law of Moses, our Master, peace be upon him, and of all those who follow it that man has an absolute ability to act; I mean to say that in virtue of his nature, his choice and his will, he may do everything that is within the capacity of men to do,...⁸⁰

Maimonides' conception of nature recognizes man's autonomy and God's unlimited knowledge. This is evident in his interpretation of the famous rabbinic statement, "All is in the power of God, except the fear of God."⁸¹ The phrase "all is in the power of God" means to Maimonides that the physical and natural aspects of life are controlled by God. These include man's size, the weather, and the chemical composition of the air. Thus, God controls nature, and man influences all other aspects of life.

By the word 'all' the Rabbis meant to designate only natural phenomena which are not influenced by the will of man, as whether a person is

tall or short, whether it is rainy or dry, whether the air is pure or impure, and all other such things that happen in the world, and which have no connection with man's conduct.⁸²

Similarly, God controls the forces of gravity and the ascent of flames.⁸³

Though God's activity is limited to the natural process, God's knowledge spans eternity. This is evident in Maimonides' opposition to the Mutakallimun. These Islamic philosophers argue that God's creative process is eternal. God acts in the present just as he acted during the creation of the world. In opposition, Maimonides argues that God's activity is limited solely to the natural process. Even the miracles which violate natural law are incorporated into nature during the six days of creation. Therefore, Maimonides believes that at creation God knew all human history.

The Mutakallimun are, however, of a different opinion in this regard, for I have heard them say that the Divine Will is constantly at work, decreeing everything from time to time. We do not agree with them, but believe that the Divine Will ordained everything at creation, and that all things, at all times, are regulated by the laws of nature, and run their natural course, in accordance with what Solomon said, 'As it was, so it will ever be, as it was made so it continues, and there is nothing new under the sun'. (Ecclesiastes 1:9) This occasioned the sages to say that all miracles which deviate from the natural course of events, whether they have already occurred, or, according to promise, are to take place in the future, were fore-ordained by the Divine Will during the six days of creation, nature being then so constituted that those miracles which were to happen really did afterwards take place. Then, when such an occurrence happened at its proper time, it may have been regarded as an absolute innovation, whereas in reality it was not.⁸⁴

The tension in Maimonides' thought is between a God who is all-knowing, and man who possesses free will.

Like Saadia, Maimonides considers the Biblical verses which seem to oppose his own perspective. In the Shmonah Peraeem, Maimonides' introduction to his commentary on the Pirkay Avot, he deals with verses which

mention the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. He realizes that these verses might be misunderstood. He agrees that if God only wanted Israel to be released, then the hardening of Pharaoh's heart could not be justified.

If Pharaoh and his counsellors had committed no other sin than that of not permitting Israel to depart, I admit that the matter would be open to great doubt, for God had prevented them from releasing Israel according to the words, 'For I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants'. (Exodus 10:1) After that, to demand of Pharaoh that he send them forth while he was forced to do the contrary, and then to punish him because he did not dismiss them, finally putting him and all his followers to death would undoubtedly be unjust, and would completely contradict all that we have previously said.⁸⁵

Like Saadia, Maimonides believes that God could not act unjustly. "It is likewise one of the fundamental principles of the Law of Moses our Master that it is in no way possible that He, may He be exalted, should be unjust."⁸⁶ Accordingly, there must be another reason for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Maimonides follows the general response of Nachmanides: Pharaoh was a wicked man. His oppression of Israel was cruel and tyrannical. His sins were committed voluntarily through his own free will. He deserved to be severely punished. However, repentance, if made in time, could protect the wicked man from punishment. Since Pharaoh's transgression was so great, God was justified in closing the gates of repentance. His punishment was thus insured.

Such, however, was not the real state of affairs, for Pharaoh and his followers, already of their own free will, without any constraint whatever, had rebelled by oppressing the strangers who were in their midst, having tyrannized over them with great injustice, as Scripture plainly states, 'And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel is more numerous and mightier than we, come let us deal wisely with it.' (Exodus 1:9-10) This they did through the dictates of their own free will and the evil passions of their hearts, without any external constraint forcing them thereto. The punishment which God then inflicted upon them was that He withheld from them the power of repentance, so that there should fall upon them that punishment which justice declared should be meted out to them. The fact that they were prevented from repenting

manifested itself by Pharaoh's not dismissing them. This God had explained and told him, namely, that if He had merely wished to liberate Israel, He would have destroyed him and his adherents, and He would have brought out the Israelites; but, in addition to the liberation of his people, God wished to punish him because of his previous oppression of Israel, as it is said at the beginning of the matter, 'And also that nation whom they shall serve will I likewise judge'. (Genesis 15:14) It would have been impossible to have punished them, if they had repented; therefore repentance was withheld from them, and they continued to keep the children of Israel in bondage, as it says, 'For even now I have stretched out my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth. But in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee My power, and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth'. (Exodus 9:15-16) 87

Pharaoh is not an exception to, but an example of a general rule. A wicked man must be punished, and repentance may be withheld from him.

If he repented, repentance serves as a shield against punishment.... A man may commit so great a sin or such numerous sins that justice requires of the true judge, as the penalty to be exacted from this particular sinner for the sins, committed by him voluntarily and of his own mind, that repentance shall be withheld from him and liberty to turn from his wickedness shall not be accorded him, so that he may die and perish in the sins which he committed.... This means that they sinned, of their own will, and multiplied transgressions to such an extent that they incurred the penalty of having repentance, which is the remedy for sin, withheld from them. Hence also, it was written, 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart.' (Exodus 4:21) Because Pharaoh sinned on his own impulse and ill-treated the Israelites, who sojourned in his land, as it says, 'Come let us deal wisely with them....' (Exodus 1:10) Justice required that repentance should be withheld from him until retribution had been visited upon him. The Holy One, blessed-be-He, accordingly hardened his heart. 88

While asserting man's free will, Maimonides also believed in God's foreknowledge. He also recognized the difficulty of endorsing such a contradiction.

This topic is the prescience of God, because it is with an argument based on this that our views are opposed by those who believe that man is predestined by God to do good or evil, and that man has no choice as to his conduct, since his volition is dependent upon God. The reason for their belief they base on the following statement. 'Does God know or does He not know that a certain individual will be good or bad? If you sayest "He knows", then it necessarily follows that man is compelled to act as God knew beforehand he would act, otherwise God's knowledge

would be imperfect. If thou sayest that God does not know in advance, then great absurdities and destructive religious theories will result.⁸⁹

Maimonides escapes the dilemma by emphasizing the transcendence of God.

The attributes of God are beyond human comprehension. If man discusses God's attributes separately, (i.e. His knowledge), His divine unity is shattered.

God is eternal. He knows the events of yesterday as well as those of tomorrow.

Man cannot comprehend the totality of God's knowledge because of his own limitations.

It is, indeed, an axiom of the science of the divine, i.e. metaphysics, that God (may He be blessed!) does not know by means of knowledge, and does not live by means of life, so that He and His knowledge may be considered two different things in the sense that this is true of man; for man is distinct from knowledge, and knowledge from man, in consequence of which they are two different things. If God knew by means of knowledge, He would necessarily be a plurality, and the primal essence would be composite, that is consisting of God Himself, the knowledge by which He knows, the life by which He lives, and the power by which He has strength, and similarly of all His attributes. I shall only mention one argument, simply and easily understood by all, though there are strong and convincing arguments and proofs that solve this difficulty. It is manifest that God is identical with His attributes and His attributes with Him, so that it may be said that He is the knowledge, the knower, and the known, and that He is the life, the living, and the source of His own life, the same being true of His other attributes....

Another accepted axiom of metaphysics is that human reason cannot fully conceive God in His true essence, because of the perfection of God's essence and the imperfection of our own reason, and because His essence is not due to causes through which it may be known. Furthermore, the inability of our own reason to comprehend Him may be compared to the inability of our eyes to gaze at the sun, not because of the weakness of the sun's light, but because that light is more powerful than that which seeks to gaze into it. Much that has been said on this subject is self-evident truth.

From what we have said, it has been demonstrated also that we cannot comprehend God's knowledge, that our minds cannot grasp it all, for He is His knowledge, and His knowledge is He. This is an especially striking idea, but those (who raise the question of God's knowledge of the future) fail to grasp it to their dying day. They are, it is true, aware that the divine essence, as it is, is incomprehensible, yet they strive to comprehend God's knowledge, so that they may know it, but this is, of course, impossible. If the human reason could grasp His knowledge, it would be able also to define His essence, since both are one and the same, as the perfect knowledge of God is the comprehension of Him as He is

in His essence, which consists of His knowledge, His will, His life, and all His other majestic attributes. Thus, we have shown how utterly futile is the pretension to define His knowledge. All that we can comprehend is that just as we know that God exists so are we cognizant of the fact that He knows. If we are asked, 'What is the nature of God's knowledge?', we answer that we do not know any more than we know the nature of His true existence.⁹⁰

That I myself say is that all these difficulties to which all of them are subject have as their cause the fact that they established a relation between our knowledge and His, may He be exalted; for every sect considers the things that are impossible for our knowledge and consequently thinks that this also holds necessarily with regard to His knowledge or else that the thing is obscure for it. The philosophers ought to be blamed more strongly than anyone else with regard to this question. For they were those who have demonstrated that there is no multiplicity in His essence, may He be exalted, and that He has no attribute beyond His essence; but that, on the contrary, His knowledge is His essence, and His essence His knowledge. As we have explained, they were those who have demonstrated that our intellects are incapable of apprehending the true reality of His essence as it really is. How then can they think that they can apprehend His knowledge, seeing that His knowledge is not a thing that is outside of His essence? For the selfsame incapacity that prevents our intellects from apprehending His essence also prevents them from apprehending His knowledge of things as they are. For this knowledge is not the same species as ours so that we can draw an analogy with regard to it, but a totally different thing.⁹¹

Maimonides maintains the same tension found in other areas of rabbinic literature. Man possesses free will, but God is omniscient. While Maimonides reinterprets Jewish symbols with Aristotelian meanings, he, does not carry this process to its ultimate conclusion. It remains for Gersonides to break the contradiction.

Chapter VI

GERSONIDES

Gersonides (Levi Ben Gershon) lived in France during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. He studied philosophy at an early age, in spite of Ben Adret's ban against teaching metaphysics to the young. He began Milchamot Ha-shem, The Wars of God, his major philosophical work, before reaching his thirtieth birthday. Though he never held a rabbinical position, he was well versed in all areas of religion and science. Issac de Lattes extolls the depth of his knowledge in the preface to Sha'are Zion.

The great prince, our master Levi b. Gershon, was the author of many valuable works. He wrote a commentary on the Bible and the Talmud; and in all branches of science, especially in logic, physics, metaphysics, mathematics, and medicine, he has no equal on earth.⁹²

Gersonides' greatness is manifested in his clear absorption of the teachings of Aristotle into Judaism. He abandons what some scholars call the hidden doctrine of Maimonides. In Gersonides' writings, communication is not weakened by the placing of an unorthodox opinion within a mass of traditional statements. Gersonides believes that reason leads to truth. Since the Torah is frequently vague, it should be interpreted with the conclusions of philosophical analysis. He asserts that his teachings are consistent with the Torah, and he could not believe that the Bible could teach irrational ideas.

We should not be inhibited before the Torah, by saying what is false. It is not a distortion of the Torah (to follow) the truth, for the manner of the Torah does not compel us to believe false things. It makes our way perfectly straight in order that it is possible to reach the truth.... These are the efforts made in a complete examination: first, (study) from the aspect of logical inquiry, and second, clarification of the matters by bringing to philosophical inquiry.... the knowledge of our Torah.⁹³

One will see that faith is dependant upon the human success as in the manner we have explained. From this aspect he is led to believe simple short statements on the matters of the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, and matters of Midrash and Agada and in the words of the prophets. He knew in truth that we do not distort this knowledge with the study of philosophy. It agrees with the teachings of Torah.⁹⁴

Thus, Gersonides believes that the teachings of philosophy are synonymous with the teaching of Torah.

Gersonides disagrees with Maimonides on the issue of free will as it relates to God's knowledge. Maimonides argues that man has free will, but God has knowledge of particulars. Analogies and comparisions of man's qualities and God's attributes are impossible.

Similarly we say that He has known all the things that are produced anew before they have come about and that He has known them perpetually. For this reason no new knowledge comes to Him in any way. For, seeing that He knows that a certain man is now nonexistent, but will exist at a certain time, will go on existing for such and such a duration, and will then again become nonexistent, there will be for Him no additional knowledge when that individual comes into existence as He had known beforehand.⁹⁵

The philosophers ought to be blanded more strongly than anyone else with regard to this question. For they were those who have demonstrated that there is no multiplicity in His essence, may He be exalted, and that He has no attribute beyond His essence; but that, on the contrary, His knowledge is His essence, and His essence His knowledge. As we have explained, they were those who have demonstrated that our intellects are incapable of apprehending the true reality of His essence as it really is. How then can they think that they can apprehend His knowledge, seeing that His knowledge is not a thing that is outside of His essence? For the selfsame incapacity that prevents our intellects from apprehending His essence also prevents them from apprehending His knowledge of things as they are. For this knowledge is not the same species as ours so that we can draw an analogy with regard to it, but a totally different thing.⁹⁶

Gersonides argues that Maimonides' position is so intellectually untenable that it was adopted only because of religious pressures.

It was already explained that the opinion of Maimonides, may his memory be for a blessing, regarding the knowledge of God, may His name be blessed, violated the foundation of logical inquiry. Logical inquiry leads to

a different conclusion, as I will explain. However, there appears in this matter much pressure from the Torah.⁹⁷

Maimonides attempts to hold both sides of the dilemma. For Gersonides, such a balance is illogical and contradictory. Gersonides contends that if events are truly contingent, and if God senses what transpires in the future, God would hold opinions, not knowledge. If man has free will, and does the opposite of what God predicts, then God would make mistakes. If man has free will, and God is not sure what would happen, God would be confused.⁹⁸

Gersonides challenges Maimonides' emphasis upon a transcendence of God's knowledge. He argues that there is a resemblance between man's qualities and God's attributes. Otherwise, man would be unable to say anything about God. Thus, Gersonides concludes that the distinction between divine and human knowledge is a matter of degree, not quality. Gersonides, like Crescas, argues that God knows things from some aspects, but not from others. Crescas tenuously contends that events are determined from the aspect of their causes, but not when viewed as isolated phenomena. Gersonides' position is more viable. He argues that God knows particulars insofar as they are ordered and defined. However, regarding particulars which are not included within the divine order, God knows that they are contingent. By recognizing a limit to the natural order, Gersonides establishes an area of freedom into which God's knowledge does not extend. Thus, Gersonides resolves Maimonides' dilemma by asserting that in areas where man has freedom, God does not know particulars.

We say that it was already made clear (above Treatise 3:1-2) that these contingents are defined and ordered in one respect and are contingents in another respect. This being so, it is clear that the respect in which He knows them is the respect in which they are ordered and defined.

Similarly (this) is the case with the Active Intellect, according to what was explained (in Treatise 3:2), because in this respect it is possible that they should be known. The respect in which He does not know them is the respect in which they are not ordered, which is the respect in which they are contingents. This is because in this respect it is impossible that they should be known. However from this (latter) respect He knows that they are contingents which possibly will not be actualized with regard to the free will which God, may He be blessed, gave to man in order to perfect what was lacking in the governance of the heavenly bodies, as was explained in the preceding treatise.⁹⁹

God, may He be blessed, knows those things which exist in this world insofar as they possess a universal nature, i.e., essences, (but He does) not (know) them insofar as they are particular, i.e., contingents. In this way there is no plurality in His essence, because He only knows His essence, and in His knowledge of Himself He knows everything which exists insofar as it possesses a universal nature.¹⁰⁰

Gersonides' conception of the Active Intellect is directly related to his notion of a God who knows particulars only insofar as they are ordered and defined. It is the Active Intellect "which endowed all sublunar nature with intelligence and purpose... (and) enables the rational power in man to rise from a tabula rasa".¹⁰¹ The order within the world is the essence of the Active Intellect. Just as the style of a craftsman is found upon all his creations, so order is the expression of the Active Intellect. Gersonides realizes the importance of his interpretation of a limited Active Intellect. Other philosophical approaches contradict themselves because their definition of knowledge is limitless. Gersonides' definition of the Active Intellect is directed solely toward the ordering found in the world.¹⁰²

But when the matter is posited as it was explained here concerning the Active Intellect, knowledge has as its object something remaining in itself outside of the intellect. It is the ordering which is in the soul of the Active Intellect, and universals are something accidental to it from the side of our abstracting what exists for sensible individuals outside of the soul. Just as ordering in the soul of the craftsman is found in everyone of the vessels which in some manner are created from it so this ordering is found in every individual created from that ordering. It is clear that none of the falsities which necessarily follow from positing universals which exist outside of the soul follow from the position.¹⁰³

The similarity of divine and human attributes extends to Gersonides' definition of knowledge. "By definition there can be no knowledge of the infinite."¹⁰⁴ Knowledge, for God as well as man, must be limited to a specific magnitude. Gersonides sets this limit as the order found in nature. Within these boundaries, God's knowledge is "encompassing (*סְגוּלָה*) and inclusive (*סְחָוָה*)."¹⁰⁵

In his commentary on the Torah, Gersonides' radical approach to divine knowledge of particulars is not evident. Confronted with divine action in the Torah, he couches his ideas in more subtle terms. He mentions the interpretation found in the Midrash in which God hardens Pharaoh's heart in order to increase His signs, and thus instills within Israel a lasting faith in God.

It is clear that Pharaoh's heart was hardened in order to increase His signs. The intention was to increase his signs in order that Israel would grasp (the belief) that He is God and they will teach it to their children after them so that this essential faith will continue forever.¹⁰⁶

He also adds an emphasis upon the special importance of the patriarchs.

I hardened Pharaoh's heart because of an excess of My providence upon Israel for the sake of the fathers. This will be a reason I must increase My signs in the land of Egypt. Since Pharaoh will not listen to you I will smite Egypt with My plagues and bring out My hosts.¹⁰⁷

Gersonides argues that Pharaoh was wicked and deserved punishment. "It is clear that Pharaoh and his people were very wicked. This is why they oppressed Israel, and they sinned as was explained profusely in the Torah."¹⁰⁸ Gersonides believes that Pharaoh was a free man who chose to sin. God did not control his behavior.

CRESCAS

Hasdai Ben Abraham Crescas lived in Spain during the fourteenth century. Though he enjoyed considerable wealth, he did not escape the persecutions which afflicted the Jewish people. He was imprisoned in 1391, and his only son died a martyr. He comforted his spirit during this tragic misfortune by developing a deep religious faith.

This religiosity is evident in Or Hashem, The Light of God, his principle philosophical work. Central to Crescas' philosophy is an attack upon Aristotelian influences within Judaism. This places him in direct opposition to the teachings of Maimonides and Gersonides. His emphasis resembles Judah Halevi's. Both Halevi and Crescas wrote "full-scale critique(s) of Aristotelianism". Also, they attempted "to establish the doctrines of Judaism in a positive manner".¹⁰⁹ Though they agree in their hostility to Aristotelianism, they differ in their approaches to philosophy in general. Whereas Halevi resolves many philosophical problems with a reliance upon faith in an authentically transmitted tradition, Crescas remains within the boundaries of philosophy. Crescas' sole enemy is not philosophy, but the influence of Aristotle upon religion.¹¹⁰

Crescas' originality is evident in his discussion of free will. Though he never completely abandons free will, his emphasis is deterministic. He argues that an action, when viewed as an isolated phenomenon, may be considered a result of free will. However, when viewed from the perspective of its causes, it is determined. Crescas implies that free will is an illusion. His style of presentation is the same as that of Gersonides. Crescas presents

the philosophical and religious arguments in favor of free will, the corresponding arguments in support of determinism, and finally his own position.

In Crescas' technical language, the issue of free will is phrased as a study of the nature of the possible. If the possible is a reality, then man possesses the power to autonomously control his actions. If the possible does not exist, then man's actions are necessarily controlled by external causes. Crescas presents several philosophical and religious arguments in support of the reality of the possible. First, experience teaches that man is able to control many actions through his will.

We see many matters are dependent upon the will. It is clear that man wills. If he does not will, things would be compelled. This would not be will, but compulsion and obligation. (Since this is obviously not true), it is clear that the nature of the possible exists.¹¹¹

Second, Aristotle explains in his Book of Physics that an event can be due to chance or accident. If all events are determined, this is obviously not true. For example, the sun rising in the morning is classified as an accident.¹¹² Third, if the possible does not exist, then all endeavors and strivings which characterize man's behavior, are futile activities. Attempts to acquire property, knowledge, or protection from dangers would be foolish. This is false.¹¹³ Fourth, the will of man is a non-material entity. It is connected to the rational soul, but separated from all things material. It is impossible for the spheres, which are material, to influence the will.¹¹⁴

After presenting the philosophical arguments in support of free will, Crescas mentions the religious proofs. If man's actions are compelled, the positive and negative commandments are without purpose. Similarly, reward and punishment are meaningless.

Nevertheless, from the aspect of Torah it is clear also from several perspectives that if all matter is forced, and man is compelled in his actions, the positive and negative commandments would be useless. Man's forced actions weaken their benefit.... Also, if man is compelled in his actions, reward and punishment would be a divine injustice. God forbid! It is clear that... reward and punishment fall only according to a free man's actions.... Reward and punishment form the foundation of all Torah. Man is free and his actions are devoid of all force and coercion.¹¹⁵

Crescas also presents several religious and philosophical arguments in support of determinism, or in Crescas' language, of the non-existence of the possible. First, Aristotle showed that all things which are destructible came into existence through four types of causes. Therefore, all things are dependent upon pre-existent causes, which in turn are dependent upon other causes. The chain of causality ends only with the first cause, God. Dependency upon causes negates the existence of the possible.

It was explained in natural science that all things are subsumed under coming into being or decaying. One of four causes by necessity are responsible for their existence. The existence of the causes by necessity creates the effects. If so, the existence of the effect compels the possible. When we study this, (we conclude) also that the existence of the causes is by necessity compelled and linked to the existence of other causes.... By necessity their existence is obligatory, and not possible. When we seek those reasons, other reasons will appear. There is a causal chain until it concludes in the first existent, the necessary existent, God. If so, it is clear that the nature of the possible does not exist.¹¹⁶

Second, Crescas emphasizes that all movement from potentiality to actuality requires an external initiating cause. Similarly, when the human will acts it moves from potentiality to actuality, and requires an external motivating cause. An examination of the agreement between the desire and the imagination, which is the composition of the will, reveals the causes for a particular action. The mover of the will cannot be the will itself. The hypothesis that the will is capable of moving itself contradicts the principles that movement from potentiality to actuality requires an external cause and

that for every will there must be a preceding will. This proves that the possible does not exist.

It is known and agreed upon that everything that moves from potentiality to actuality requires an external cause to transform it....The will moves from potentiality to actuality by means of an external cause. This matter moves the potential power to collect and agree with the imaginative power as explained in the Book of Metaphysics.... When we say that the will moved itself, it is the opposite of compulsion. This conclusion is incorrect for two reasons: If the matter moved itself and brought it from potentiality to actuality, it contradicts previously agreed upon principles. For every will there is a preceding will which moved it and caused it to change from potentiality to actuality, and for this preceding will there is another preceding will. The will is compelled by other wills.¹¹⁷

Therefore, two men who are similar in all respects would act in the same manner. An external cause influencing only one would be required to promote different behavior.¹¹⁸

Crescas also offers religious reasons for rejecting the existence of the possible. If God is omniscient, and knows events before they take place, man cannot act against His knowledge. The possible does not exist, and man is not free.

As has been explained in the first section, the knowledge of God, may He be blessed, encompasses all particulars. They would not be particulars if they did not occur and become real. They are by necessity compelled to occur.¹¹⁹

Moreover, if free will exists, verses in the Bible which demonstrate God's foreknowledge and control of events could not be explained.

From the aspect of logical inquiry, the nature of the possible does not exist. Also, from the aspect of Torah there is no doubt to its truth. We mentioned that the knowledge of God is all-encompassing in particulars. (It is not possible) that they do not occur. Also, the prophets know many particulars before they occur. If they are not compelled in themselves (to occur) it is the will, and they hang upon choice. (However) like the matter of Pharaoh, they teach openly that the nature of the possible does not exist.¹²⁰

After summarizing both sides of the argument, Crescas presents his own position. He concludes that the possible can exist from some aspects, but not from others. When viewed as an isolated phenomenon, free will is possible; when viewed in terms of its causes, free will does not exist. Though Crescas does not abandon free will, he clearly implies that it is an illusion.

In the section devoted to his personal opinion, Crescas lists refutations of the arguments in support of free will. The first argument contends that it is possible to discover causes in only some instances. Therefore, the possible exists in those instances in which causes could not be discovered. Crescas contends that this argument is based upon circular reasoning. To prove that the possible does not exist, it is only necessary to prove the possibility of causes. The second argument contends that man senses that he chooses or exerts his own will. This is refuted by the principle of causal necessity. Every will must have a cause. The third argument is based upon the reality of accidents. Crescas contends that this argument only proves the reality of the possible when an event is viewed as an isolated phenomenon. When evaluated from the aspect of its causes, the nature of the possible remains non-existent. The fourth argument stresses man's strivings and studies. It is refuted by viewing these dispositions within man as the product of long chains of events with many causal links. The fifth argument separates the spiritual will from the material spheres. It is refuted by stressing that the rational soul is a hylic substance. Thus, Crescas argues that it is possible for the bodies of the spheres to influence a soul and move potentiality to actuality.

Crescas concludes his refutation of the arguments in support of the existence of the possible by summarizing his general position.

It is clear that in all the arguments from the aspect of philosophical inquiry that the existence of the possible is not compelled in relationship to itself, but is compelled from the aspect of causes.¹²¹

After presenting the philosophical aspects of his position, Crescas deals with several religious considerations. First, he discusses the role of the positive and negative commandments. Crescas' problem is obvious: If events are causes, there is no need for the commandments. Crescas views the positive and negative commandments as causes and effects in a long chain of events.

If actions are possible from the aspect of themselves and obligated in relation to their causes, the positive and negative commandments are not nullified, but possess an important purpose. This is because causes which transform things are possible in relation to themselves and are linked together as steps.¹²²

Second, he discusses reward and punishment. Supporters of free will have argued that if events are determined, reward and punishment would be an injustice. Crescas interprets reward and punishment in terms of his emphasis upon causality. They become the effects which necessarily follow from the observance or violation of the commandments. He argues that there is no injustice in this perspective.

Indeed when we study it, there is no laxity from what is asked. If reward and punishment were obligated actions and actions were dependent upon the results of causes, one cannot say there is injustice in them. Similarly, there is no injustice in the placing of a sacrifice in a fire and being burned.¹²³

Third, Crescas discusses God's omniscience. Events are possible when viewed as isolated phenomena, but are compelled from the perspective of God's foreknowledge.¹²⁴

Crescas realizes the heterodox nature of his argument. He directly states that it should not be publicized to the masses because it is a potentially dangerous weapon. For example, the wicked might believe that there is no punishment for sin. It is interesting to note that in spite of Crescas' concern with removing Aristotelian ideas from Judaism, he separates God entirely from the reward and punishment process. They are links in the chain of causality. Moreover, Crescas all but states that free will is an illusion.

Torah and philosophy (teach) that the nature of the possible exists in actions in relation to themselves, but not in relation to their causes. However, the publication (of these ideas) may damage the masses in that they may constitute a defense for those who do evil. This obligation is proper in a manner in which man does not feel the coercion or compulsion. This (illusion) is the foundation of choice and will.¹²⁵

In conclusion to his presentation, Crescas notes the story of Rabbi Akiba who enters and leaves paradise without being hurt. He stresses one of Rabbi Akiba's famous aphorisms, "All is foreseen, but free will is given." For Crescas, the phrase, "All is foreseen," implies that in relation to causes, all things are determined, whereas the phrase, "free will is given" discusses events viewed as isolated phenomena.

Already the righteous one, who entered in peace and went out in peace has testified out of the depths in the short statement: 'All is foreseen, but free will is given.' 'All is foreseen' teaches that all things are ordered and known, it is the great foundation which is undoubtedly true.... 'Free will is given' testifies to the secret of his free choice. The will is given to every man from the aspect of himself.¹²⁶

Crescas refers only briefly to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, but his position is clear. Though he gives a token endorsement of free will, he emphasizes determinism. However, Crescas' God is still the God of the philosopher. He stresses that the causal chain begins with God (the first cause). Crescas limits divine activity because God is only the initiator

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of events. Like Maimonides, who places miracles into the natural process at the time of creation, Crescas places the decision to harden Pharaoh's heart at the time of the first cause. Thus, the writings of Aristotle clearly influenced one of its principal critics.

The conflict between determinism and free will is unavoidable; both ideas are mutually exclusive. In spite of this contradiction, the agadic and philosophical materials examined in this thesis emphasize the rabbinic endorsement of both sides of the paradox. The Midrash, the Commentaries, as well as the writings of Saadia, Halevi, and Maimonides embrace both free will and determinism. Even Crescas and Gersonides, who struggle more than the other thinkers to break the paradox, still insist upon emphasizing the importance of both sides of the conflict.

The characteristics which differentiate the rabbis' positions reflect their intellectual environment, their relationship to the Jewish tradition, and their personal beliefs. A modern stance would be dependent upon the same kinds of influences. We live in a different world than the rabbis; our world emphasizes the limits of rationality, the dependence of religion upon psychological feelings, and a recognition of the process of cultural interface. In evolving a modern response to the free will-determinism conflict, it is hoped that modern skepticism will not harden our own hearts. Modern man may intellectually appreciate the rabbis' position. However, it is desirable that such an appreciation will not be an end in itself, but lead to the formulation of contemporary beliefs and opinions.

- ¹ Yalkut Shemoni (Berlin: Chorav, 1929), Part I, Number 225, page 139.
- ² Mechiltah d'R. Shimon bar Yochai, arranged by Yaakov Nachom Halevi Ephshteen and Ezra Zion Milamed (Jerusalem: Cheurat M'ketzay Mirdameem, 1956), page 44.
- ³ Midrash Hagadol Shemot, commentary by Mordecai Margaliot (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1957), 10:1, page 145.
- ⁴ Ibid., 14:4, page 255; Yalkut Shemoni, Part I, Number 230, page 142.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Yalkut Shemoni, Part II, Number 512, page 302.
- ⁷ Midrash Hagadol Shemot, 14:4, page 255.
- ⁸ Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Vol. V, commentary by Moses Merkeen (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1959) 13:1, pages 153-5; Midrash Rabbah, translated under the editorship of Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, Vol. III, Exodus, translated by Rabbi Dr. S. M. Lehrman (London: Soncino Press, 1939) page 150.
- ⁹ Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 5:7, page 89; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 5:7, page 84.
- ¹⁰ Midrash Hagadol Shemot, 10:1, pages 143-145.
- ¹¹ Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 11:6, page 142; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 11:6, page 142.
- ¹² Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 13:3, page 154; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 13:3, page 152.
- ¹³ Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 13:1, page 153; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 13:1, page 150.
- ¹⁴ Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 9:8, page 127; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 9:8, page 125.
- ¹⁵ Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 13:3, page 154; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 13:3, page 152.
- ¹⁶ Midrash Hagadol Shemot, 9:34, pages 140-1; Tanhuma (Jerusalem: Lewin-Epstein, Ltd., 1962), Vayaran, Number 17, page 78a; Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 12:7, page 149; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 12:7, page 149.

- 17 Midrash Hagadol Shemot, 8:11, page 123; Midrash Rabbah Shemot, Merkeen, 10:6, page 135; Midrash Rabbah-Exodus, Lehrman, 10:6, page 135.
- 18 Midrash Hagadol Shemot, 14:4, page 255; Yalkut Shemoni, Part I, Number 703, page 226, Number 229, page 142.
- 19 Yalkut Shemoni, Part I, Number 225, page 139.
- 20 Rashi, Exodus 14:3. All translations of Rashi's commentary are taken from Abraham ben Isaiah and Benjamin Sharfman, The Pentateuch and Rashi's Commentary; A Linear Translation into English (Brooklyn: S.S.&R. Publishing Company, Inc., 1950)
- 21 Rashi, Exodus 7:3; Tanhuma, Vayarah, Number 3, page 72b.
- 22 Ibid., 14:4.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid., 7:22.
- 25 Ibid., 3:6-7; 3:11; 7:14.
- 26 Ibn Ezra, Exodus 7:3.
- 27 Ibid., Deuteronomy 5:26.
- 28 Ibid., Exodus 14:4.
- 29 Ibid., 9:34-5.
- 30 Ibid., 10:20.
- 31 Ibid., 7:13.
- 32 Ibid., 8:15.
- 33 Ibid., 9:12.
- 34 Ibid., 10:1.
- 35 Ibid., 7:14; 3:11.
- 36 Nachmanides, Exodus 7:3. All translations of Nachmanides' commentary are taken from Charles Chavel, Ramban-Commentary on the Torah, Exodus (New York: Shilo Publishing House, Inc., 1973)
- 37 Ibid., 9:12.
- 38 Ibid., 10:1.

³⁹Ibid., 14:4.

⁴⁰Sforno, Exodus 9:7.

⁴¹Ibid., 7:14.

⁴²Ibid., 9:32.

⁴³Nachmanides, op. cit., Exodus 7:3.

⁴⁴Sforno, Exodus 7:3.

⁴⁵Ibid., 10:1.

⁴⁶Ibid., 11:9.

⁴⁷Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964, page 70.

⁴⁸Saadia Gaon, Sefer Haemunot Ve-Hadaot, translated into Hebrew by Judah Ibn Tibbon (New York:Om, 1947), Part IV, page 91; Saadia Gaon, The Book of Beliefs and Opinions, translated from the Arabic and the Hebrew by Samuel Rosenblatt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), Part IV:1, page 181.

⁴⁹Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 92; Saadia, Rosenblatt, pages 181-2.

⁵⁰Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 92; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 182.

⁵¹Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 92; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 183.

⁵²Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, pages 92-3; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 183.

⁵³Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 93; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 184.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 93; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 185.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 94; Saadia, Rosenblatt, pages 187-8.

⁵⁹Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 95; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 183.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 95; Saadia, Rosenblatt, pages 183-9.

⁶²Ibid.

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⁶³This discussion is found in Part IV:4. However, logic would indicate that it should have been placed in IV:5.

⁶⁴Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 97; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 191.

⁶⁵Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 98; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 193.

⁶⁶Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 99; Saadia, Rosenblatt, page 196.

⁶⁷Saadia, Ibn Tibbon, page 100; Saadia, Rosenblatt, pages 198-9.

⁶⁸Judah Halevi, Sefer Kuzari, translated by Judah Ibn Tibbon (Israel: Madaran, 1943), III:23, pages 64-5; Judah Halevi, Book of Kuzari, translated from the Arabic by Hartwig Hirschfeld (New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1946), page 143. Also see Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, pages 88-89; Halevi, Hirschfeld, 247.

⁶⁹Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, I:77, pages 90-91; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 49.

⁷⁰Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, pages 88-89; Halevi, Hirschfeld, pages 247-8. Also see Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, IV:3, pages 24-4; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 180.

⁷¹Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, pages 100-1; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 251.

⁷²Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, page 87; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 245.

⁷³Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, page 91; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 248.

⁷⁴Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, page 92; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 249.

⁷⁵Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, page 101; Halevi, Hirschfeld, Page 251.

⁷⁶Halevi, Ibn Tibbon, V:20, pages 95-6; Halevi, Hirschfeld, page 249.

⁷⁷Moses Maimonides, Shmoneh Prakeem, translated by Joseph Corfinkle (New York: Columbia University, 1912), pages 86-7.

⁷⁸Ibid., page 92.

⁷⁹Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge, translated by Moses Chamaazahen (New York: Ezre'el, 1933), page 36b.

⁸⁰Moses Maimonides, Moreh Nevuchim, translated by Samuel Ibn Tibbon (Vilna: Peval Garbar, 1904), III:17, page 24b; Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, translated by Shlomo Pines (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1933), page 469.

- 81 Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 33b, Middah 16b, Megillah 25a.
- 82 Moses Maimonides, Shmonah Prakeem, page 39.
- 83 Ibid., page 90.
- 84 Ibid., pages 90-1.
- 85 Ibid., page 94.
- 86 Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, Ibn Tibbon, III:17, page 24b; Pines, page 462.
- 87 Moses Maimonides, Shmonah Prakeem, pages 94-5.
- 88 Moses Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, The Book of Knowledge, 6:2-3, page 88a.
- 89 Moses Maimonides, Shmonah Prakeem, pages 99-100.
- 90 Ibid., pages 100-102.
- 91 Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, Ibn Tibbon, III:20, pages 29b-30a; Pines, page 481.
- 92 Isaac Broyde, "Levi ben Gershon," The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc.), page 26.
- 93 Gersonides, Milchamot Ha-Shem. (Leipzig: Druck und Verlag von Carl V. Lorck, 1866), Introduction, page 7.
- 94 Ibid., I:14, page 91.
- 95 Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed, Ibn Tibbon, III:20, pages 29a-b; Pines, page 480.
- 96 Ibid., Ibn Tibbon, page 30a; Pines, page, 482.
- 97 Gersonides, op. cit., III:30, page 132.
- 98 Isaac Husik, A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy. (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1916) page 344.
- 99 Gersonides, op. cit., III:4, pages 138-9; Norbert Samuelson, "Gersonides' Account of God's Knowledge of Particulars", Journal of the History of Philosophy, Vol. 10:4, October, 1972, page 399.
- 100 Ibid., III:1, page 120; Samuelson, page 411.

- 101 Norbert Samuelson, op. cit., page 399.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Gersonides, op. cit., I:1, pages 46-7.
- 104 Ibid., III:4, pages 144-5; Samuelson, op. cit., pages 402-4.
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 Gersonides, Commentary on the Torah (Brooklyn, New York: Rabbi Jacob M. Shurkin, 1958), page 60b.
- 107 Ibid., page 58a.
- 108 Ibid., page 58a.
- 109 Julius Guttmann, op. cit., page 256.
- 110 Ibid., page 257.
- 111 Abraham Crescas, Or Hashem. (Vienna, Druck und Verlag von Adalb, 1860) v:1, page 45b.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 Ibid.
- 116 Ibid., v:2, page 46a.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 Ibid., pages 46a-b.
- 120 Ibid., page 46b.
- 121 Ibid., v:3, page 48a.
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Ibid.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid.

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