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A Translation of the Introduction and
First Twenty Sections of
Tsedah LaDerech
of Menachem Ibn Zerach

Roy Allen Walter

Thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the require-
ments for the Degree of
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I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Abe Walter. Whatever I have learned at the Hebrew Union College would be totally meaningless if not for the great love of Judaism instilled in me by them. It is what they have given me more than anything else that will be responsible for the proper use of my knowledge. If I can pass on to others but one-tenth of the love they have given me, I will indeed have much to offer.

This thesis would not be complete without a special thanks to Rabbi Uri Smith. His knowledge earns him a place in my bibliography; his warmth, wit, and endless willingness to be of aid to me when I could go no further on my own have earned him a place in my heart. Thank you, Uri; without you there would be no thesis (and no Rabbi Roy Walter)!

Introduction

Tsedah LaDerech, written in 1373 by Menachem Ibn Zerach, is a short code of Jewish law. I found it to be an interesting work, more because of the author's involvement in what he was saying than for any chochmah revealed in the book. The personality -- or, more correctly, what I believe to be the personality -- of the man came through loud and clear, for more than just a compilation of laws, the book is a defense of halachah and what was for him the "Jewish point of view" regarding the major areas of science, philosophy, religion, etc.

The book, organized in classical form, has five general parts which are subdivided into chapters and sections. Each part, chapter, and section has a title describing its contents in increasingly more specific terms: i.e., the part is general, the chapter more defined, and the section exactly labeled as to contents. In addition there is an introduction -- of particular value for its record of Jewish "scholarship" up to his time -- in which the character and personality of the author brought most clearly to the surface.

I guess like most people in this world, Menachem Ibn Zerach thought he was right. I consider his assertions of correctness one of the major impressions made on me. At times I felt them to be so obnoxious that I wanted to

shake him violently and ask him if he was aware of the consequences of what he was saying; but alas I only found myself shaking my fist at the typewriter for another typographical error. The man obviously could not answer me; perhaps that infuriated me more than anything else.

I cannot help but choose some of his medical reports as example, since they are still so timely in consequence. Ibn Zerach states them with such sureness, as though any varying opinion is obviously wrong (or was I reading that in?! The field of medicine is still today a great deal of speculation, especially regarding cures for such things as colds and burns. But no doctor ever speculated on the cure; he told you. It certainly points out clearly that confidence in one's opinions does not make them right, especially if you analyze Ibn Zerach's medical descriptions in the light of what we know today.

What this, and many other things in the thesis, pointed out most clearly to me, is that there are certain things in this world which just don't change, and one of them is that there is a certain range of topics that we will never be able to answer definitively. However, that will never prevent men from stating that they have answered them. And though there is a chidush here and there, we really have basically nothing new to add. You hear distinct echos of the Ibn Zerach-Aristotelians debate

when listening to Drs. Reines and Petuchowski.

I think doing this thesis also gave me confidence that for as long as it has gone on in the past, this same process will continue at least as long into the future. As long as men follow their hearts as well as their minds, I think we can count on it. God willing!

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הקדמת הספר



דברינו וחבורנו ומלולנו. עלינו לשבח לאדון הכל לתת גדולה ליוצר בראשית
את השמים ואת הארץ וכל צבאם לחפצו ולרצונו ובזמנו על מכוננו. וברא את
האדם בצלמו בצלם דמות תבניתו. ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים שבו הכדילוג מן החיה
ומן הבהמה למען ישכיל וידע ויכיר מי שאמר ויהי העולם. ויולד בדמותו
בצלמו שת אשר ממנו הושתת מין האדם

Introduction to the Book

At the beginning of our composition "it is our duty to praise the Master of all, to ascribe greatness to Him who in the beginning created heaven and earth" (traditional prayerbook) and all their hosts, completely according to His will and at the appropriate time and place; who created man in His own image (Genesis 1:27), in the image of his own formation; who "blew into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7), by which He distinguished him [man] from the various other kinds of animals, in order that he know fully who the Creator of the universe is.¹

"And he [Adam] bore in his own image Seth" (Genesis 5:30), from whom the species of man was founded in the

world.² After him and from him came forth individuals who are known by their names, such as Noah and Shem and Eber, who lived for many years and from whom the account of creation was received. They are the faithful witnesses³ to creatio ex nihilo.

Behold, Noah lived during [the time of] Adam, and Abraham during [the time of] Noah. Abraham [then] is the third witness of the creation of man, as is explained by an accounting of their years.⁴ Jacob served Shem, the son of Noah (B'reishit Rabbah 56:11), who lived with his father on the ark and knew everything that happened.⁵ Then Jacob recounted it to his sons, and his sons to their sons,⁶ and their sons to their sons until today.

In olden days, from the time of Enosh until the flood, as we have received it from our father, they would worship the sun and the moon and the stars.⁷ The earth was full of violence until the end of flesh came before Him (Genesis 6:13), may He be blessed, when He brought upon them the waters of the flood (Genesis 7:10). "But Noah found favor with the Lord" (Genesis 6:8), and "The Lord shut him in" (Genesis 7:16) with his sons, "when He wiped out all [other] existence" (Genesis 7:23).

But those who came after them also erred, for they built a tower for an evil purpose, as we are told by our sages, may they rest in peace. However, it also

appears that God desired that the earth be settled, "for He created it not a waste; He formed it to be inhabited" (Psalms 45:18), so He spread them [mankind] out to all the ends of the earth.⁸

We have indeed received the reliable tradition that they did not know God in these generations until Abram -- or Abraham -- was born; he made known the existence of God and His providence. He opposed those who rebelled either with awareness or because of ignorance. Then Nimrod bound him and "they humbled his feet with fetters and iron overcame him" (Psalms 105:18) because the king was afraid that he would remove their [the peoples'] faith and uproot the basis of their erring. He cast him in the fiery furnace, but God, may He be blessed, saved him, as we find in the words of the sages.⁹ From the beginning of creation until Abraham was born was 1948 [years], and he was 48 years old during the generation of the mixing [of the tongues].¹⁰

During those days were [to be] found individuals who were servants of God, like Shem and Eber, but they did not feel as their duty to awaken the people to the service of God or to reprove them for the evil of their deeds. If they did teach, it was to someone who asked them. However, Abraham our father, may he rest in peace, from the day that he gained wisdom and dedicated himself

to call on the name of the Lord, would rebuke them [for evil deeds]; he also predicted to them concerning the good as reward for their good deeds and for their service to God, may He be blessed. Thus he converted many souls, as it is written, "And all the persons they had gotten¹¹ in Haran" (Genesis 12:5).

When God, may He be blessed, saw that he [Abraham] drew near to serve Him and cling lovingly to Him, announcing that there is in the world a Creator and Director who through His will created everything which exists besides Himself, He chose him and designated him as the¹² one to whose seed He would give the Land of Canaan.

Clearly God did not send him to groups or to individuals to command them or to warn them concerning even one of the commandments, until our fathers went down to Egypt and became assimilated with the Egyptians and learned their ways. "Then Egypt caused the children of Israel to serve with harshness" (Exodus 1:13). "They cried to the Lord in their sorrow", (Psalms 107:6), "and their cry for help went up to the Lord from their servitude" (Exodus 2:3). Then He sent His servant Moses to bring them out "with signs and with wonders and with a strong arm" (Jeremiah 32:21). Through him [i.e. Moses] was the existence of God made known, along with His providence and His sovereignty in the world, for we find

that Pharoah said, "I know not the Lord" (Exodus 5:2). But after he came to know of His sovereignty and His wonders, he sent forth the people, he and his servants and his people with gold and silver and clothes (Exodus 12:35). Thus the prophecy and mission of Moses became known to the whole world.

Through His favor of those who served Him and loved Him and accepted Him, He increased the Torah and commandments for them by the faithful prophet of his house [Moses]. He gave them His Torah, the Torah of truth, and the laws and righteous judgments -- which "He did not do with every nation" (Psalms 147:20)--- to teach them and to bring them near to serve Him, so that we would be meritorious and live and inherit good and blessing in the world to come.

He made known to Moses, may He rest in peace, the explanation of the commandments that He had given him at Sinai orally ¹³ "for making many books...is a weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). However, he did write down the five books of the Torah which contain all of the commandments

Everything that can be explained about a commandment for it to be understood completely can be clarified from the Torah by one of the thirteen rules by which the Torah is expounded. ¹⁴ There are also things which are

said which are not explained by the thirteen rules, and these are called Halachah L'Moshe MiSinai [Law (Given) to Moses at Sinai], such as the shin and the black straps of the t'fillin, and similar verses which are found in the Talmud.

Know that the essence of the written law is dependent upon the oral law and [that] if not for it [i.e. the oral law] the written law would not be clear and we would be lost, because you will find many verses in it [the Torah] where one contradicts the other. In addition, not one of the commandments would be understood in its [real] form except by explanation; [this is so] even for matters which are not classified as commandments. For example, it is written, "Now the time that the children of Israel dwelled in Egypt was 430 years" (Exodus 12:40). But we find that Kohath was among those who went down to Egypt; he lived 130 years, and his son Amram lived 137 years (Exodus 6:18-20), and Moses was 80 years old when the Holy One blessed be He was revealed to him in Egypt (Exodus 7:70). When you add all these, they equal [only] 347 years.¹⁶ For many verses like these you will not find an explanation except through their tradition.

Similarly, regarding the commandments it is written in one place it says, "For seven days one eats un-

leavened cakes" (Exodus 12:15), and it is written in another place it says, "For six days one eats unleavened cakes" (Deuteronomy 16:8). Again, it is written in one place it says, "But on the first day you shall remove leaven from your house" (Exodus 12:15), and it is written in another place it says, "For seven days leaven shall not be found in your house" (Exodus 12:19). Now if on the first day you remove the leaven, how will seven days be counted without leaven in your house, for it [the leaven] would be found in the house on the first day before they brought it out? Again, it is written in one place it says,, "Count fifty days" (Leviticus 23:16), and it is written in another place it says, "Seven weeks you shall count for yourself" (Deuteronomy 16:9), which is forty-nine days and no more.

There are many like these but I will not be lengthy, for the scholars [who preceded me] have already dealt with this in detail. However, in addition, we would not know the characteristics of the kosher animals or how to differentiate between the fat that is permitted and that which is forbidden; nor would we even know which fat was permitted and which fat was forbidden. Also all the [forbidden] works of Shabbat are not made known from the Torah. It is [merely] written, "Those who profane it [the Sabbath] shall surely be put to death"

(Exodus 31:14). But we would not know what the profanation [of the Sabbath] is and several [other] things that are explained concerning [Sabbath] works.

Similarly, in the matter of the tabernacle, we would not know its dimensions or its plan concerning the cover and the walls, or concerning the commandment of circumcision whether to circumcise the corona membrane or not. So also regarding the commandment for tsitsit -- it is not made clear from the Torah how many threads [there must be] and how they should be made -- and also regarding t'fillin we would not know how they should be made or how many paragraphs, etc.

Similarly, the laws are not explained by the Torah truly [in detail], except by the true tradition. All of them were transmitted to Moses at Sinai, and he taught them to the children of Israel during the forty years that they did not have to trouble themselves or work for their food and other bodily needs. In addition to the community, [at large, certain] individuals of that generation received them [specifically], as it says in Avot, "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and passed it on to Joshua, etc." (Avot 1:1).

After this, how can a nation or a city or a family or a wise man proclaim that he knows that his explanation, if contrary to the explanation of the sages, may they

rest in peace, is better. Who would listen to him except one who seeks an opportunity to pursue his own stubbornness! Anyone who pursues an explanation other than this does not believe in the Torah of Moses at all; he denies it and the Lord God of Israel, even if he does not utter it.

But now I shall return to the intention of the book, for according to the true tradition -- as the greatest of authors [Maimonides] wrote -- the lore of the sages, may they rest in peace, is divided into five parts.

The first division

The explanation received from Moses our teacher, may he rest in peace, which has support and proof within Scripture so that there is no division of opinion [among the sages].

The second division

That which is called Halachah L'Moshe MiSinai [Law (Given) to Moses at Sinai] and has no proof text, yet there is no division of opinion.

The third division

Laws which they derived by

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means of logical deduction,
and if they differed over
this matter -- each one ac-
cording to his own reasoning
and proof -- it is not, far
be it, that there be a doubt
in the tradition.

The fourth section

Prohibitions which the sages,
may they rest in peace, de-
creed regarding [legally] per-
mitted things, so that people
would not do any thing that
is forbidden. They based
these things [i.e. the decrees]
upon what the Torah says,
"And you shall watch my watches"
(Leviticus 18:30); [that is,]
make a watch for My watch. As
for the meat of a bird in milk
or secondary sexual relations,¹⁷
no one argues over most of
them. A prohibition which be-
came widespread there is no
arguing over -- thus did they
say regarding the eighteen

11.

things that Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel, whose decrees have become widely accepted as forbidden, that even Elijah is not able to cancel them.

The fifth section

Rabbinical improvements and customs that the wise men of the generation ordained and directed in the matter of ritual law and business law, in addition to the early enactments, like those of Moses and Joshua, and Ezra. After them there were further ordinances, some by individual sages of the generations, like Hillel or Rabban Gamliel or Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai and the like, or by the sages collectively, as for instance those decrees of Usha and other similar groups.

As for the customs, there are those which are widely observed throughout all of Israel, and there are those which are practiced [only] in [certain] lands within the Diaspora; and then there are some [practiced] only in certain localities. Furthermore, the sages, may they rest in peace, said that a custom [often] overrides a law, so that they should not be lax with any custom performed on the authority of a sage, which they follow be-

cause of public welfare. However, if it is a custom in error, for example, any custom which is performed because they were under the impression that there is a prohibition in this manner but for no other reason, a custom such as this it is permitted to change.

Since the true tradition does not record all these differences, I shall not mention them, for there is no end to the [numerous] details of these divergent customs. Furthermore, so that they [Israel] should not rely on what is written on dead parchments; rather in their hearts should be written the things (Jeremiah 31:32) which are received and agreed upon. And further still, that they not be found to be people who copy anything which comes to the fullness of his heart to bring it close to him. And thus it will not happen like it happened to those who copy the Torah and the prophets and who concocted in their hearts untrue, non-traditional verses and words and letters, as well as unacceptable
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explanations.

We have even found some among our sages that would write secret scrolls and the like, until arose our holy Rabbi [Judah HaNasi], who was a great man, a prince of the seed of princes, from the seed of David on the side of his mother and on the side of his father from the tribe of Benjamin, as is explained in the Palestinian

Talmud. He found favor in the eyes of Antoninus, the Roman king who ruled over the land of Israel.

He saw that wisdom was becoming progressively weaker, and that [knowledge of] the Torah was diminishing and the tradition coming into doubt, and that the wise men were decreasing and becoming scattered to the ends of the earth, and that trouble was increasing in the world -- especially for a people who because of their sins were exiled from their land and made slaves in a land of captivity -- under the yoke of taxation and forced labor. He arose by consent of those who were with him, and he, may he rest in peace, became the author of the source of all these divergences. He wrote the Mishnah with such faultless clarity and concision that a man would not be able to remove from his language even one word, not even a letter.

The sages who came after him studied closely the ordering of the Mishnah regarding what comes first and what comes last, and they [investigated] each and every letter in his words, as it is clear to one who has thoroughly studied the Talmud, which was compiled on the Mishnah by Rav Ashi, a great and wise man who spent much time in the academy, as I will explain. He put the mishnayot into a logical sequence and divided them into the six known orders:

I. Concerning the obligatory commandments regarding seeds, like [not mixing] the various kinds, and the Sabbatical year, and not eating the fruit of the tree for the first three years, and tithing, and those things which are contiguous and connected to it.

Seder Zeraim

II. Concerning the [observance of the] seasons of the year, and the set times and in what way we are obligated toward them.

Seder HaMoed

III. Concerning permitted and forbidden sexual intercourse, and the laws which are connected to this, such as leverite marriage, chalitza, betrothal, divorce, and marriage.

Seder Nashim

IV. Concerning the laws between a man and his fellow man and that which is connected to it.

Seder N'zikin

V. Concerning sacrifices and their laws. Seder K'doshim

VI. Concerning laws of purity and their

opposite and that which is con-

nected to them.

Seder Tohorot

Each of these orders is divided into known sections, and he called each one by its own name as befits the particular tractate. Then each tractate has known divisions, each one according to its subject, which are called chapters. The orders, just as the tractates and the chapters, are all placed in incorrect logical order as the great author [Maimonides], may he rest in peace, explained. This writing was completed in the 3949 anno mundi, which is the year 500 of the Seleucid era, which [marks] the beginning of the rule of Alexander the Greek in the year 120 since the destruction of the Temple, the destruction of which was due to our sins, in the year 3828 anno mundi. Then Rabbi Hiya and Rabbi Hoshiah wrote b'raitot and tosafot; these are the essential ones, for they were students of our holy Rabbi [Judah HaNasi]. Then Rav wrote the Mechilta, the Sifra and the Sifrei, and Rabbi Yochanan, who was [both] the greatest and the first of the Amoraim, wrote in the year 200 after the destruction the Talmud Yerushalmi in five orders, for we

have not found a Seder Tohorot in the Jerusalem Talmud, except for Masechet Nidah. Then Rabbah wrote Midrash Rabbah, B'reishit Rabbah and the companion writings.

Now Rav and Rabbi Yochanan and Shmuel and Resh Lakish were the leading Amoraim. Rav Ashi was the greatest among the Jews [of his generation] and a very wise man, and close to the King of Persia; they sages, may they rest in peace, said, "From the days of Moses until Rabbi we did not find Torah and greatness in one place" (Gitin 59:1). They also said, "From the days of Rav until Rav Ashi we did not find Torah and greatness in one place" (Sanhedrin 36:20).

And when he [Rav Ashi] too saw that the strength of the holy people was growing weary and that the troubles in each and every generation were increasing, and the [study] of Torah was fading and coming to an end, he compiled all the words of the commentators and annotators of the Mishnah, which was compiled by our holy Rabbi [Judah HaNasi]. We have from him [Rav Ashi] in Seder Zeraim a composition of Masechet B'rachot and all of Seder Moed, except Masechet Sh'kalim, and of Seder Nashim. Furthermore he wrote nothing of Masechet Eduyot and Avot from Seder N'zikin, nor of Masechet Midot nor Kinim from Seder K'doshim, and nothing at all for Seder Tohorot, except for Masechet Nidah.

Rav Ashi made two editions, i.e., he made two versions of them like a writer who writes and rewrites, and then reviews his composition and corrects it and shortens it in places and lengthens it in others, as God inspires him. He was the head in Sura for some sixty years and then died in the year 4187 anno mundi; for in the letter of Rav Shrirah Gaon, it is written that he died in the year 738 which began in the year 3449 since creation, which began with the reign of Alexander [i.e., the Seleucid era], for in the year 45 during the building of the Temple, the reign of Alexander began.

But he [Rav Ashi] did not finish it. Rather Marei Mar and Mar Bar Rav Ashi his son completed it, and from then until now Jews have accepted it and observed it wherever they live, for it was inspired by God, may He be praised. In it he wrote explanations for the Mishnah with its derivations and also matters which were innovated by the Tannaim and the Amoraim, who reviewed all morals and manners, which he included there and the tongue is too tired to recount.

Similarly, he wrote in it legends and stories [which] are strange to what is perceived and what is rational at first glance. Some of it is obscure; [that] he dealt with as the ancients who concealed it had done by speaking in parables -- even [regarding] natural things,

for they would call the matter "female" and the form "male." Since the mind of all men will not suffer [to learn] these things, all the moreso rational ideas which are supernatural.

There is no doubt that these things are unquestionably true. The fault lies rather with our defective reason which does not grasp the words of the sages, may they rest in peace, in their real meaning. Just as they spoke on the words of Moses our teacher, may he rest in peace, so we will speak on the words of those who expounded his words on the basis of the tradition and on the deeds that the wise and famous men recorded, men of God who were in the distant past, may they rest in peace; for our sages said, "for it is not a vain thing for you" (Deuteronomy 32:47). If it is vain, [then] it is due to the smallness of our mind; it is not empty because of the Torah which is perfect (Sifrei, Ekev). Thus do I say that if we are unable to understand the words of the ancients, "it is not a vain thing;" it is only due to our reason, and we should not suspect wise and fit men because of [our lack].

After this composition, that is to say the writing of the Babylonian Talmud, the only compositions are those of the ~~Ch~~aninim, who came after the Saboraim, who came [in turn] after the Amoraim. Rabbi Shimshon ben

Kayarah, though not ordained a Gaon, wrote Halachot G'dolot in the year 4501 anno mundi. Rav Yehudai Gaon wrote Halachot P'sukkot, though he was blind, and he died in the year 4623. Then Rav Acha of Shabchah wrote HaSh'eltot, which are arranged according according to the order of the weekly portions; there he wrote all the laws arranged by weekly portion according to content. From some of these came more important laws, some in Arabic, which are not according to the order of the tractate.

After them Rabeynu Yitzchak Alfasi, who was from Kil'at Achmad, wrote. He came to Spain in the year 4848, staying a while in Cordova and then going on to the country of Lucenna which is only twelve parasongs from Cordova. Thenentire city was made up of Jews, and tradition has it that there were some of the remnants of the exile from Jerusalem who had settled there and built the city. Rabeynu Yitzchak lived there, and he wrote Halachot B'kotzer l'talta Sidrei¹⁹ which is like an abridged Talmud.

Since the days of Rabeynu Hai, none arose like him, for his writing was spread to the ends of the earth. Rabeynu Yitzchak the Tosafist said of him that a man would not be able to write a composition such as his without the

Shechinah resting on him. He lived about ninety years and died in the year 4883, having raised up many students, the greatest of whom was Rabi Yoseph ben Menassah.

After him arose the Rambam in Cordova. He went to Egypt and there dwelt in great honor with the king of Cairo, known as the Sultan. He was a great sage in all Greek wisdom, but he had special skill in Talmud. His language was clear and lucid in both the Holy Tongue and Arabic. In his youth he wrote a commentary to the six orders of the Mishnah, which he called Sefer HaMaor; and whoever has not seen his introduction to the orders has never seen brilliance [at all].

The introduction that he wrote to Zeraim in particular, and [also] to Seder Tohorot, he wrote in Arabic, after which he was inspired to write a book called Mishneh Torah. There he explains everything that became law from the six orders concerning things practiced in our time and things practiced at the time of the Temple -- sacrifices and all the things like them concerning purifications and the like. There is nothing in the Talmud which he omitted (Isaiah 40:26).

One who has spent time [studying] Torah and then the six orders of the Talmud and [then] observes his [Maimonides'] order in books knows [to appreciate] how he arranged and placed his laws into chapters by nega-

tive and positive commandments, and what is written [in Scripture]. From the substance of what he included in one of his sections, you know how great was his strength in [all of] Talmud. Who would be able to match his achievement, and who could attain the clarity of his Hebrew style, so brief in structure yet broad in substance! His books have been spread throughout the Diaspora.

He also composed commentaries on the Talmud in Arabic, but due to a lack of studying the Talmud by those who came after him, these works were not so widely [read]. He also wrote in the other [areas] of wisdom books without end, especially books on medicine. During his life he saved entire congregations in various countries of the Diaspora. Furthermore, in his writings and his commentings, he strengthened the faith of several congregations among Israel. He was a very pious man, in addition to his wisdom, and generous and very hospitable.

I have seen an old man whose name is Rabbi Yitzchak Aroti, who told me in the name of his father who had stayed with the Rambam in Egypt for a long time about his greatness and his virtue and the discipline the above-mentioned sage, peace be upon him, would observe.

After him came Rabbi Meir HaLevy, who came from Burgos and settled here in Toledo, where still today

there are some of the descendants of his daughters. He was a great sage in the Talmud, for he wrote commentaries on most of the Talmud -- long and broad -- concerning legal decisions, difficult questions, and answers to them. He wrote a longer and a shorter edition.

In his time, and similarly before this, they only studied in this land the laws of Rabeynu Alfasi. Rabeynu Meir HeLevy died at Pesach in the year 5004 anno mundi, and after him came Rabeynu Yonah from Gerona, a great sage and erudite in the Talmud, who wrote novellae concerning the laws of Rabeynu Alfasi. Including in them what the Tosafists thought, he derived new insights and many derivations by his keen mind.

Up to here we have spoken [only] of the land of Babylonia and the western lands. In France, however, there had already been scholars since time of old with great strengths in the Talmud. Before the time of the great Rabbi Shlomo the Tayar from the city of Trois, they would study from the commentaries of Rabbie Gershom, a Luminary of the Exile, which were lengthy. Then the holy spirit rested upon Rabbi Shlomo, and he became a great expert in Talmud. He wrote commentaries to the Babylonian Talmud in pure, concise language, the likes of which there had never before been. If not for him, the study of Talmud would have been forgotten from Israel.

His grandsons from his daughters' side took it from him, namely Rabeynu Ya'akov from Ramburg, which is a city of three parasongs from Trois; he is also called Rabeynu Tam, who wrote a book called Sefer HaYashar, "which cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir" (Job 28:160. And Rabeynu Shmuel [the other grandson] who expounded Baba Batra. Also Rabeynu Yitzchak, the nephew of Rabeynu Tam, who was known as the Tosafist, which subject he taught and studied in the Yeshivah.

My French teachers have born witness to me in behalf of their rabbi that he was well-known and famous; that sixty rabbis had studied under him, and that everyone of them would sit and listen to the laws which he would relate. Furthermore, each one would study by himself a volume which his fellow students did not study; then they would review by heart; every law Rabeynu Yitzchak would give, they would have at the tip of their tongue, whether that law was found throughout the Talmud or only in that one place, until all doubts that are in the Talmud were made clear to them. And every law or statement, Tannaitic or Amoraic, for which there was a seeming contradiction in another place, he would sit and revise by means of this [the sixty], as it is clear to everyone who has seen their Tosafot and the questions and their answers and the commentaries and the objections

that they raised against their grandfather, Rabbi Shlomo.

After them were innumerable sages, experts, and great men in the Talmud in France and Germany. Under the influence of Rabeynu Shlomo and his grandchildren, they learned Talmud, studying in every place we have heard of; and we know that [it was] the Babylonian Talmud that they studied. They are the indirect and direct cause [of the continuation of the Talmud].

In the year 5065 Rabbi Asher ben Rabbi Yechiel was inspired to go out from Germany, he and his sons and his household, to live in Toledo, and there he lived and taught Torah publically, raising up many students. Through him, they supported those who studied the Talmud and he wrote Chibbur HaB'sakim in the manner of the Alfasi, adding to them the words of the Tosafot and the opinions of the new interpreters like Rabeynu Meir HaLevi and the Rambam and Rabbi Yona and HaRav Avraham who wrote new interpretations after the Tosafists. He also composed a commentary and abridged version of the Tosafot of Rabbi Shimshon from Shuntz, who was the main student of Rabeynu Yitzchak the Tosafist, adding notes and comments from the other innovators, especially from Moreynu HaRav Meir of Rothenberg, his main teacher. He [Asher] died in the year 5081 anno mundi, and they paid him great honor at his death. In his place his son Moreynu

HaRav Yehudah, may he rest in peace, taught Torah. He had eight sons, of which the greatest was Rabbi Yechiel, but he died before his father.

After him came Rabbi Shlomo the Chasid, who occupied himself with good deeds and righteous acts. Then after him came HaRav Ya'akov, who wrote four books on [different] sections of law, in which he wrote many of the questions and answers of his father. And after him, [came] Moreynu HaRav Yehudah and HaRav Elikim and Rav Moshe and Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Shimon, may they rest in peace

And I, the writer and speaker, the humblest of my family, am Menachem the son of the saintly Rabbi Aharon ben Zerach. I was born in the land of Navarre, but my father was among those driven out of the land of France from which the expulsion date was 5066 anno mundi, in the month of Av. At about age sixteen, I was married to the daughter of Rav Binyamin Avitz, may he rest in paradise, who taught Torah in Ishtilia. The greatest of his students were the sons of Askarah, an important family who knew Torah well, as well as Mishnah, and who were very wealthy.

In the year 5085 anno mundi, "The Lord became angry at His people" (Psalms. 106:40), and the King of France

who ruled over Navarre died. So the people up and counseled together "to destroy completely all the Jews" (Esther 3:13) who were in their kingdom; in Ishtilia and the other places in the land, they killed some six thousand Jews. My honorable father and mother and [their] four children, younger than I, became martyrs, and they were killed for the unity of His name, may God revenge their blood. "I alone escaped" (Job 1:16) from among the house of my father, "smitten of God and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4), for twenty-five men inflicted wounds upon me, and I lay naked among the dead from twilight until midnight, on the twenty-third of the month of Adar. Then at midnight a horseman, a friend of the household of my honorable father, came and brought me out from among the dead and took me to his house and dealt righteously with me. After He who heals freely, may He be blessed, applied healing to my wounds, I took it upon myself to go and study at Toledo. A new king arose over Navarre, and we, the sons of the dead, cried angrily to him for vengeance of the blood of our fathers which had been spilled, but it did us no good.

At that time I studied some two years with my teacher HaRav Y'hoshua ben Shoiv, may he rest in paradise, and afterwards I came to this country in the year 5091. They detained me in Alkah, where I studied with Rav

Yoseph Ibn Alish, may he rest in paradise. We would review constantly, day and night, he and I, from the beginning tractate in the Tosafot of Rabbi Peretz. He died in the year 5110 anno mundi, so the congregation requested from my honorable self that I teach Torah in his place. If I had not been staunch, I would have done as they requested.

But at that time, while Rav Yoseph, may he rest in paradise, was still living, I came to study with my teacher HaRav Yehudah, may he rest in paradise, in Toledo Seder Zeraim and Seder Tohorot with the commentaries of the Rosh [Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel]. I reviewed with him the text of Seder Moed, and Seder N'zikin, and Talmud Gitin; and I noted the various texts according to his reading. Then from the year 5110 until the year 5128 I studied with my good friends and colleagues constantly in Alkal'ah, most of which study was with the Tosafot of Rabeynu Peretz.

And it came to pass in that year that the Lord enlightened the spirit of King don Enrique, the son of King don Alfonso, so that he fought with his brother don Pedro, who ruled in the year 5110, following the death of his father don Alfonso. He besieged the walled cities and captured them, beseiging Toledo in the year 5128 in

the month of Iyar. Then at the end of the year, don Pedro departed with his entire army from the city of Seville to make war against his brother and to save the city of Toledo from seige.

King don Enrique went out to meet him and slew him at the city of Montil; thus the government became established into the hands (II Chronicles 17:5) of King Enrique, "and his kingdom was established firmly" (I Kings 2:12).

During those days when they were making war and the whole land was an abyss and "each man did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:25), the people of the land robbed and spoiled most of the congregations of Spain. Israel became very lowly; it was a time of trouble for the Jews anywhere in the kingdom of Castille, the likes of which has not been seen since they were exiled there, "many killed by the sword and many taken into captivity" (Jeremiah 43:11). The holy congregations, the congregation of Toledo, was smitten double in the seige, until they ate the flesh of their sons and daughters (Lamentations 4:10), and there died in the seige some eight thousand men, old and young [alike], "in the seige and in the straightness" (Deuteronomy 28:53), from hunger and lack of everything. Upon the few remaining, the king put such a tax that there did not [even] remain a

a piece of bread to those who dwelt there.

I too was left empty of everything I had had, for they plundered me and deprived me; they left me wounded and took my clothes from me, and I had nothing left of all my hard labor except my books, my house, and my land. They who sustained and supported my living [did so] with the help of his highness, don Shmuel Abravanel, may God protect him, one of the citizens of Seville who helped me escape from the destruction.

I came to the city of Toledo to live there, for the remaining people who knew me beforehand pressed me, so I consented to live with them. Perhaps God will be gracious to the hosts of the remnant of those who escaped. They gave me and my friends who studied with me daily bread, and I remembered all the goods which his highness, don Shmuel, had done with me. I found him an intelligent man, who loved sages and kept them near him and dealt well with them. During the days that the rumbling of the times quieted from upon him, he wanted to study in the books of those who wrote and spoke.

Though I saw that those who dwell in the courtyard of our master the king, may his glory be exalted, are the shield and the shelter for the rest of His people, each man according to his degree and his station, nevertheless, through the confusion of the time and their

desire for luxuries and unnecessary things, they decrease [their practice of] obligatory commandments, especially the travelers and those servants who have audience with the king. These [commandments which they neglect] are prayer, blessings, observing the watch of permitted and forbidden things in the area of food, keeping the Sabbath and the festivals, Seder Nashim, and these also erred concerning wine.

Out of love for his highness, may God protect him, I stepped out of line slightly making myself target for the arrows of teachers and scholars by going beyond my group. I wrote for him a book and called it Tsedah La-Derech. I divided it into five sections: the first chapter -- concerning all the laws of prayer and blessing and their meaning; the second -- concerning the laws of forbidden and permitted things and their meanings; the third -- concerning the laws of women; the fourth -- concerning the laws of the Sabbath and the festivals and their meaning; and the fifth -- concerning the laws of fasts and their prayers.

I closed the composition with the coming of the Messiah and the world to come, since this is the hope of everyone who hopes for the ultimate end. And in each and every portion I have made general sections, and in each of the sections I have made chapters, so that any-

one who is seeking a particular questions may find where it is.

I informed and confess and give thanks, not out of humility but for the sake of truth, that anyone who reads this writing and who finds in it gratification, whether from the standpoint of laws or from the standpoint of reason and the pearls of wisdom, should not praise me. Rather he should praise the sages and writers who came before me, for their waters do I drink, according to their words I speak, and from their books do I recount. Their precious things I have uncovered and their sapphires I am recounting. With their heifers I plowed and their dispersed [writings] have I gathered. I have brought together their dispersements, and from their pearls have I built a house. From their jewels I have stretched a tent, from their words I have founded an upper chamber. From the taste of their sweetness have I found reason and from the bread of their desireable things have I eaten the bread of desireability; "I hang my ears on large trees" (Pesachim 112a).

Behold I am but a student who gleans the pearls of my wise and noble teachers, among them the famous sage the Rambam and the Ramban and the sages like them, and from the words of Chacham Rabbi Avraham ben Ezra in his grammar and of Chacham Rabbi Yitzchak ben Yisrael

on astronomy, and from the words of the doctors on medicine. Anyone who is acquainted with them and their works will find these my words among their words and these my sections among their writings. I will not glorify myself in borrowed clothes, nor will I appropriate [fraudulently] the status of great ones. It is true [only] that I united that which was scattered and dispersed in their books and castles and courts in order of their families and lineage, each one at his own time and place, every raven with its own kind, "secular matters which were worked over in a holy matter" (Hulin 2b), in the service of God, may He be blessed.

To call upon Him daily from new moon to new moon, to separate between the holy and the profane and between accidents and substance, "pleasant words are like a honey-comb sweet to the soul and healing to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24). To strengthen him whose knee falters, to save the unfortunate from the yoke of the [evil] inclination and from the slavery of tyranny, "it guides the humble in the way" (Psalms 25:9) and teaches sinners the way. Because I have done his slaughtering, poured his wine, and set his table for body and for soul, in an invaluable manner, I called its name "Preparations for the Road," and I told myself to remove the stones from the path of those blessed of the Lord, both large and

small. By teaching what is revealed, one indicates what is hidden. Now "go and write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book that it may be for the time to come, forever, and ever." (Isaiah 30:9).

"I will also speak of your testimony before kings and I will not be ashamed" (Psalms 119:46), "for as often as I speak, I cry out" (Habbakuk 1:2), violence and spoil I cry, "for the word of the Lord is made a reproach to me and a derision" (Jeremiah 20:8) because I heard public slander from the philosophers saying "to one who abides in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalms 91:1) and to one who frequents his doors every day: "What shall be given to you and what shall be done more for you" (Psalms 120:3) if you become wise in "justice for the fatherless and the widow" (Deuteronomy 10:18)? And what will He add for you who become wise in saving the poor man "from ones stronger than himself" (Jeremiah 31:11) or if you know the law of the Shor Tam and the Shor Moad (Baba Kamma 2:4) and to distinguish between the holy and the profane, between the pure and the impure, between the animal which may be eaten and the one which may not be eaten?

Behold you have saved the substance of the temporal body with its honor and its glory. You know its

accidental purities and impurities; yet you did not save your soul from the traps of folly and foolishness. You gave your strengths to others and your years to the cruel. Pleasure and its essential impurity and purity you have not informed your soul. What will you do in the end of days?

They mocked the messenger of God as if they had gone up "on a ladder set upon the earth with the top of it reaching to heaven" (Genesis 28:12) "and seen God" (Exodus 24:4) and spoken with them face to face, and "He showed them all His treasure house" (II Kings 20:13). "A deceived heart turned him aside" (Isaiah 44:20) when they "drank the bitter, cursing waters" (Numbers 5:18) that they drew from the Greek well which does not contain living water. Rather, [his] is a statement which is according to his own intelligence, his own perception, and his own knowledge in natural things, according to the nature of reality. But he did not ascend "to the heavens and come back down" (Proverbs 30:4), nor did he come to know the secrets of the earths that are there in it or what is found in all the ends of the earth.

Though he [Aristotle] did not see and hear or believe in the wonders of God, not even what is above and what is below, what is within and what is beyond, my complaint is not against him.. Perhaps he knew that

his strength only found that which was close to the wisdom of man, and in places of Torah concerning a lack of his knowledge in wise things. Rather, my complaint is against those who are called by his name [i.e. Aristotelians], "who know not, neither do they understand; they go about in darkness" (Psalms 82:5).

With the greatness of their tongue and the sweetness of their words, they proclaim the sound of noise of their atheism to the crowd, that their power of reason has grasped the treasures of heaven, and they have seen visions of God in their faulty imagination which was revealed to them, "a spirit that passes away and comes not again." (Psalms 78:39). "They think they have a knowledge of God; but their ways are not His ways and their thoughts are not His thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8). Concerning them the prophet said, "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jeremiah 4:22). "Woe to him who strives with his Maker, as a potsherd with the potsherds of the earth" (Isaiah 45:9); they imagine they know their end. They have grasped the end of the matter, but they go backward instead of forward, for they were struck blind when they said, "We put forth our hand and we ate of the Tree of Life."

In reality, however, they ate the deadly poison

which kills so that there is no resurrection. Concerning this Solomon said, "For she has cast down many wounded, yea a mighty host are all her slain" (Proverbs 7:26), [meaning] in this world and in the world to come.

"So he prophesied, not knowing what he prophesied" (Baba Batra 119b); "he brought forth slander concerning the discussion of Abaye and Rava "to extinguish love" (Song of Songs 8:7), "for the Lord is with me as a mighty warrior; therefore, my persecutor shall stumble and they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed, for they have not prospered" (Jeremiah 20:11).

"Listen to me, you that know righteousness, people in whose hearts is the Torah of the Lord [texts reads My Torah]. Do not fear the taunt of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings" (Isaiah 51:7). "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew" (Deuteronomy 32:2) on those who speak out against those more righteous than themselves. Their language is arrogantly proud; they scorn the words of those wiser than themselves with the mischief of their throat.

Do they not know or hear and was it not told to them by the greatest of the sages before their ~~every~~ eyes that the greats of their sages consumed their days [trying to] grasp the truth of the sciences by delibera-

tion, through their hypotheses and syllogisms! They died, but wisdom and the attainment of truth they did not find, for the greatest and wisest among them could not explain the natural, hylic things. Neither he, nor those who came after him, found reasonable explanations for the changes of the spherical movements.

Behold it is said to Job concerning Nature, "Gird up your loins now like a man, I will ask of you and you tell Me" (Job 40:7). All of the questions are concerned with the sub-lunar sphere; how much the moreso with the spheres and the stars that have so many uncertainties [i.e., the super-lunar spheres] -- "they grope for the wall like the blind" (Isaiah 59:10) -- and even more definitely there is no need to mention [the problems of] the Intelligences.

However, our prophets and our sages, who received [prophecy] from the Real Creator without preconceptions and syllogisms, perceive things in their very essence. If they found the explanation of these things on their own, how much the moreso the faithful one of the house [Moses], with whom the Lord spoke face to face (Exodus 33:11) without parables and riddles, so that he understood things abstracted from all substance, with no curtains, through an illuminating mirror [i.e. directly and clearly], in such a way that no [other] human mind had per-

ceived, even through prophecy. He taught Joshua his servant, and those like him, things as they really are, and he [Joshua] received from him [Moses] all that was hidden. He [Moses] taught knowledge to the people as much as their reason could perceive.

We found for our sages, may they rest in peace, a concrete memorial in the art of intercalation by giving [it in] concise wording in the Talmud, so that those who were not circumcised were unable to grasp them. This is known to the sages of our faith who studied their books and saw the words of our sages, may they rest in peace, in the well-known laws. Shmuel said, "The paths of heaven are as clear to me as the streets of Nahardiah" (B'rachot 58b).

Also in the wisdom of Nature, both the earlier and the later sages of the Greeks wearied themselves to discover what the Amoraim knew. [For example] by order of the king of his times, they brought before Rabbah sixty kinds of blood to test out, and he said concerning each one what species of animal or fowl it was. Let the Greeks and their students come and tell about this great sight.

It is also well-known that the Tannaim were experts in all knowledge -- in all kinds of magic and the planting of cucumber and the whispering of palm trees

and the like (Sanhedrin 68a). It is said of Mar Avraham Gaon, as the author of the Aruch wrote, that this Gaon in the year 4690 anno mundi wrote that he understood the whispering of the palm trees and spoke of future things. Similarly they said, "Every figure of one square cubit has a diagonal of one and two-fifths cubits" (Baba Batra 116). And similarly, any circle having its diameter one handbreadth has in its circumference three handbreadths, for they made a close estimation without mentioning the fractions. Similarly there are [other] laws like this that show that they were experts and fully knowledgeable in the wisdom of geometry -- as [for example] the tube of a reed which Rabban Gamliel had by which to measure [distances] on the earth [apparently some form of sextant], and there are many others in the Talmud like this.

Similarly did our sages, may they rest in peace, write that the sages who lived in the days of the Talmud knew how to make, with a compound of the elements and a joining of the letters [of the alphabet] a creature which had the power of mobility and sensibility, like a calf, etc. (Sanhedrin 65b). Similarly, [they knew how] to make forms of the human structure without a self-subsistent, vital spirit, as it is written, "And He blew into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).

It is also known that they did not appoint a single

man among the seventy of the Sanhedrin who was not wise in all sciences and an expert in all languages and in all kinds of magic; whereas, we do not find that the philosophers achieved [even] one of these qualities. Rather they would talk with their [own] mouths and teach according to their [own] intellect and speak about the material as a part of an eternally operating Nature.

That which was not constant they would circulate slander about it that it was an accident. There is no doubt that if they were worthy of seeing the wonders of change in Nature, they would say it was chance, as their magician precessors of Egypt had done. And he who did not see or hear would say of the one who told him about the miracles, "all that his mouth utters is vanity and a story of the old women who spin wool by the light of the moon."

Not in this manner did the Lord our God establish for us after we knew that our fathers had seen the signs and the wonders and the strong hand, and had undergone the great and awesome standing, that of Mt. Sinai, and had learned and received from Moses, a choice mortal, may he rest in peace, who stood on the mountain forty days and forty nights, without eating bread or drinking water, so that that which was physical about him became spiritual.

[Rather] our fathers stayed with him for forty years, while their food, the manna, came down from the heavens, a day's portion at a time, except on Friday when an extra portion [fell] so they could collect two days' worth, since on the Sabbath day the manna would not fall. Their clothes did not wear away nor did their feet become swollen all forty years (Deuteronomy 29:4). They learned from him Torah and commandments, and they received from him the explanations that explain it, just as he had received from God, may He be blessed, and not from his own intellect or from his own syllogisms, for all the essences of the words and the foundations of the commandments. All this is beyond their nature and their foolish wisdom.

Should not every enlightened and faithful person kill himself in the diligent study of the tent of our perfect Torah and its explanations from those who received it, each man from another, and so on, for they promise in it the recompense in the world to come and the punishment to one who transgresses, [which is] more than all the philosophers and magicians [have to offer]. In it they teach manners and morality and the wisdom of ethical virtues and intellectual virtues with unequivocal brevity, far more than all the books of the philosophers.

Can you not see in Tractate Avot how much is included of ethics and manners! All their words in Aggadot are spread out over all kinds of virtues. The Bible is but a drop in the sea of their wisdom. It was well-known to them that there were many sages who punished and killed the wicked with [but] their glance. Have we heard and was it told us from of old that the greatest of philosophers [i.e. Aristotle] by his logic and his nature and his theology would do one of these things.

But the one who desires to flee to his refuge city under the wings of the Shechinah and the fear and love and service of God, may He be praised, bespeaks an excuse to follow stubbornness and the error of his wayward inclination. When he wanted to be proud and to show off his piety to the common man, he would say, "God desires the heart" (Shahedrin 106b). This is the Torah and the laws and the statutes and the commandments for every man.

Woe to their souls, for they sin and cause many others to sin. Not for them nor their masses nor their crowds are those who frequent the doors of the Talmud, which is an explanation of the complete Torah, for the call to the people is to look at the rock from which they were hewn and at the hole of the pit from which they were dug and to hold to the standards of their holy and

pious fathers who have always been famous men. Also to comprehend all that they do regarding the commandments of the Torah and its explanations, concerning a minor commandment as much as a major one, and a small as much as a large thing, like everything they explained in it, and all the ordinances and edicts and customs that our sages, rest their souls, ordained and formulated and used to do, as our master Moses, may he rest in peace, said, "You shall not turn from all that He has told you to the right or to the left" (Deuteronomy 17:11).

Behold, I have undertaken to recount and to write of the words of the elders concerning things which are [intended] "to love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 11:13), "to fear Him forever" (Jeremiah 32:39) -- that which follows from the study of the Mishnah and its explanations, from the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds, from the opinions of the Gaonim and the sages of France and the innovators, and particularly in the wisdom of Rabeynu Asher, who was an expert in the chambers of Torah and a master of inference and logical thought. He saw and read and taught the words of the former and later rabbis and legislated correctly; thus it is worthwhile to rely on him.

I have also written a matter for praise in the opening sections, which I wrote before the legal sections,

to know and to make known and to be made known that it is no vain thing. And if there is a rationale for the totality of the commandments as well as individual ones, it is greater and better and higher than what I have written, for there are seventy faces to the Torah; what is written in this book is not a vain thing.

Pray listen and know; learn from its mouth Torah, and it will be your portion and your fate. Let these words be in your heart and in your soul, and wave them as a wave offering; its fruit will be for food and its leaves for healing. And I will prostrate myself and bow down, I will bless and praise and give thanks to the One who has no image nor form nor comparison: "He instructs the sinner in the way" (Psalms 25:8).

The introduction to the book is completed and with the help of God we will begin. Praise to the One who is awesome in deed, the One who offers words of goodness.

"O that my ways were directed to observe Your statutes" (Psalms 119:5). "I have chosen the way of faithfulness, Your ordinances have I set before me" (Psalms 119:30). "Make me to understand the way of Your precepts that I may talk of You wondrous works"

(Psalms 119:27). "Remove from me the way of falsehood and grant me Thy law graciously" (Psalms 119:29). "I will run the way of Your commandments, for You enlarge my heart" (Psalms 119:32). "I told of my ways and You answered me; teach me Your statutes" (Psalms 119:26). "Let Your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen Your precepts" (Psalms 119:173).

Part I: Concerning all the Prayers and Blessings and
their Meanings, and Concerning Things Connected
with the Love of God, Containing Five Chapters.

Chapter I : Concerning the Explanations and the Order of
the Blessings and Prayers, and their Efficacy
and Meaning, Containing Forty-One Sections.

Section I Deals with Necessary Things to Consider
for One who Goes on a Journey.

Every man in whom God has placed wisdom is obligated to keep in mind the service of God, so He, may He be blessed, will be before him always, as David, may he rest in peace said, "I have set the Lord always before me, surely He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalms 16:8). This [is so] even more for the one who goes out on a trip, for the roads are dangerous. Therefore, he needs mercy and must prepare himself for several things which a man needs, whether for the needs of this existing, destructible world or for the needs of the world to come, since he knows good and well that the end of all men is death.

One of the things to which he must pay attention is that he must make a will as the sages, may they rest in peace, said: From where do we get the idea of a will? -- from the Torah, for it is written, "He should command his house" (II Samuel 17:23). The former sages, when they would go out to see their fields and vineyards, would make a will, for they said, "All the roads are known to be dangerous."

Because man is by nature social and needs others to serve him, he is obligated to choose for himself ser-

vants, good, God-fearing men. Especially does [this apply to] great men and nobles, who spend most of their time in the palace of kings [so that] the one who takes care of expenses should be fit and faithful, who would not feed something forbidden on utensils which are forbidden, such as Canaanite [non-Jewish] vessels, and the like. Similarly he should appoint within his household a professional slaughterer who is learned and who would not stumble into forbidden things; and also a cook who knows the laws of removing the veins from the meat and of salting, for much stumbling has come through such people. Their downfall is usually concerning fat and blood, the prohibition of which is punishable by divine extirpation. (I intend to enumerate certain paragraphs in this book concerning these laws and others like them in a brief manner, with the help of God.)

One of the things necessary for a man going out on a trip is that he perform [the act of] charity, for it is written, "Righteousness shall go before him, and then he shall put his footsteps on the way" (Psalms 85:14). Thus did our sages, may they rest in peace,, say: It is forbidden for a man to take a trip before he prays, for it is written, "Righteousness shall go before him, etc." (Psalms 85:14). They also said: If a man prays and then goes on a trip, his needs will be taken care of,

as it is written, "Righteousness shall go before him..." (Psalms 85:14).

One who is ready to go out says, "May it be Your will, O Lord my God, that You send me out from this city in safety" and after he has gone out in safety he says, "I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, that You have brought me out from this city in safety, and just as You have brought me out safely, so direct me to safety and save me from the hands of every enemy and predator on the way." Thus because of prayer and charity, He will save him from every pain and stumbling. And to fulfill his plans, "He should put his foot on the way" (Psalms 85:14).

Section II Deals with the Prayer for the Road when
One Goes Out and His Thanks when He Rests.

Eliahu commanded three things to Rav Yehudah: Do not get angry so you won't sin, do not get drunk so you won't sin, and if you go out on a trip consult your Creator and then go out. (B'rachot 29b). What is this consultation? -- it is the prayer for the road, and this is its form: "May it be Your will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, to direct us to safety and cause us to walk toward peace; and keep us close to safety; and bring us back to our homes in peace; save us from every enemy

enemy and predator on the way, and give us over to favor and lovingkindness and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hears prayer." There are some who are accustomed to saying after that, "Who sits in secret on high," and also "A Psalm of ascents, I lift up mine eyes to the mountains" (Psalms 121:1). And thus the very pious say when they go out from the gate of the city, "O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5); for all people go, each man in the name of his god. Thus we go in the name of the Lord our God, forever and ever.

This prayer is said only when a man must go a parasong or more, and he must say it standing still, not while walking; and he [must say it] when he is actually on the road. It is good to say it within [the first] parasong. If he forgot, he should say it later while still on the way, and some say he must say it once every day that he is in travel. Thus if it should occur to him to spend the night in a certain place, and he then decides to leave after he's already settled down to spend the night, he must say it a second time.

Our sages, may they rest in peace, said that those walking in the desert have to give [special] thanks, as it is written, "They wandered in the wilderness, in the desert's way, etc." (Psalms 107:4), and it is written,

"Let them give thanks unto the Lord for His mercy" (Psalms 107:8). But now that all the roads are dangerous as we explained, every man must give thanks to the Lord who helped him and saved him. What does he say? "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who deals mercifully with those obligated for goodness and who has recompensed me with good." He must say it in [a group of] ten, as it is written, "Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people" (Psalms 107:32). And it is a choice mitzvah that two of them be scholars, as it is written, "And praise Him in the seat of the elders" (Psalms 107:32). It is preferable for a man to say it within three days. If, however, he didn't say it, he should say it even after several days, since this blessing was ordained in correspondence with the thanksgiving offering, and the thanksgiving offering could be brought at any time one wanted.

When he arrives close to the gate of a city which he encounters, whether still on the road or at a city where it is his intention to spend the night upon entering, he says, "May it be Your will, O Lord my God, to bring me into this city peacefully." After he has entered peacefully, he says, "I give thanks before You that You have caused me to enter in peace, and just as You have caused me to enter in peace, so also sustain me there

in peace." Everything is to give thanks to the eternal God, who brought us here: You are peace and Your house is peace.

Section III Deals with Obligatory Prayers for Travel-
ers and Something of the Virtues of Prayer.

Even though it is said that it is forbidden for a man to take a trip until he has prayed, there are times when a man arise to go out on the road early, before the time for the Amidah has arrived; or there are times when a man is troubled and his heart is not free. [In these cases] a man may not say the Amidah until after he is out on the road. And because there are laws concerning the prayer for the road which do not apply when a man prays in the synagogue, I shall outline the laws for prayer for those who are out on the road. Since the virtue of prayer is very high and it [serves as] service [corresponding to the sacrifices] for those in the Diaspora, as our sages, may they rest in peace, said, "You shall serve Him with all your heart." "What is service of the heart? -- behold, they say that this is the prayer" (Ta'anit 2a). I shall explain a little of its high virtue and why a man needs it, since most people do it merely perfunctorily.

Since man was created out of the four elements, his substance is close to that of animals, and thus it is impossible [for him] to live without food and drink. When he is in his growing period, the process of growth and regeneration will not occur without food. And when he rises, he cannot do it without [food] and the same for descending. [Without food] he cannot replace that which vanishes; he would diminish [altogether].

But God, may He be blessed, is merciful in preparing for him various foods, for man hates one [kind of] food [all the time]. We find in our perfect Torah [by way of example] that our fathers grew tired of the manna which fell from heaven, the taste of which was like the juice of oil and a cake of honey.

He distinguished between the animal, for whom He supplies the grass of the field and covered with the skin which it was born with and man, who needs clothes. God, may He be blessed, prepared all this for him and opened His hand and satisfied according to His desire, as it is written, "You open Your hand and satisfy everything living" (Psalms 145:16). Therefore, logic impels that we thank Him and glorify Him for all the goodness which He has done and is doing.

Does not the servant who was acquired by His master give thanks to him and praise him in humility and

lowliness, even though the master feeds him and gives him drink for his own needs, so that he [the servant] may do his work. [Nonetheless] since he gives him food and drink, he gives thanks to him and praises him. How much the moreso are we obligated to praise the Master of everything, who does not need our service or our praise or our prayer or our petitions. Rather it is for our needs and our profit, for everything is His, and if you are righteous, what are you giving Him?

Section IV Deals with How Many Prayers a Man is
Obligated to Say

It is a positive commandment to pray every day, for it is written, "And you shall serve the Lord your God" (Exodus 23:25). Through the oral tradition they learned that this service is prayer. The number of prayers to be said is not [found] in the Torah. Rather [it says] that a man is obligated to supplicate and pray every day, and to mention the praise of the Holy One blessed be He, and then ask for his own needs; after that he gives praise and thanks to the One who gives abundantly from His goodness.

There are some who pray once a day, and some who pray several times. All of them [face] in the direction

of the Temple; thus was the manner always, from Moses until Ezra. Ezra and his court, which is called the men of the Great Assembly, up and ordained for Israel, after they were exiled in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, eighteen blessings in a given order: the first three a praise to God, the last three thanksgiving, and the middle ones containing petitions for all those things needed for individuals and for the group, so that all Israel would pray one Amidah in one manner.

In the days of Rabbi Gamliel the elder, heretics increased among Israel, and they would vex them and seduce them into turning away from God. When he saw that this was the greatest of all human needs [i.e., to remain with God] he and his court up and ordained a blessing, a petition of God to destroy the heretics, and they [then] fixed the prayer [as part of the Amidah making the number of blessing nineteen instead of eighteen]. When I explain the Amidah, I will add an explanation of this particular blessing.

The men of the Great Assembly ordained that the prayers should correspond to the number of sacrifices: two amidot every day, corresponding to the two tamid sacrifices -- the morning service corresponding to the tamid sacrifice in the morning and afternoon prayer corresponding to the tamid sacrifice of the late afternoon. Simi-

larly, they also ordained the prayer service of the night [ma'ariv], corresponding to the limbs of the tamid sacrifice of the evening which continued to be consumed all night. "Evening and morning and at noonday will I complain and moan, and He has heard my voice" (Psalms 55:18).

In like manner they ordained the musaf service on the day they used to make the musaf sacrifice; thus also did they ordain on a day of public fast a prayer after the minchah prayer service near sunset, this in order to add supplication and petition because of the fast, and this is called Ne'ilah.

These prayers one may not diminish, but one may add to them a free-will prayer, even the whole day, provided that he innovate in some way in each blessing of the middle group the essence of the blessing. This prayer corresponds to the free-will sacrifice. Therefore, the congregation does not say the free-will prayer, since a congregation does not bring the free-will sacrifice; rather theirs is the obligatory sacrifice, which atones for their sins and their errors and brings them closer to love; each individual was to be willing before God and fit in his sense of obligation: "Every man whose heart makes him willing" (Exodus 25:2).

His Heart From all Thoughts and Be
Clean When He Prays and That He Concen-
trate on His Prayer.

Before a man prays, he should turn his heart from thoughts which trouble him and cast the vanities of the world behind him. He should be clean from all dirt and impurity; he should keep himself far from anything that has a bad odor, as it is written, "Prepare to meet you God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12).

One who prays should pray in earnest, like a servant who is asking for his needs from his master, as it is written, "Behold, and like the eyes of servants unto the hands of their master, etc." (Psalms 123:2). And he needs to direct his feet, as it is written, "And their feet were straight feet" (Ezra 1:7), and be covered in fear and trembling.

He should turn his face to the wall, so that different passers-by will not interrupt him and distract him, as it is written of Hezekiah, "Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall" (Isaiah 38:2). His mouth and his heart should be alike in intention on prayer, as David said, "With all my heart have I sought You" (Psalms 119:10). "I have entreated Your favor with my whole heart" (Psalms 119:58). And even though our sages, may they

rest in peace, said that "the commandments do not require intention" (Pesachim 114b), this was only said concerning the commandments of doing things, like building a sukkah and the like. Prayer, on the other hand, is basically in the heart and because the heart of a man longs for vanity, they ordered us to say it with the mouth and guard it in the heart.

Have you not seen that they ordered for us at the end of the prayer, "May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You?" If, however, his heart is on thoughts of useless activity, shouldn't a man be embarrassed to say to his Creator, who knows all that is hidden, "May the words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart...? When he prays, reciting some of the middle blessings which are his won needs but his heart is not with him, how can He grant him his petitions? Did he not [then] ask like someone mocking, as a chirping bird? Do you not see what Asaf the singer said? "My soul yearns, yea even pines for the courts of the Lord, etc." (Psalms 84:3). And connected to it, "Yea, the sparrow has found a house, etc." (Psalms 84:4).

What is the connection between the two of them? Only that Asaf said that when he comes to the courts of the Lord to request his needs with mind and body, he sings and praises and petitions, for if the heart and the mouth

are not the same, then "yea, the sparrow has found its house" (Psalms 84:4); that is to say, there are also birds and sparrows there in the house of the Lord that flutter about and murmur with their mouths and their tongues without intention. The sages parabolized speech to the body and intention to the soul. If so, when a man prays with his mouth and not his heart, his prayer is like a body without a soul. Concerning him the prophet has said, "And with their mouth and with their lips do they honor Me, but they have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear of Me is the commandment of men learned by rote" (Isaiah 29:13).

Come and see the quality of prayer, for Daniel delivered himself from death by prayer, as it is written concerning him, "And he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed" (Daniel 6:11). Prayers are among the services beloved by God, as David said, "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Him" (Psalms 141:2). When he prays, his eyes should be down and his heart should be up, as it is written, "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in heaven" (Lamentations 3:41). He should not glance to the side nor spit, and be lowly and humble in fear like a slave before his master. His prayer should not be upon him as a burden, rather he should say it quietly and in supplication, as our sages, may

they rest in peace, said, "And when you pray, your prayer should not be fixed, but rather a supplication before the Holy One blessed be He" (Avot 2, 13).

When one prays in this manner, he can be sure that God will hear his prayer, as David said, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalms 145:18). And in order that he not sin in his heart or with an utterance of the lips, his heart should be directed upward and his eyes downward, as our sages, the enlightened ones "and the prophets who rebuke from day to day said, "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens" (Lamentations 3:41).

Section VI Deals with the Fact that a Man Should Be Clean in Order to Pray when He Arises and Should Say the "Asher Yatzar" Blessing and Its Explanations, and the Fact that the Body is Composed of Form and Matter.

The status of the order of the eighteen benedictions of the Amidah are very well known to all. The men of the Great Assembly arranged them on the order of the P'sukim (B'rachot 33a), as I will explain. Similarly,

they ordered the blessings, starting with the "Asher Yatzar" blessing. So also the blessing "Baruch she'amar" until the end of "Yishtabach." So [also] the Shema blessings -- all [of which] they were accustomed to say throughout the Diaspora of Israel. The change in the machzorim is small, and they are basically equivalent.

We have already written that the man praying must be clean from any impurities. Since a man sleeps at night naked of any clothin, his hands are not clean when he rises in the morning. Aside from this [a man] must inspect himself both from the standpoint of the health of his body and from the standpoint of cleanliness. He must wash his hands, [during which] he is obligated to say the blessing "al n'tilat yadayim." Next to this blessing he says, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who formed man in wisdom," because the formation of a man in the interior of his mother is a wonderful thing, as David said, "I will give thanks unto You, since I am fearfully and wonderfully made, wonderful are Your works and that my soul know right well" (Psalms 139:14), for his remaining in the stomach of his mother nine months, closed up completely. It is known that every living thing which enters into the interior of a man will die, and is not able to live there. Yet he [the child] remains there alive and fed

from the small bits of food that the woman provides.

When he goes out into light from darkness, the Holy One blessed be He arranges food for him, the breast milk of his mother, on which he is able to sustain himself according to his nature. The milk comes to him in a quantity that he is able to pull out according to his own strength, for if it were to come out in an overflow he would not have the strength to endure it and would choke himself. And if he would have to pull it out strongly by means of a hard sucking, he would not have the strength during youth to pull it out. This is the lovingkindness of the Lord upon him, to raise him up to be what he really is, so that he would fear Him at all times according to his strength.

"And He created in him various orifices and passageways" (traditional prayerbook) according to their natural need, to pull in the air or push out the surplus which it is preferable to get rid of. The wise men of medicine have already spoken at length on the wisdom of the creation of man, and the profitable use of the limbs, may He who forms everything be exalted. Who can grasp even one among the many thousand things of the wisdom of the formation of one created thing, for how wonderful are the works of the Lord.

Section VII Deals with the Matter of the Beginning of Creation, Since It Came from Absolute Nothingness, and How It Came to Be, and How the Four Elements Received their Form, and How the Elements Came to Be, and on What their Mixture is Founded.

It is already explained in Natural Philosophy that the body is composed of form and matter, and that the matter is actualized by the form, and the combination of the form and the matter is His work, so that they should serve their Creator. This can be exemplified by artificial things, for the wood of the boat [for example] is actualized by the form of the boat. Their result is the activity of the boat, which is that it should go on water, and this is the form of the boat. Thus have they said that nature is the messenger of the Creator of everything; nothing was made in vain. Because there is benefit in recognizing works of God, I will write some of His wonders in creation based on what the rishonim wrote. Listen to this, elders, and, fathers, tell it to your sons: "Praise the Lord of Lords" (Psalms 136:3).

They said that an element is that from which a thing comes, but that that thing [i.e., the element] is found in it potentially and not actually. I would like

to say that plants and living creature are [made] from the four elements, as can be explained: none of the four elements is not found in them actually, but rather potentially. The Ramban, may he rest in peace, wrote in the beginning of his commentary to the Torah, "The Holy One blessed be He created all creatures out of absolute nothingness, and the wonly word we have in the Holy Tongue [to describe] the coming out of something from nothing is bara [trahslated create]. However, not everything which was created under the sun is from nothing in the very beginning. He brought forth from nothingness the very finest basis, having no substance; but it is potential substance ready to receive the form and pass from its ppotentiality into actuality: this is the primeval matter which the Greek sages called Hyle.

After that He did not create anything; instead He formed and made, for from it [the primeval matter] He produced everything. He dressed the forms and fixed them, and in our language we called this basis tohu. For if a man came to give it a name he confers and wonders whether he should give it one ~~name~~, since it has not taken a form to which a name can be at all fitted. When the matter is informed by the form it is called vohu, that is to say, it contains the ~~form~~ within it [the author is making a pun by changing the spelling].

So it is in the midrash of Rabbi N'chuniah ben HaKannah: What is the meaning of the statement, "The earth was void and formless" (Genesis 1:2)? "Was" means that it was previously Tohu, which makes men wonder, but it turned into vohu. And what is vohu? -- that which has in it actuality. The meaning of this sage is that creation was from absolute nothingness, from substance and from form, not from form alone. Substance itself is included among what was created from absolute nothingness, just as time is included among what was created.

This absolute creation is true for everyone who believes in our Torah and the wonders and the change in Nature which occur in Torah, for there are strange ideas concerning this opinion of the Rambam, may he rest in peace, in the Moreh Nevuchim which I am free of.

"Let my soul not come into their council; this is my glory and lift up my head" (Genesis 49:6). The Physicians wrote something similar to this, namely, regarding matter and not regarding creatio ex nihilo. They said that there is within the lunar sphere that which is connected to us -- one substance, called Hyle, and this primeval substance received the first four forms, becoming within the four of them four substances which are the true elements for everything that is formed in the sub-lunar sphere, i.e., earth, water, air, and fire.

Earth is cold and dry; water is cold and moist; air is hot and moist; fire is hot and dry. Each of these four elements has a natural place, special for it, where none is found except itself. It is at rest [there] according to its nature. They are dead substances that don't move by themselves. Rather each one lies in its own natural place, and if they force one out from its natural place out of necessity, when the force is gone, it will move so as to return to its place.

At the movement of the fifth substance, which is the sphere which moves according to the will of the Highest through the power of its rotation, it creates in the other elements a necessary movement. The elements move from their place on its [the upper sphere's] account, [the elements being] the fire and the ~~air~~ They are shoved into the water, and they passed through the substance of the earth, creating among the elements a mixture; then they began to move to return to their natural place.

One small number of them influenced another small group of them and there is a change in the mixture until some of them become the original volatile spirits. Afterward, the earths and the metals and the various kinds of plants and animals, according to what was decreed by the mixture. From this it is explained that every crea-

tion is also perishable. Now this fire that is found and perceived by us is not the basic element that we mentioned; for that element is the cause of existence, and the perceived one is the cause of the disappearance. Furthermore, [it is] because the element has no color, as does the perceived one which has color as one of its accidents. It is connected with the earthly substance, for if the element had color, we would be able to see the air completely aglow with fire.

The four of them are hinted at in the beginning of the Torah, ancient of days, from the verse: "And the earth was void and formless, and darkness was upon the face of the void, and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the water" [my underlining] (Genesis 1:2).

Section VIII Deals with the Matter of the Mixtures and their Qualities.

We have already explained that all created things are composed of the four elements, and that this composition is by way of the mixture and combination [of them]. The combination comes through cooking, and the cooking comes through the heat; the forms of these materials are determined by the measures of heat in the body and the

cold, and by the measure of moisture and dryness. By way of generalization, their form is nothing other than the form of the mixture. All the accidents which are adapted for each and every kind of them are in accord with these forms. Since the matter is thus, as is said of the material and of the active and passive part, it is only that which was derived from the measure of the mixture of the four elements.

In the mixture will be found two kinds, one whose proportion is equal, i.e. the measure of the quantity of the forms is equal within it; that is, there will be found in it some heat as well as some cold and some dryness as well as some dampness. The second is where the proportion is different; the change results from a mixture of the kinds and by way of example, the temperament of a man will be different from that of a horse.

The physicians reckoned that the mixtures were of nine kinds, one average and the other eight deriving from the mean. Of the eight, four are separated and four are combined, which is to say that for those set apart, a particular quality rules over them, whether of heat or of cold, while in the mixture two qualities govern. The separate characters are hot and moist, hot and dry, cold and moist, cold and dry, as they have dealt with at length. Since it is so, the area in which it is discussed that

the limbs will be active or passive depends on one of these nine mixtures. Therefore, the doctor needs to know the kinds of characters, for if he does not know them, he will err in his teaching. The sick man will not be healed from his illness, and like mud in the hand of the Creator, He will change the substance and the guard will work in vain.

Section IX Deals with the Fact that the Characters are Related to the Elements, and How They Vary; Similarly, the Parts of the Year, and Countries, and the Periods of a Man's life, and the Humours are Four.

The constitutions are related to the elements. There is a dry, hot constitution related to fire and the green bile. There is a hot, moist constitution related to the air and the blood. There is a cold, moist constitution related to water and the white phlegm. And there is a cold, dry constitution related to earth and the black bile.

In each and every man his constitution is adapted to his soul, specially suited to him, and it is impossible for another to combine with it. It is in this that he is alive and healthy. That which exists comes into being

when the active strengths, namely heat and cold, prevail over the passive strengths, i.e. dampness and dryness. Non-existence will be the opposite of this -- when the passive strengths prevail over the active ones. This is the [meaning of] the statement of Chacham Rabbi Avraham [Ibn Ezra] when he said in explanation to creation: A thing is destroyed when the passive conquers the active.

Similar to this, the seasons of the year are four, and the winds which blow are four, and the periods of a man's life are four, and the humours are four.

The seasons of the year are four: "cold and heat, summer and fall" (Genesis 8:22). The constitution of the cold, which is the winter, is cold and moist, like that of the white phlegm and that of water. This is the time from the solstice of Tevet until the equinox of Nisan. Most sickness at this time is of a type of the phlegm and is a daily fever.

The constitution of heat is hot and moist, like the nature of the blood and air, and in this season the blood increases. This is from the equinox of Nisan until the solstice of Tammuz, and most of the sickness at this time is a constant fever.

The constitution of the summer is hot and dry like the nature of fire, and the green bile is found in it. It is from the solstice of Tammuz until the equinox of

Tishre, and most of the sickness of this third fever is intense.

The constitution of fall is cold and dry like the nature of earth and black bile, extending from the equinox of Tishre until the solstice of Tevet; most of the sickness of winter is from this bile, and this is the fourth fever.

The winds are four: the wind from the east inclines toward a dry heat, the western wind toward a moist cold, the north toward a dry cold, and the south toward a moist heat.

The lands vary similarly in climates according to the extremities [of the world in which they are located], for the state which is to the extreme north will be cold. Thus it is with all states according to their distance or proximity to the four winds.

The periods in a man's life are four: The first is the period of childhood, until he reaches twenty year of age; this is a time of growing and his constitution is hot and moist [at this time] like the nature of blood. The second is the period of youth from twenty until forty, the constitution of which is hot and dry like the nature of green bile. The third is from forty to sixty; this is the time of want, and its constitution is cold and dry like the constitution of the black bile. The fourth is

period of old age; it is the time when there appears in him a weakening of his natural strength. This is from sixty to eighty, and the mixture is completely cold and dry. This is from the constitution of earth, and the white bile rules them. This phlegm makes him cold because they are cold, moldy surpluses; therefore, this time is the time of destruction in nature, because the cold and the dry are the cause of destruction, as we have explained.

The humours are four: the black bile which is similar to the earth, the green to fire, the white to water, and the blood to air. The medical experts have said that the four elements are distant bases for the human body; what are close to him are the four humours. Some of the latter sages say that the substance of which man is composed comes into being as the blood and that these humours are the overflows of the blood when it matures and that the green bile is as close to the blood as foam, which arises when it boils. The black bile is the lees.

Concerning the white they say that it is in the lung and in the limbs of the body. There are also those who say that it has no special place, because the limbs need it just as [they do] blood for when food is missing from the limbs, they take sustenance from it [the white

bile], and it divides into several kinds -- tasteless, salty, bitter, sweet, and very bitter.

The green [bile] resides in the liver, and the black in the spleen; when there is too great a change, sickness will increase in the spleen because it has no mind to separate itself from the excesses or "between the holy and the profane."

Section X Deals with the Number of Limbs

The limbs [number two hundred forty eight.] On the skull there are seven, and they are joined to each other. The upper jaw is composed of eighteen bones; the lower jaw is composed of two; and there are thirty-two teeth. All of these bones are joined, but they are not movable, except for the two on the lower jaw. The neck is composed of seven vertebrae, and none of the bones has any sensation except the teeth, which they get from the brain.

The back is composed of seventeen vertebrae and twenty-four ribs. The tailbone is composed of two bones; each shoulder is made up of two bones, which [makes] four. Each arm is composed of an upper arm, a lower arm, and the five fingers, composed of fifteen bones [apiece]; between both of them there are thirty-four.

The thigh has two bones and the leg joint three bones; the buttock has two bones, and the upper leg is two bones. Each calf is made up of two bones, and every foot is made of two heels and a bone which is called Alzand. There are twenty-four bones on the heel side of the foot, and five bones on the ball of the foot. The five toes are composed of twenty-eight bones. All these add up to two hundred forty-eight.

Now I will present the form from the Mishnah "Ahilot:" Two hundred forty-eight limbs [there are] in a man -- thirty on the foot up to the ankle, [including] six on each toe, ten on the ankle, two in the leg, five on the knee, one on the thigh, three on the hips, eleven ribs, thirty on the hand up to the wrist [including] six on each finger, two on the arm, two on the elbow, one on the upper arm, four on the shoulder, or one hundred and one on each side. [Add] eighteen vertebrae in the backbone, nine in the head, eight in the neck, six at the opening to the heart, which is the chest, and five at the [various] orifices. Each of these limbs is made in a form and a structure which is perfect, and no one of us [really] knows to what extent [this is so]: Blessed be the One who formed man in wisdom.

Together.

The limbs which are formed from the parts, such as the bones and the flesh and the sinews and the like, come into being because of the compounds. As an example of this, the arm, which is composed of flesh and bone and sinews and skin, works all of these. And the activity by which each limb operates is due to natural heat which is spread throughout every limb, apart from the natural constitutional heat which is in it, this latter being the heat which comes from the heart, for from there it is sent forth to all the limbs.

Thus it [the heart] is the most important of all the limbs, though one needs [heat] apart from it for the limb's activity; this heat is the form of the limb. Now come and see the work of God, in their usefulness and their constitution in short. Who would not fear the King and take courage in His strength for all His works which He has created.

Section XII Deals with the Usefulness of the Simple
Limbs and their Constitution.

Regarding the bone: cold and drybprevail in it,
and its use is as support and basis for the body. Some

of them are to protect the body, as in the case of the backbone, the chest, and the skull. Others of them are a shield to protect the inner organs, such as the vertebrae and the ribs. Still others of them are for movement, such as the bones of the arm. Each bone is large and strong or slight and soft according to its need. As for the usefulness of the nails, cold and dry prevail in them. They strengthen the ends of the fingers, to strengthen the flesh in order to grasp something. They also serve man and the other animals as implements of damage.

The usefulness of the nerves: They are cold and dry, and their use is for sensation and motion and to regulate the natural heat until there be in them organs of voluntary movement.

The usefulness of the sinews; the ligaments, and the skin: Their constitution is cold and dry. Their use is for visible, voluntary movements, and the feeling in them expands and contracts. The skin covers the limbs for protection. Similarly, the skin of the stomach is a protection and a covering, so that the intestines will not come out. The ligaments connect the limbs with each other at the joints; similarly they connect the vertebrae

of the backbone.

The usefulness of the blood vessels: There are two kinds. The first are sinews which are called Sharian, and they carry the living spirit and the blood which is in the heart. They are located throughout the entire body for the use of the entire body, to bring to it whatever is to be spread, like the blood and the spirit. The second are the veins which do not throb. Their beginning is in the liver, and their essence is of the nerve type of a non-double kind, [i.e.] for movement and not for sensation. There is a lot of blood in them, but only a small amount of spirit. Their purpose is to disperse the matured blood in the lower and to watch the limbs.

The usefulness of the marrow: The marrow has two parts. One is found within the bone of the skull, and it is the substance of the spirit in the crown of the head, which has sensations within it. The second is the marrow which is in the bones. This overflows with the food which sustains the bones, and there is need for them because of their dryness.

The usefulness of the flesh: Its constitution is warm and moist, and the flesh is capable of the sensation

of touch. The heart is the source of this strength, and thus it is of flesh. The flesh is also a protection for the soft and the small sinews, and it feeds them from the moisture that is in it.

The usefulness of the blood: It is warm and moist, and it is the residing place of the natural spirit which is in the heart. It was put in there as the container of the food, like the blood of the liver and the veins, and the food which is matured is retained by the liver as blood; this is the food for the limbs; it is their substance by which they exist.

Whoever has a lot of blood will be thin because of the lack of blood near the flesh, since it is only fed by it a little bit. He who has not a little blood will be fat, since the blood spreads itself out within the flesh and feeds it. He whose blood is clear and has only a small amount of heat is one who is sharp and wise; and thus the ants and bees are clever, for they have [only] a little blood. He whose blood is cold is a coward, and whoever has a lot of hot blood is an irascible person.

The usefulness of the white humour: it is blood which is not matured, and the food, when it is transformed, is this humour derived. It also has another use, and

that is to moisten the limbs so they won't dry out. It is as if it were the food for them when the [real] food is delayed.

The usefulness of the green [bile] and the black [bile]. Their essence is in the body for the chile of the food which leaves the stomach and goes to the liver, i.e. when the food is digested in the stomach and returns, liquefying, at which point it is called in Latin chilus, cannot mature until the blood returns without these two biles, as happens when grapes are pressed. The clear part separates off; the first remains thick and earthy, while the second remains thin and white

Special vessels are prepared for them for the pocket of the bile has a complicated passageway connected with it from the upper intestines. One passageway is to the stomach; this is used to stimulate the small intestine and push out the excesses and to clean them out in order that the stomach digest the food. Similarly, the spleen has a tract that adjoins the mouth of the stomach to send to it [the stomach] some of the black acid to strengthen it for digestion, for this is the activity of acid things.

The usefulness of the fat: This is the excess of the blood that is too ripe, for it is not likely that

there will be food for it from the limbs. And this is only found in a living being whose digestion and mixture is good. Therefore any living thing which has in it only a little blood, the fat in it is [also] only a small [amount]; and when there is a lot of fat, this will be a cause of old age, for the majority of his blood becomes this excess, and the heat and the moisture decrease, and the body becomes cold, which is the cause of death. Therefore one who has a lot of fat in him will reproduce only a little. Its [the fat's] use is to heat the intestines and to defend them.

The usefulness of the hair: Its constitution is cold and dry, and its use is a defense of the head and the brows [to defend] the eyelids. Some is to beautify the body, like the hair of the beard or the underarms. The bodily hair is produced from the air, which is smoky and burns.

The use of the skin: It is a screen and a shield which tends to be warm and moist. In the skin there are holes out of which come sweat and the vapors which are the excess of the body.

The usefulness of the souls: There are three kinds.

The first is the natural spirit which is a vapor-like body, produced by the clean air; it resides in the liver, and from there it passes on to all the rest of the body. The second is the vital spirit which resides in the heart; it is the means of life, and a lack of it [means] death. The third is the rational spirit, which is in the brain; this is matured in the brain and divides into the three parts of the brain.

The first kind is the spirit which is in the front of the brain; this is the substance of the imagination. The second is the spirit which is in the middle; this is the substance of thought. The third is the spirit which is in the rear; it is the substance of the memory and of retention.

Between the rear and the center is a bone similar to a worm, which is called the gatekeeper, for when a man thinks about something which he has forgotten and he wants to remember it, he opens this door which is between the rear enclosure and the middle one, and he remembers the thing; then afterward, it closes. When he opens it quickly, he is called one who is endowed with a good memory; and when he is slow [to open it] he is called forgetful.

The strength of the natural spirit is the nutritive soul, and that of the vital spirit is the vital soul;

that of the rational [spirit] is the perceptive soul
Imagination and thought and memory are in this [latter
one].

Thus at this [point] is completed some discussion
about the use of the simple limbs. We will next begin
concerning the usefulness of the combined ones with sweet
and pleasant reasons for their nature and constitution,
their place and thier situation, exalted be the One who
prepares and situates them, He who dwells with the cherubs.

Section XIII Deals with the Usefulness of the Complex
Limbs.

The complex limbs are: in the head -- the eyes,
the tongue, the ears; in the chest -- the heart, the lungs,
and the diaphragm; in the abdomen -- the stomach, the
intestines, the liver, the bile, the spleen, the kidneys,
the bladder (i.e. the container of the urine), the penis,
and [for] a woman, the womb. We will speak first about
those limbs which serve for the activity of feeding, for
it is necessary for existence.

The use of the limbs of sustenance: The limbs
which are ready for this use are the stomach and the ex-
tension of it, like the mouth and the gullet, the liver,
the intestines, the veins, the kidneys, the bladder, the

the spleen and the bile. The function of the mouth is that it chews the food, and the teeth, the molars and the incisors, help; plus, in the mouth there is some digestion. The function of the esophagus is as a path to bring [the food] to the stomach by the power of the pulling and pushing of the stomach. Whoever has this action stop in him will die of hunger.

The function of the stomach: It is a spherical body, similar to a round gourd with a long neck, with a nervous nature, and its constitution is cold and dry. It is composed of nerves and flesh and sinews and veins, some of which throb and some of which do not. The flesh of the stomach is in the lower part and in the neck, but the mouth is naked of flesh. The liver is located above its right side and the spleen above its left.

Its function is the digestion of the food, and when the digestion has been completed, it pushes downward and in the lower regions there is a narrow hole called the pylorus. After the food has gone down, the hole closes until the food has been matured; then after the food has been matured, the pylorus opens up and the food goes down into the small intestine, namely the first of the small intestine, which is attached to it; it is roughly twelve times the breadth of that man's finger [the duodenum]. Anyone having a large stomach, his di-

gestion will be strong. Thus it is said that the gizzards of birds are of use to the stomach, since they have no teeth and their gizzard does the digesting.

The function of the intestines: The upper number six; three of them are narrow and three of them are bulky, and these are the lower ones. Their constitution is cold and moist, and the nature of the intestine is doubly nervous. The stomach sends the food there and the liver draws the essence of the food into the connecting veins; then when it's through, the small intestines send the rest of the dry matter downward. And there are in the intestines winding ways in order to delay the food there until the liver takes what it needs. Therefore, it is said that anyone whose paths are not windy is a glutton.

The three lower ones: The first one is crooked and is called blind (otherwise known as the monocolus). It has one opening through which comes to it the waste of the food and one closed side which is on the right. This second one is called the colon, which is connected to the top of the crooked one; in it is the secretion which is called coleng (colica). The third one is straight, and it has a large hole in it in which it can gather all the waste; its head is in his rectum, and from there the waste goes out.

The function of the liver: Its place is on the

right side, and its upper part touches the diaphragm of the chest, and the back of it is connected to the rear ribs. Its constitution is warm and moist, and it is congealed blood; its function is to transform the food until it turns itself into blood again and to send it to all the limbs of the body.

The function of the spleen: Its location is on the left side between the rear ribs and the stomach; its constitution is warm and moist, and it has two tracts. The first is connected to the liver, by which is pulled to it the rest of the black bile from the liver; this is its function in the body. Therefore, the sediment of the blood is found in it. The second [tract] is connected to the stomach, into which it sends some of the black bile to strengthen the appetite for food through its acidity.

The function of the gall bladder: Its constitution is warm and dry, and it is connected to the liver; it is an organ for the green bile, and its function is that it pulls the green bile from the liver and heats the liver and the stomach. It has two tracts -- the first to the stomach to mature the food and the second to the bowels to clean them out so they can push the waste out.

The function of the kidneys: Their place is below the back, connected to the vertebrae. Their constitution

is warm and moist, like the spleen, and they serve the liver because they draw off the water from the blood of the liver, and they are sustained by the water. They send it to the bladder.

The function of the bladder: to draw off the excess from the kidneys, and all of these are vessels which were prepared to pull that which is excess from the blood. Thus there is for each limb five powers, that is the power to draw off, to hold, to digest, to expel the excess, and to excrete.

The general feeding process which is performed by each of them is according to the way best suited to it; thus according to this, the digestive processes are two -- one in the stomach and the other in the liver. Plus there is a third [which occurs] in each and every limb, which we have already mentioned.

The function of the testicles: As a place where the seeds come into existence, and there the blood becomes white as an egg, just as the liver becomes red.

The function of the penis: to project the seed into the womb; plus it is a tract or a path to excrete the liquid waste, i.e. the urine.

The function of the womb: To receive conception, and it is also a path for the blood waste which is not matured, namely the blood of menstruation, for women in

their abundance of moistness and small degree of natural heat in their body do not have sufficient heat to mature the blood in the limbs, and it draws it off at proscribed times.

The function of the breast: Their constitution is cold and dry, and when there is a lack of moistness from the womb, it is dwelling in the breast, for they are among the limbs which are inter-dependent; and when there is an excess in the womb, it returns from the breast; and when the menstruation resides, then it will not come, for most nursing mothers do not usually become pregnant. Their [main] function is to produce the milk for the child to suck.

Now I will clarify the function of the sensory nerves in all living things which feel, especially men and women, in order to become chiefs and heads, and "through them they judge people" (Job 36:31), for they are the essentials of a living thing: "those who judge, feel" (Genesis 46:23).

Section XIV Deals with the Five Senses and their Powers.

The function of the senses [including] those four which are hearing, sight, smell, and taste, of which the

organs are known, and the fifth sense, that of touch, whose organ is contained in the sense. There are those who say that the head is adapted to all these senses and is the center of them. Others, however, say that the heart is the center and the head is the auxiliary. Thus we say that the flesh is the organ of the sense of touch, and thus it senses the four qualities which are contraries, namely heat and cold, moisture and dryness.

The organ of taste is the tongue. Its constitution is hot and moist, and it was made for tasting and the pronounciation of the letters. At the root of the tongue are two mouths, and they are called excreters of saliva; the saliva is to moisten the things that are eaten so that it has taste in the mouth and to help the teeth to chew the hard food and move it around with ease and to help the tongue to chew the food and push it down into the esophagus.

The organ of sight, as is clear, is the eyes. Each one is composed of seven layers and they have three moisteners. The first layer is close to the air and is called the mucous membrane which is the white of the eye. Behind it is the cornea which is hard like a horn in brightness, clarity, and whiteness. Behind that is the uvea, sometimes black and sometimes green, or variegated colors. Behind that is the aqueous humour, which

has the whiteness of an egg; and behind that is the iris which is like the webboff a spider, which is very fine. Behind that is the lens~~s~~ which resembles ice, and it is round. In this mucous is the actual sight when it distinguishes the perceived forms when the sun shines in the air, which is the medium [which carries sight]. In it [the lens] are the impressions like the impression of the form on the mirror, for if a m~~o~~rror could see it would see the form which is impressed in it. Behind that comes the vitreous humour, which is like melted glass. Behind it comes the retina which is like a lattice, and behind that is the choroid coat which is like a plecenta whibh contains many sinews. Behind that is the schlera, which is close to the socket bone. All of these surround each other like the peel of an onion

The function of each of these has been dealt with at length. It is enough to give it briefly in this book.

The organs of hearing are the ears. The first organ for hearing is the nerve which covers the opening of the ear. The opening of the ear is crooked so that the cold air will not enter it at some point and damage the organ of hearing and so that the loud noises will not enter too loudly. The waste that is in the ear is like the waste of the third food which nature pushes out.

The organ of smell: this is the nose, and they

say that it smells through the paths which appear in the nose which is for breathing. And there is for the nose another great function, which is to excrete the excess of the head, the excess of food which feeds the brain, and which [also] is to aid with the pronunciation of the letters and to get them out easily.

I have already explained the function of the five senses. Wise men are too weary to recount the glories of God. "They have eyes but see not" (Psalms 113:5). They tell of His wonders, but they do not know their niceties. "They have ears but hear not," (Psalms 113:5) especially in seeming wisdom they speak many things, and in their own wisdom they discuss. "Noses they have but smell not" (Psalms 113:5). And with the power of touch, they will be quick to explain it and its reason. "Hands they have but feel not" (Psalms 113:5). To explain everything they are drawn to its final cause. "Feet they have but walk not" (Psalms 113:5). For His way is higher than their ways, and His thoughts are higher than their thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). But if they did reach something, they only reached the most minute part of His wonders. "He tells His works to Jacob and lauds His statutes" (Psalms 147:19) to His prophets and those who guard His commandments "to inform man of His mighty acts" (Psalms 145:12).

Now I will discuss the limbs that were placed in a body of flesh and blood for the purpose of the power of movement, "and he lies down and falls asleep" (Jonah 1:5), "for this is all that is man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Section XV Deals with the Usefulness of the Limbs
for Voluntary Movement.

Know that this power which causes a living thing to move is the power that stimulates after the image of [the act] has appeared and has been followed by assent to [the act]. This is what activates the formal stimulant [i.e., formal cause] of the body upon choosing the form it imagines. (I will explain this further with the help of God when I speak about the powers of the soul.)

Voluntary motion is part general and part specific. The general is the movement of walking [i.e. of the total body with respect to its surroundings], and the particular is the movement of any of the rest of the limbs [i.e., parts of the body with respect to the other parts]. What is apparent from these movements is that they follow from the movements of more than one [limb]. As a sample of this, the movement of the arms is [caused] by the cords, and the movements of the cords is caused by the sinews; but this [causal series] cannot continue

ad infinitum.

It is known that everything that moves has a cause which makes it move, and what makes it move either is itself a body which also moves, and another body moves it -- but this does not continue ad infinitum -- or it will have something that moves it which does not itself move, but this cannot be a body. Thus what is apparent is that the ultimate movement for a living being concerning these movements is not a body but is the spiritual power within the body. This is the stimulating power which has the imagination joined to it when assent occurs. Since this cause of movement is not a body, it is necessary that that which is moved first by it be a body. The body will be like its [the power's] substance and the power will be like its [the body's] form.

Since it is impossible for the ultimate cause of motion in a living thing to be without substance connected to it, as we have said, then the beginning is in this ultimate form. Since this is so, we will check which body it is.

It seems that this body is the natural heat in the bodies of living beings. Therefore when the limbs grow cold, their movement ceases. This natural heat is distributed within each and every limb. The source and spring from which it is drawn is the heart, and the brain

is its auxiliary according to the sage most famous among the Physicians. And according to this [also] the stimulating power is in the heart.

Breathing is in the category of voluntary movement. I will now explain the usefulness of the breathing, for everything which moves on the face of the earth [exists] so that every soul shall praise God (Psalms 150:6).

Section VXi Deals with the Usefulness of the Organs
of Breathing.

The organs of breathing are the lungs, the diaphragm, the windpipe, and the laryngeal cartilage. Breathing is useful in two ways: The first use is to make the natural warmth which is in the heart blow, so that it is replaced by the cold air; that is to say, it causes the cold air to enter and exhales the warm air which is a vapor-like body.

This process is necessary for the existence of a living being which is warm and has blood. For this reason, this air is called the "breath of life" for it is the cause of the continuation of life, and a lack of it means death. The second [use] is that it feeds the natural spirit with the incoming air and takes its place in exchange for the heated [air]. This activity, i.e., the power of breathing, is for the voluntary power, and

nutritive power, which doctors call the natural power, and the power of breathing are for the [other] powers and are composed of the two together. It is [found] in many of the movements of the limbs, such as that of the eyebrows and swallowing. Therefore when these two [powers] are eliminated, i.e. the natural and the voluntary, swallowing becomes difficult, as happens to one who has no desire for food.

The usefulness of the lungs: Know that the limbs which are the strongest in the activity of breathing are the lungs, and when they expand they draw in air, and when they contract, they push it out. The parts of the lungs are duplicated so that if something were to happen to one of them, the other would take its place.

An example of this is that if one of them is wounded and one of the spaces of the chest becomes torn, the part of the lung which is in the area that is not torn will take its place in the function of breathing. When both sides of the chest, however, are torn open together, a living thing will die.

The usefulness of the windpipe: It is round and through it the air enters and goes out; it also is what produces the voice, and in it is the laryngial cartilage which is made to bring out voices. Over the mouth of the windpipe is a membrane which acts as a partition, so

that what passes from the mouth to the esophagus will not enter [the windpipe], lest he choke himself. The cords are used as a partition to prevent dust and smoke from entering the laryngial cartilage and to prevent cold from entering the limbs of breathing.

The usefulness of the heart: Its constitution is warm and tends toward the moist side. It has two cavities: in one, which is the right side, there is a lot of blood and a small amount of spirit; in the second, which is the left side, there is a lot of spirit and a little blood. Each cavity transfers to the other. The throbbing arteries spring up from the left cavity and not from the right side, for the right side is near the liver, and it is busy drawing in the blood, for by its own [power] it draws the food to it.

The heart also has blood vessels through which blood and food flow from the heart to the lungs, and breathed air from the lungs to the heart.

The heart is the seat of natural heat and hylic spirit, and this is the first thing created in a man; it is constantly in motion, and it is the source of all movement which is found in the body. If it rests but an instant, a man will become nothing.

Some of the limbs are only for action and some others of them are for function; while others of them

have both action and function. These [latter] are the heart, the liver, and the lungs. I meant to say that action is that which completes itself apart from the powers entering through the vitality of man or through the perpetuation of the species, just as you find action in the heart which gives birth to the natural spirit in which is vitality. I mean by function that which is prepared to accept the action of another limb, then the action will be completed, for the function of the vitality of man or the perpetuation of the species, as for the preparation of the lung for air.

At the beginning of the liver's digestive process it performs the stage stage [of the digestive process], preparing the food for the third stage and the fourth stage. And in the manner of performing the second digestion, it performs the action by itself, so that it will feed itself; in the manner that it performs an action supportive of the limbs in which occurs the third digestion, it benefits them [i.e., the limbs]. Thus it is clear that it [the liver] has both action and function. This above is a sufficient explanation of the function of the limbs for the purpose of this author, who breaks up the words and thoughts of heretics, "and who gives a message of gladness" (Genesis 49:21).

Section XVII Deals with the Powers of the Body which are Three, the Natural, the Vital, and the Spiritual.

The powers of the body are three according to the counting of the doctors and the Natural Philosophers, and they are : the natural powers, the vital powers, and the spiritual powers. The natural powers are the power of sustenance by which the body is sustained and grows and through it procreates. The vital powers are the power of the beating of the heart, and the power of arousing [other activities]. The spiritual powers are sensation, movement, imagination, thought, memory, retention; the source of all these, according to Aristotle, is the heart. The head and the liver and the testicles serve these actions, and for each one of these the powers serve, each according to its status.

The natural power has seven supportive powers. The first one changes the seed in the womb and the menstrual blood until they become a body; [this power] does not form it, but rather it prepares [the body] for formation. The second power is the formative, and it aids in formation of the body, like the hand, the fingers, and their number, and the like. These are the two powers for procreation. Another four participate in sustaining. One draws in the food, and this is an action of the heat

and the dryness. The second digests, and it is the action of heat and wetness. The third is that which holds the food until it is digested, and it is an action of the cold and the dry, though it has some heat. The fourth pushes the excess out, and it acts through heat and dryness. These four powers are taken on by the feeling of the stomach, and the same will be [the case] in each of the limbs, for the food which is necessary for them will not be consumed except by these and by the fifth power, which is what causes the food to cling to the limbs. This assimilates it to the limb itself, i.e. it transforms [the food] into flesh in flesh, and nerve in nerve, and bone in bone; the same is true within the other limbs [as well].

There are two powers subordinate to the vital power. One power is the action of pulsation when the arteries expand and contract; the other is the power which arouses, and we have already explained how this works in a man: they are love and hate, and anger and desire, and fear and bravery and cruelty and mercy, and others: spiritual emotions from this power.

The spiritual powers: there are subordinate to it nine powers: The five senses that we have mentioned. The sixth which clings to the sinews is called muscle

power; this is the one by which a man moves his limbs and moves around in place. The seventh is the imagination, and that is what forms things after they have made an impression on the brain and remembers the impression of percepts after they are hidden from the eye. It combines parts of them with [other] parts of them and separates parts of them from [other] parts of them. Thus this power combined matters that he [the person] does not perceive, and it is impossible for him to perceive them, for he may imagine [for example] an iron ship floating in the air or a man with his head in the sky or many [other] impossible things. Its activity occurs while awake and while asleep, for dreams are imaginings and this power becomes stronger during sleep, since he is resting then from the disturbance of the senses which agitate him during the activities [he engages in] while he is awake.

We have already mentioned that this power starts in the front of the brain. The eighth power is that of thought which is in the intellectual power available to a man by which he is wise and by which he attains wisdom and by which he distinguishes between that which is not desireable and that which is desireable and by which he perceives those of the works which are practical, such as carpentry and seamanship and others like them, They

are [all] speculative, including the various systems of wisdom called the simple sciences.

The ninth strength is the memory by which we recall something after it has been forgotten. Behold we have written of the wonders of God in the creation of man -- [though] not even one-thousandth of them -- to know and to make known and to be made known that a man is obligated to give thanks to Him, may He be blessed, for the wisdom of creation of that which comes into being and vanishes [i.e., transient beings].

Thus they ordained in its [proper] place to make the blessing "Who made man in His wisdom, etc." (B'rachot 60b), and to conclude with "healer of all flesh and wondrous to do." One who looks at the past sections will know and understand from the source of the matter that we are obligated in this blessing to know God and His strengths and he will see in a vision. (Numbers 24:4). Behold, this is our God, as David the poet said in his book, to praise God for His honor and His strength and His glory, "I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...." (Psalms 139:14).

Section XVIII Deals with the Eternal Soul

Since they ordained this blessing concerning the composition of the body and its maintenance it is seemly

to give thanks to Him for the pure soul which remains after death, which was joined in the transient bodily vessel. They ordained to say, "O Lord, the would which You have placed in me is pure..." (traditional prayerbook).

Now I will speak a bit concerning the status of the wise soul, the pure spirit, in the course of this book, to know, to make known, and to be made known, how much a man is obligated to perfect his soul with light, with the true light of life, to walk before God in the light of life (Psalms 56:14). This soul is rational with the faculty of speech, and its activity is thought, understanding, memory, choice; it is the form of the first man by which God distinguished him from the other animals.

It is not, [however], the body or the power of the body; the intellect which it [the rational soul] obtained first is called "passive intellect" or "hylic intellect." It must be actualized, for it is in potential, and that which brings it out must be the active intellect. When it [the active intellect] actualizes [the passive intellect] and when those things which are intellect in potential become intellect in actuality, then also this [passive] intellect becomes active intellect.

The soul reached this status through ideas that were correct and deeds that were proper; this is the primary perfection. These concepts are given to it as sug-

gestions to reach through them to the final perfection. When it is active intellect it is called in the language of the sages "acquired intellect," which is different from substance, and the order [of forms] will be along this line:

The power of the rational soul is like the substance of the passive intellect, and the passive intellect is its form. And when it comes into being as the active intellect, it is analogous to a substance of acquired intellect, and the acquired intellect is its form. This intellect also will be like the substance of the active intellect which is separated in its reality, and the active intellect is its form; that is the final aim of the soul, i.e. its unification with the active intellect, so that [the soul] and [the active] intellect become one. Of this form it is said, "Let us make man in our own image, in our own likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

Therefore, when the body, which is composed of elements, is separated into its elements, and the souls become lost, for they have no existence apart from the bodies and they need bodies. But this form is not lost because there is not a power of the body at all, for it is an active intellect so separated from the body with a genuine separation that it resembles the separated intellects [i.e. pure Intellegence] and comprehends the

Creator, may He be blessed, according to its status. And the prophet said concerning those who remained with Joshua the priest, "I have given you paths between those who are standing here" (Zechariah 3:7); and the perfect Jonathan ben Uziel translated it: "I will give you paths among the seraphim."

Concerning this soul Solomon said, "The spirit will return to the Lord who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). And Abigail said to David, "The soul of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord your God" (I Samuel 25:29). And there shall be those who love God who hated the ways of mischievous children, but walked in the way of the good and were close to God.

Section XIX Deals with the Fact that When the Rational Soul is Perfected it Reaches in with Godly Desire According to the Degree of Prophecy.

Know that when the Godly desire is attached to the rational soul and when it is transformed from the potential to the actual, and when it reaches its final destination to understand and to know the natural things and the spheres and the intellegences and their causes and the causes of their causes, and [when] it is perfected in the status of virtue and intellegence, and it is

[also] in the holy land, then it reaches the status of prophecy through a godly desire.

The prophetic soul is the highest and most precious of all the spiritual powers; it is destined to receive the upper effluence which causes a man perfect in his intellect and virtue to prophesy, and it [the prophetic soul] is ready to cling to the active intellect. It corrects the souls which are deflected from the stright path and directs men to the ways of truth and peace and goodness.

One sage said that to arrive to this degree a man must complete ten conditions: One is to be great in his soul, to do the desired deeds without fear; he will be unwilling to forgive the wicked. The second is that the structure of his body be strong with perfect limbs. The third, his nature is easy to understand things in their complete truth. The fourth, one who is easy to learn and hard to forget. The fifth, his understanding is clear, so that he understands by hints things said in secret and he can measure their meaning. Sixth, that he love the learning that is useful to himself and to others. The seventh, his tongue should be facile to explain matters to those beside himself. Eighth, he naturally loves the truth and hates falsehood. The ninth, he is naturally humble and lowly, and he is not humiliated nor degraded

with worldly desires; rather he is happy with his lot and his soul is noble. The tenth, that there be in his nature a love of honesty and trust and that he receive everyone who comes to him willingly.

Our sages, may they rest in peace, summarized them into three: prophecy only rests on the wise, the wealthy, and the mighty (Shabbat 92a).

Since the status of the soul is thus, and we have explained only the slightest part of its status because it is bestowed by Him, may He be blessed, we are obligated to give thanks and to praise and laud the One who gave us the soul in a body of mixed dust. Who can recount all His faithfulness and His goodness which continually return, may He be exalted above every blessing and praise.

Section XX Deals with the Order of the Blessings from Asher Yatzar, etc. until the Blessings of the Torah, and I have Already Explained a Little of the Status of the Torah.

After they ordained for us to give thanks to God, may He be blessed, for the pure soul and we have given thanks for the rebirth of the dead, at the end of the blessing when we say "You shall return it to me in the

future (...). Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who returns the soul to dead corpses" (traditional prayerbook), and this is a basic foundation of our faith, as I will explain at the end of the composition -- they have arranged for us the order of the blessings which we are obligated to say concerning His lovingkindness and His goodness with us. This order is correct and true and trustworthy according to anyone who "acknowledges the truth" (traditional prayerbook).

The blessing "who gave to the rooster understanding, etc." (traditional prayerbook) [is there] because it [the rooster] is useful to man, for man has the pleasure of knowing the times of night and he directs, when he hears that call, his attention to His wonderful deeds concerning all creatures. "Who made me an Israelite" (traditional prayerbook) is given because they do not serve Him completely, for they are not obligated in the positive, time-bound commandments (Kiddushin 29a).

The rest of the blessings are known through their usefulness: "the one who removes the chains of sleep from my eyes, etc." (traditional prayerbook) [for example]. The usefulness of a man's awakening from his sleep is to give thanks to God, may He be blessed, to do work, and keep his soul and the souls of his house alive; this is well-known. And all this is apart from the known useful-

ness in the direction of health which I will explain in its [proper] place : that there is a damage to the body from too much sleep. As the sage said, "a little sleep, a little slumber."

They ordained the blessings over the Torah to give it status and make it beloved by man. And when we have to read from the Torah and the mishnah and the baraita, they ordained for us to say those blessings which we are obligated to say, just as the sages, may they rest in peace, said, "We were taught, Beloved of Israel" (Pirke Avot 3:18), for were given a precious object by which the world was created. A greater love is shown to them, as it is said, "For good instruction I have given to you, My Torah, do not forsake it" (Proverbs 4:2). If so, it is preferable for the receiver of a gift to bless the one who gives such a gift which "He didn't do thus with every nation."

As for its status and its preciousness, I will write something of its status and its preciousness even though it can not be recounted [fully] (Psalms 69:32). "And it will please the Lord better than a bullock."

Know that Moses our teacher, may he rest in peace, wrote the Torah as one speaking in behalf of another, for he wrote the geneology of the first [generations]

as well as his own extraction and history and events which [he participated] in, in the third person. Therefore he said, "And the Lord spoke to Moses." Because the matter is thus, he was not mentioned until [the narrative] reached his birth and then was mentioned as though another speaks about him. You should not find the matter in Deuteronomy too difficult where he is speaking in behalf of himself ("I will be gracious to the Lord and I will praise the Lord" [change from third to first person]), for at the beginning of the book he said, "These are the words Moses spoke" (Deuteronomy 1:1).

The reason it was written in this style is that it [the Torah] preceded the world, and it goes without saying [that it preceded] the birth of Moses; as the sages, may they rest in peace, said, "It was written in black fire on white fire" (Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim, perek vav, end of halacha alef). Moses our teacher was like the author copying from an earlier book, for the truth is that the entire Torah from "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1) until "to the eyes of all Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:12) is said from the mouth of God, may He be blessed, to Moses. He informed him first of "the heavens and the earth and all of their host" (Genesis 2:1) being created; i.e., the creation of everything that was created in the upper and the lower [creatures].

If so, everything that was said in prophecy from

the secrets of the heavenly spheres and the secrets of creation and that which was received by the sages [the Kabbalah] together with the formation of the four elements and their history and similar matters and their powers, e.g., the powers of the minerals and the power of the plants and animals which are not rational, and the power of rational beings -- [all this] was told to Moses in its correct quantity and quality and essence, and the destructibility of the non-eternal. Everything was told him, and it was written in the Torah whether explicitly or cryptically.

Our rabbis, may they rest in peace, have already said, "There are fifty gates of understanding created in the world, and all of them were passed on to Moses except for one; as it is written, 'Yet You have made him only a little lower than the angels' (Psalms 8:6)" (Rosh Hashanah 21b). They meant by this that a certain number of the gates were created, for example, a gate for the understanding of minerals and a gate for the understanding of plant life, ever higher gates until the one for the rational soul, to know and recognize the order of the soul and its essence and its capability of comprehending all natures and spheres, and all that is in the power of the intelligence of man to comprehend under the status of prophecy.

Possibly their statement "except for one" deals with the knowledge of the Creator, may He be blessed, which was not passed on to anyone besides Himself, may He be blessed. Even though it was stated "created in the world" concerning the [gates], he is dealing here with the majority [of the gates as opposed to all of them], and all of this was passed on to Moses at Sinai in the complete Torah by written word or by numerology or in the signs of the letters which were written and the order they come in, or in their crown, as they said, "When Moses went to the top, he found the Holy One blessed be He tying crowns to the letters" (Menachot 29b). He asked Him, "What are these for?" He answered, "One man is destined to expound mounds upon mounds of the law [on every jot and tittle].

Thus they said in Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah regarding Hezekiah, that he showed them a book of crowns and this book is known and found, and in it are explained how many alefs and how many letters have crowns in the Torah and what power and knowledge are contained in them [which are many deep secrets].

The end of the matter is that all secrets a man can learn from the Torah, and Solomon, to whom God gave wisdom and knowledge, came to him from the Torah and from it he learned, until he knew the secrets of the ge-

nerations and the power of herbs and their particular remedies, until he wrote a book of healing and spoke about herbs, trees, and the stones and all the transitory beings.

Furthermore, we have in our hand the true tradition that all of the Torah is [formed] of the names of the Holy One blessed be He, and the written words are divided into the segments [which form such names]. Rabeynu Shlomo wrote in Gemarra Sota that the seventy-two-letter name of God comes from the pasuk, "Vayish Malach Adonai," and "Vayavo" and "Vayeit" (Exodus 14: 19-21) (Sota 45a).

Therefore, a Sefer Torah in which is an error where [a letter] is missing or superfluous is prohibited. And the Torah which was written in black fire on white fire was written continuously without any break between the words, and it was possible that it would be read in the manner of the names. However, it was given to Moses in the manner of [the recitation of] the commandments, and it was passed on to him orally according to the names and the secrets. Thus those who have mastered the names divide the great name into three letter groups and other divisions; so all of it is [a series of] combinations.

Rav Sh'rira Gaon wrote that the sages passed to

each other explanatory hints and ordered diagrams. Some of them say from the pasuk "the book of the generations of man" (Genesis 5:17), and others say that from "male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). They only pass on these secrets of Torah and these hidden things to ones who show signs of being worthy of it. Thus since it was the wish of the Lord, may He be blessed, to actualize existences without His having any need for them, the Holy One blessed be He wanted to merit Israel; and so He gave them the complete Torah and its commandments to perfect them and to set them straight, as the explained in pasuk, "After the Lord your God you shall go" (Deuteronomy 13:5).

Just as He is merciful, so you should be merciful; just as He is compassionate, so you should be compassionate. For in thought and in deed the soul should cling to the upper world and He sat in the hidden place on high in the midst of the "litter that Solomon [i.e. God] made for him" (Song of Songs 3:9), for the perfect who climb the rungs of the ladder. For the Lord commanded there the blessing of eternal life.

FOOTNOTES

1

This paragraph is devoted to stating the point of view that God directly created the universe, this in opposition to the Aristotelian view that God set the universe in motion, but was not the direct cause of this world in which we live. The author is further adding that one of the distinguishing features of man is his ability to know this

2

"Adam begot him [Seth] in his likeness and image, different from Cain, who had not been in his likeness and image. Thus Seth became, in a genuine sense, the father of the human race...." (Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, Vol. I, p. 127.)

3

The reliability of the tradition depends upon its being passed on faithfully. The author is here, as he also does elsewhere in this introduction, validating his theory of creation through the chain of tradition.

4

Adam was first, Noah second, and Abraham third.

5

By having Jacob alive during the time of Shem, the reliability of the chain is even stronger; Jacob received it first hand.

6

No father would lie to his son, and that is how the chain was passed.

7

The source of this tradition is from an interpretation of Genesis 4:26. The word הוֹמל is considered to be related to the Hebrew root חלל (meaning profane) rather than חלל (meaning begin). For further information, see Rashi's commentary to the verse.

8

This verse brought in from Isaiah makes the point that spreading man to the ends of the earth was more than just a punishment; it was actually a fulfillment of the intention that the earth was intended to be inhabited.

9

See Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, Vol. I, pp.198-203.

FOOTNOTES, (cont.)

10

Seder Olam, beginning of chapter I.

11

The Hebrew word וּמַעְבָּד is translated converted by the rabbis. See Midrash Rabba, Genesis, 39:14.

12

Genesis 12:7.

13

The oral law.

14

The thirteen exegetical rules of Rabbi Ishmael. An enumeration of them can be found in the introduction to Sifra.

15

The author is referring to the four-pronged shin on the box of the t'fillin for the head and to the fact that the straps of the t'fillin are black; neither of these characteristics is discussed in the Torah but rather is found in the oral law.

16

The discrepancy between the three hundred forty seven years and the figure which should actually be derived (namely, four hundred thirty years) is explained in the Oral Law: we count from the time of Isaac.

17

That one may not mix the milk with the meat of a beast in biblical; that one may not do it with the meat of a bird is from the oral law, rabbinic. The rabbis also expanded the list of relatives with whom one could not marry beyond that of the Bible.

18

The Karaites.

19

The work only covers Moed, Nashim, and N'zikin.

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