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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE

SEPHER HAYASHAR

OF

ZERAHIA HA YEWANI

by

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Referee

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Rabbi and the degree of Master of Hebrew Letters.

March 1, 1941

rec. 2/8/41

To the Memory of  
My Father

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Authorship

The "Sepher Hayashar" may be called, to paraphrase another title, "the book without an author. Or perhaps we should say the book with so many authors that no decision has been reached as to who actually wrote the book. It has been variously ascribed to Rabbenu Jakob Tam, Zerachya Halewi ben Isaac Gerondi, and Zerahya Ha Yewani. We shall endeavor to prove, but then only by inference, that the author was actually Zerahya Ha Yewani.

The volume has gone through many editions, probably <sup>1</sup> twenty-four in number. All of them were not available for examination. It is not quite certain when the first edition was published. It appears to have been in Constantinople in fifteen hundred and twenty-six (1526).<sup>2</sup>

This earliest edition was not available. The other more important editions are as follows:<sup>3</sup>

Venice 1544 (Octavo)

Krakow 1586 (quarto)

\*Amsterdam 1708 (octavo)

\*Frankfort on Oder 1733 (octavo) and also 1791

? See list of editions

See list of editions  
p. 280  
for additional eds

\*Sulzbach 1762

Prague 1588 quarto (listed in Heidenheim's  
catalogue)

\*Zolkiew 1765

Korez 1785 (Octave)

Lemberg 1792 (octavo)

\*Warsaw 1840

\*Frankfort a. Main 1850

\*Lemberg 1851

Warsaw 1875 also 1922

It is significant to note that all the volumes up to and including the Frankfort a. Main edition in 1850 bear the inscription: ספר הישר האיום לרבנו אהרן . They all, without a single exception, attribute the authorship to Rabbenu Tam. This can be easily understood for we know that Rabbenu Tam wrote a book entitled . ספר הישר . This is a halachic book written by a Tosafist who was hardly concerned with the philosophic-ethical problems. It may be said that the only resemblance of the two books lies in the title. As to content there is no similarity whatever. It is quite evident from the style, content, and general approach that the two books could hardly have been written by the same author.

The edition with which we worked is the Franfort a. Main (1850) edition. This contains a high-German trans-

lation by Isaac Kaufman. In his introduction he makes clear that he accepts the opinion regarding the authorship of Azulai in his "Shem Hagdolim." Azulai is of the belief that Zerachya Ha Yewani wrote the Sopher Hayashar. He admits that there was a confusion with regard to Rabbenu Tam and also Zerachya Halewi ben Isaac Gerondi. The confusion with regards to Zerachya Halewi ben Isaac Gerondi he attributes to the similarity in names ר' זרחה (Rabi Zerachya Ha Yewani) ר' זרחה (Rabi Zerachya Gerondi Halewi). He (Azulai) gets this idea from Lonzano whom the translator Isaac Kaufman quotes:

היה אובד תלמוד  
והא שדרו גלובא הסוגיא  
ושליו זה קטור על פק  
דר כס וספר הישרים

The תלמוד אובד, of course, is the well-known book by Bachya ibn Pakuda of which we will have more to say later on. The שדרו גלובא referred to<sup>is</sup> the book of Rabbi Jonah Gerondi (not to be confused with Zerachya Halewi Gerondi). In addition to שדרו גלובא he wrote תלמוד אובד and the ספר הישרים. The ספר הישרים referred to is undoubtedly the work of Zerachya Ha Yewani.

The Lemberg edition of 1851 ascribes the book to Zerachya Ha Yewani on the title page. However, since this book is merely a reprint of the earlier Franfort a. Main edition (1850) it throws no light upon the authorship. The

publisher merely accepts the conclusion of Isaac Kaufman. Isaac Kaufman admits, however, that he can find no mention of Zerachya Ha Yewani in any of the writings of his period or in any of the listings of prominent men.<sup>6</sup> This could lead one to the conclusion that perhaps such a man never existed. The author of the criticism of the translation of the ספר חסידים (Fr. a. M. 1850) says that he can form no opinion and that the question of authorship should be solved by scholars qualified to do so.<sup>7</sup> (This would hardly seem to include the author of this thesis).

Dr. Isaiah Sonne has still another theory as to the origin and authorship of the Sepher Hayashar. According to his opinion the Sepher Hayashar is the product of the Italian School of the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century. He cites here the ascetic influence and also mentions the influence of Bahya.<sup>8</sup>

Since we have no direct evidence as to the actual time of the man it must remain a matter for conjecture. The Jewish Encyclopedia places Zerachya Ha Yewani in either the 13th or fourteenth century. He is a "Byzantine ethical writer... Of his life no details are known except that he was the author of an ethical work entitled Sepher Hayashar."<sup>9</sup>

Meyer Waxman places Zerachya Ha Yewani definitely in the fourteenth century. "The 14th century produced a number of ethical books, the most important of which may be considered to be the Sepher Hayashar (The book of Righteousness)

by Zerahya ha-Yewani (the Greek) hailing from a city in Greece (d. c. 1394)<sup>10</sup> We note that Waxman is very indefinite as to the location of the city in Greece.

Carmoly in an article in the "Israelitische Annalen" places Zerachya at the end of the 13th century. In this article Zerachya is described as being a close and trusted friend of a certain Jacob ben Reuben, author of the *Sefer ha-  
Yerusha*<sup>11</sup> According to the Jewish Encyclopedia the famous Karaite Biblical exegete, Jacob ben Reuben lived in the eleventh century.<sup>12</sup> This is an obvious discrepancy. One who was supposed to have lived in the thirteenth or fourteenth century can hardly be said to be a close friend of one who lived in the eleventh century. Carmoly gives no reference which substantiates the existence of such a friendship.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to note that we find the Sepher Hayashar quoted in the *Sefer ha-  
Yerusha* of Ya'abez (Jacob Emden) 18th century. He mentions it as being a book of pious nature and credits it to Rabbenu Tam.<sup>12</sup>

There is a reference to the Sepher Hayashar in the *Sefer ha-  
Yerusha*<sup>13</sup> of Abraham Saba, a Castilian preacher of the sixteenth century. It does not mention the author by name but merely says that he should be blessed for having written such a book.

*Besty  
Revised*



## B. The Man and the Book

In his introduction the author describes himself as being a philosopher, one of those who have forsaken the path of religion and morality and are engrossed in the pursuit of riches, honor, and pleasure.<sup>16</sup>

The inherent piety of the man may be clearly seen in his frequent use of Biblical quotations to substantiate his opinions. He uses them much in the same manner as do the authors of the Midrashim of various types. We will cite just a few to show his method.

### 1. **Biblical** references.

In his introduction he states that the value of the precepts and the laws of the Torah is ascertained by the testimony of two witnesses, first by reason, second by the prophets. It would seem that by placing "reason" first he is inclined to prefer the philosophic truths to those of the prophetic revelations. Nevertheless, whichever he may prefer they must both be directed toward the Lord. e.g. concerning reason he quotes Jeremiah IX:23:

"כִּי אֵין מַגִּיד מַלְאָכָיו וְיִתְּנָהּ מִלְּפָנֵי ה' וְיִתְּנָהּ מִלְּפָנֵי ה' וְיִתְּנָהּ מִלְּפָנֵי ה'."

This "reason" is to glory only in that it knows the Lord. This is important for, as we will later show, he condemns all knowledge which is not directed toward the Lord as vain knowledge, which will lead to wickedness and sin. Of course

he uses the Biblical word *השכל* in a denominated form from *שכל* in the same philosophical sense of the meaning of *שכל* being "reason." This is indicative of his method. He is not always correct in the usage of the words but he can be forgiven as he only wished to give his opinions of greater authority by establishing their basis in the Bible. With regards to prophecy he quotes Hosea XII:11;

*וידברתי על הנביאים ואנכי אצל הנביא*

For the same reason as above he states that prophecy or rather revelation, or intuitive knowledge is divinely inspired.<sup>17</sup>

In speaking of righteousness he quotes Elihu in the Book of Job XXXV:6-7

*אם צדקת מה תתן לו ורבו פשדיק מה תעשה לו*

This is an alteration of the order of the verses . Job XXXV:6-7 reads as follows:

*ו. אם-אלהים מה תעשה לו ורבו פשדיק מה תעשה לו*

*ד. אם צדקת מה תתן לו א-מה מידק תקח*

Though he takes liberty with the order of the text he does not mutilate its meaning. The question is that of a scoffer which Zerachya answers saying that we do have a part to play

namely: *אודה עולמי להודות לו על כל אשר גמלנו והטובה אשר הנחילנו ושלאל מאמו אדגורנו לעשות הישר בדנינו... לא לבקרה ולבוא*

An instance of the typical rabbinic method of using the Scriptures to prove a point is the use of Isaiah XLIII:7:

in connection with the Genesis story of the creation of the luminaries. *כל הנקרא בשמי לכבודי בראתי (Is. XLIII:7)*

To prove this he quotes Gen. I:17:

*ויתן אלהם אלהים כרקיד השמים והאיר על הארץ*

It does not say: *להאיר על הארץ* but only *להאיר על השמים*

This proves, to Zerachya's satisfaction, that God created the world not out of any necessity for himself but rather that it should be a testimony of his greatness. This type of Scriptural quotation shows that he must have been thoroughly at home with the midrashic method of Biblical quotation. <sup>18</sup>

Zerachya quotes Biblical verses galore. We have cited just a few in which is conveyed the manner in which he uses them. We do not believe that it is necessary to cite any more verses as they are used in much the same manner as the pious men of all ages in Jewish history have used them. His attempts to secure support for all his theories, whenever possible, from the Bible. It lends an aura of sanctity and provides his theories with the support of the one impeccable authority which no one can dare to oppose.

## 2. Rabbinic Sources

Zerachya does not have frequent occasion to use rabbinic sources to support his ideas. He prefers to rely on the Bible for his authority. However, a few instances might be cited to give an insight into the author's relationship to rabbinic literature and his method of using it.

One of Zerachya's contentions is that a righteous person should pay no attention to the mockers and scoffers who are prone to make fun of him. He cites in support of this theory the statement "And I am the Lord who has brought you forth from <sup>the</sup> Ur of the Chaldees."

(19) "ואני יהוה הוצאתיך מור" *Ur*

This he takes to refer to the midrash of Abraham being cast into the fiery furnace by Nimrod. God upon hearing his supplication turned the wood of the fire into living trees and made the furnace a garden spot.<sup>20</sup>

210 refer  
to Rev  
to find in the  
text the  
reference to  
to Gen. R.  
38.13

The interesting thing to observe in this connection is the obvious belief of Zerzchya in the authenticity of this midrashic legend. He uses it with complete faith, believing that this story is concrete evidence to the fact that Abraham paid no attention to the scoffers until the very last moment. He deliberately puns upon the words אש כשן to make them mean "fire of the Chaldees." The word אש can mean fire. I am sure he knew that what the verse meant was actually "out of the Ur (valley) of the Chaldees."

The author either had heard this midrash or had access to an original manuscript. The first printing of this midrash occurred in Constantinople in 1519 or 1518.<sup>21</sup> We are not sure whether he got it from the original Arabic or the Hebrew translation.

Our author does not hesitate to pervert the original meaning of a text if the original idea does not suit his purposes. He does this quite cleverly as may be seen from the following example. He is trying to prove his belief that those who have never sinned occupy a higher place in God's estimation than those who have sinned and repented. He quotes:

הקורא בלבוש צדקה יבא אל המלך וישיב לו ויאמר לו  
אין לי עוון ואלוהי יאמר לו ויאמר לו

"The completely righteous do not occupy the place of those who have repented."<sup>22</sup> Rabbi Abahu unquestionably meant this to mean that a sinner who has repented occupies a higher place than those who have never sinned. It means that even the completely righteous cannot hope to attain the exalted of one who has erred and having seen the error of his ways comes back and repents. Zerachya does not let this bother him. He needs a rabbinic statement to lend authority to his belief, which, as we shall see later is contradiction to the accepted belief of his day. He blithely interprets the statement to mean the exact opposite of what was originally intended. For him it means, that the righteous do not stand in the place of the repentant sinners. Of course they don't; their place is a higher one. We must say, however, that this is not characteristic of the man. In his other quotations from the rabbis which he always introduces by *דברי רבנן* "our rabbis may their memory be blessed," he is faithful to the original interpretation.

He has the greatest respect for rabbinic wisdom as he says, "It is obligatory that no day shall pass without study of the Torah, and the words of our rabbis, may their memories be blessed...In the words of the rabbis one may find all the aspects of that which is prohibited and that which is permitted. And (these words) make a fence and do not lead him to make a breach and commit a sin, for they are more clearly understandable than the words of the Torah whose mean-

*also quoted in the book*

ings are obscure and concealed (lit. closed and sealed).<sup>23</sup>

There is a reference to a rather obscure collection of parables,

תנא דרבי חנינא . This is a collection of fables similar to Aesop's Fables. In it the animals are portrayed as discussing the wisdom of living and government.<sup>24</sup>

It was originally written in Arabic and later translated into Hebrew by Jacob ben Elasar. Zerachya refers to the cat mentioned in the תנא דרבי חנינא . He says

"do not be like the cat who when it became old and was not able to catch his prey, took the vows of a Nazirite. The beasts which formerly feared him now trusted him until they were caught in his trap and he broke their bones."<sup>25</sup>

The subject in connection with which this fable is used will be discussed later.

The author acknowledges the influence of Bachya's

תנא דרבי חנינא which he praises very highly. The influence of this work is so pronounced that it can best be illustrated when we come to the analysis of the chapters of the book. Here it will be shown the effect which this vital book had upon our author. At this time also will the Miamon-<sup>influence</sup>idean also be made clear.

C. Structure of the Book

The Sepher Hayashar is divided into eighteen portals, or chapters. The first one of which is called the Secret of Creation of the World. ( ספר חסדיו ) serves really as the foundation of all the following chapters, inasmuch as it supplies the speculative basis for the central conception of the book, which is the worship of God ( אלהים )

דוד ). Of the others, six chapters are devoted to a definition and description of that worship (Ch. II-VI and XIII) four to penitence (VII-X), and seven to related subjects such as the distinctions between the righteous and the wicked (XI and XIII). The foundations of the world to come (XII), the accounting of man and his soul(XIV), the explanation of the time fitting for the worship of the Lord (XV), the desirability of the world to come (XVI) and man should be mindful of the day of his death (XVII).<sup>26</sup> This division of the chapters according to their content will be carried through the remainder of this thesis.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. Jewish Encyclopedia. "Zerachya Ha Yewani" Vol. VII  
p. 661, col. 2.
2. Der Orient XI, p. 534 "Sepher HaYashar"
3. Those with asterisk were available for examination by  
author. All later references are to Frankfort a. Main  
edition, 1850.
4. Azulai "Shem Hagdolim" p. 52.
5. הקצת החזיק לאור of the Franfort a. Main edition,  
1850. Also in Der Orient XI "Sefer Hayaschar" p. 535.
6. ibid. p. 535.
7. Der Orient XI ibid.p. 535 (Steinschneider lists Dukes  
as the author of the article on Sefer Hayaschar. How-  
ever, the article is unsigned which would lead one to be-  
lieve the editor, J. Fürst, was the author.
8. Isaiah Sonne: p. 326 "ספרות המוסר והפילוסופיה בימינו"  
דמנאל הרוא'
9. Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. XII, p. 661.
10. Meyer Waxman, History of Jewish Literature, vol. II,  
p. 276 ff.
11. Jost's, "Israelitische Annalen" Vol I, p. 155.
12. Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. VII, p. 41.
13. Jost's "Israelitische Annalen" Vol. I, p. 155.
14. Yaabez אור הארץ p.22a Amsterdam 1781
15. Saba, Abraham זכר-החור (1781)



16. Waxman, *ibid.* p. 277.
17. *Sepher Hayashar* Introduction
18. *ibid.* p. 2.
19. *ibid.* p. 25.
20. Jellinek, "Beth ha-Midrash" Vol. I, pp. 25-34.
21. *ibid.* p. 25.
22. *Sepher Hayashar* p. 148; Talmud Berachot 34b.
23. *ibid.* p. 163.
24. Steinschneider; "Hebraische Übersetzung des Mittelalters." pp. 878-9.
25. *Sepher Hayashar*, p. 166.
26. Waxman: *History of Jewish Literature*, p. 277.

THE SEPHER HAYASHAR

*no need of  
translation of the  
preface.*

A. The Purpose of the Book

Zerachya Ha Yewani explains his purpose in writing this volume in his introduction. The introduction, therefore, is given here in a free translation.

"Let us thank God and bless our Creator who has created us, and let us call out unto the most prized of our soul. Before we existed His righteousness prevailed over us for He created us out of nothing and out of naught He made us something. By means of laws, statutes, and righteous judgments He permitted His face to shine upon us. And by means of His servants, the prophets, He made know to us the path in which there was light in order to place our eyes out of the darkness into the light so that we might walk in the path of His good Torah which is a tree of life to them that lay hold of it.

*great/precious  
prop.  
book*

*judg e.p*

*precious  
book*

"He breathed with His nostrils the soul, the spirit, of wisdom to give the fools cunning in order that they might know the right and cleave to it and to keep far away from evil and to turn away from its path. And He instructed us concerning His statutes and precious ordinances by means of two witness, first by means of the rational sense and secondly, by means of prophecy. As it is said concerning the rational sense: 'But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me...' (Jeremiah 9:23) And concerning prophecy it is said: "I have also spoken unto the prophets and I have multiplied visions." (Hosea 12:11); in

*later hall  
2/16/5*

*his*

order that the fear of Him shall be upon our faces and His Torah between our eyes. For these two, (rationality and intuition) are the media through which to approach the will of God, and they are the ladder by which one reaches the the highest chariot (referring to the <sup>3</sup>vision of Ezekiel), and they are the entrance to the gates of hope.

"Therefore it is incumbent upon us to give thanks unto Him for everything which He has given us; and for the good which He has caused us to inherit; and to ask of Him to help us to do that which is right in His eyes; and to tell of His greatness; and to attain the ultimate of perfection by our fulfillment of His commandments, for on account of all this He created us. He did not create us out of any need of His as it is written, 'If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him, and if thy transgressions become multiplied, what doest thou unto Him?' (Job 35:6-7, see Introduction). However, He created us for His honor, and to show us the power of His might and the extent of His grace, as it is written; 'Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory.' (Isaiah 43.7). Therefore, I entreat Him that my work may be pleasing unto Him. Perhaps he will reward me for it according to my intention and not according to my meager ability. For how can unimportant and mortal man approach the greatness of his Creator? For what is man that he should follow after the king? (vis. that he should be able to divine His intentions?)

"I begin, with the help of God and say, I have seen

many worthy books dealing with the subject of the worship of God, e. g. 'The Duties of the Heart' by Bahya ibn Pakuda, may his memory be blessed, and many other worthy books. But their subject matter is too deep and men of our generation do not delve into them for it is too much for their intelligence, for the burdens are heavy, the desire is weak. But these (books) will not lead to righteousness. The desire of man is evil from his youth and from these books the wounds will not be healed, for daily the ranks of the righteous grow thinner. All pursue wealth and property, and honor and haughtiness. And the heart flutters between them like a drunken person, like a hero confused by wine. Eagerly he strives after wealth, he does not hear the voice of the teachers, he does not listen to the reproaches of the scholars who warn him.

man can do it

"And I was sick just as they. And I was like them but I hoped that by reading these books perhaps their veiled hearts, which are as flint which cannot be moved from their place, would be converted. And when I became overcome with pain and saw the vanity of it all, I said (to myself) in my heart, why do you not seek rest which is good, open up your eyes and see, strengthen your desire and you, gird your loins and prepare provisions before the remembrance comes. It is not impossible that God has permitted his wisdom to be in you and has put words in your mouth and the answer upon your tongue. And do not rely upon that which has already been published, only upon that which your imagination feels. For no one else knows

p 27  
Y/21  
do not see/see  
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your heart's mistakes except yourself. Therefore no one else  
can heal your wounds. As a poet says: 'How could a fool re-  
pent of a sin if his own soul did not warn him?'<sup>1</sup> My heart!  
My heart! Lift up your eyes unto the heavens and comprehend  
the wonders, the luminaries and their dominions, the moun-  
tains and their foundations, the lands and their inhabitants.  
And direct your heart to know who created them and arranged  
the with such wisdom. Comprehend that they were created out  
of nothing and for what purpose? Comprehend the world and all  
its accidents. Also the righteous acts of the Creator and His  
goodness and compassion. And pay heed to the singularity of  
this mortal world which is comparable to a gourd which appears  
in one night and in one night disappears.<sup>2</sup> Keep before you  
life and its anxieties, the consternation of the Day of Judg-  
ment and the punishment of its judgment. And these things  
shall be arranged before you and turn not them away from be-  
fore your eyes. Then shall your soul be aroused to stand on  
the path of wisdom between hope and dread. And love and rever-  
ence shall draw you unto the worship of the blessed Creator. By  
means of the two of them you will attain your purpose and be  
saved from destruction. They open up the portals of hope and  
salvation and they save you from the depths of iniquity and  
they will be as a reminder, if you forget they will remind  
you. If you sleep they will awaken you and if you err they  
will warn you. In this will be the good wages of your labor  
and your reward will never be destroyed. Just as this trea-  
tise aids you, so will it aid everyone whose needs are similar

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to yours and whose strength approximates you own. And if the <sup>and equally</sup> wise men have no need for it perhaps a person straying from the rational path may find it. And when it comes to his heart perhaps it will arouse him from the sleep of folly and it shall be as a reward for you as King David, may peace be upon, said: 'Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners will return unto Thee.' (Psalm 51:15) 520

"When I saw that this was good advice, pleasing to God, I hurried and did not delay seeking that which would help me, which would redeem me from Sheol. I poured out my thoughts and put them together in a manner in which both the wise men and the fools might derive some benefit. All who comprehend them will understand the bases for the worship of God and shall ascend, by means of them, unto the highest place where there is a rest for the pure souls. He takes to heart all that which he owes to his master and he recalls the bitter and fearful day on which he will no longer find help. And perhaps, if he takes these matters seriously, he will desire to attain the place of the righteous and this desire will urge him to imitate them and perform deeds like theirs. I have not overlooked any matter which humbles the heart or which stirs the tranquil thoughts. All that I know and have learnt from wise men I have not held back and have put into this book. I have called it 'Sepher Hayashar' (a book of righteous living) in order that it shall make straight the path to the worship of God. It is a path of life to them that lay hold of it and

its supporters are happy.

"And God who reveals the secret and loosens the tongue of the dumb, may He be with my mouth and direct my thoughts and guard my paths that I do not sin with my tongue. May he place fine words in my mouth and guide me in the paths of righteousness and faith, as it is written: 'He restoreth my soul; He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.'" (Ps. 23:3)

It is quite evident from this introduction that Zerachya had a twofold purpose in writing this book. First, all the available books dealing with the righteous way of life were too deep and profound for the common man to understand them. Secondly, he felt a need for the expression of his own thoughts regarding what he considered to be the proper way of life. By putting them in a book he could aid both himself and others who were in the same dilemma. He proposed to write the book in a popular style which would appeal to the simple man and give him comfort and guidance.

Unquestionably Zerachya Ha Yewani was greatly influenced by Bahya ibn Pakuda. As we have mentioned before, he comments that the "Hovos Halevovos" is one of the great works and should be studied. However, he admits that perhaps this book is too deep and cannot be understood by the common people.

The Sepher Hayashar is modeled very closely upon the "Hovos Halevovos". The latter book has ten "portals" or chapters dealing with specific aspects of man's relation-

ship to his God. Zerachya also has "portals", eighteen in number in which he deals with all the aspects of the relationship of man to God and vice-versa.

Like Bahya, Zerachya likes to think of his book as being a means whereby the path to God shall be made straight. Bahya refers to his own work saying, "I aimed to make the book one of permanent value, a treasury of things hitherto unknown, A lamp to illuminate men's paths and show them in which way to go."<sup>3</sup>

Similar to Bahya, Zerachya places the emphasis upon reason first. He states, as we have mentioned before, the value of the precepts and the laws of the Torah is ascertained by the testimony of two witnesses, first by reason, second by the prophets. Bahya adds to these two a third, namely tradition. For Bahya, Reason, Scripture and Tradition are necessary to understand the duties of the heart. Actually Zerachya's idea is but a simplification of Bahya's which is much more complex.

Like Bahya, Zerachya bases his ethical system on the recognition of the greatness of God primarily through the observation of His wonderful deeds. Bahya's natural philosophy is much more fully developed than that of Zerachya. It was not the latter's intention to delve into the realms of science to the extent that Bahya did.

Throughout the volume there can be seen the influence of Maimonides. This great scholar who was the first

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master of Rabbinic law to delve into the realm of philosophy had his effect upon Zerachya just as he had upon countless generations that followed after him. It is difficult to point out precisely those teachings of M~~i~~am~~i~~onides which influenced our author because of the time which elapsed between his lifetime and that of Zerachya Ha Yewani. Many of M~~i~~am~~i~~onides teachings had been accepted as verities belonging to the public domain. However, being a philosopher of a kind, our author probably was familiar with Miamonides' works. Whenever it is possible we will endeavor to cite the philosophical sources from which our author draws his ideas.

From this point on there follows an analysis of the text of the "Sepher Hayashar."

B. Secret of the Creation of the World (Ch. I)

The essence of this chapter is that God created the world in order to perfect His name. Our author arrives at this conclusion by the following method.

"All wise people believe and understand that intelligence can understand only two things, one, the Creator; two, the created. And nothing else besides these two. <sup>^</sup> And so we believe that the Creator has no need for anything, for anything which needs something is deficient in that which it needs and by acquiring it becomes complete. Since the Creator is complete therefore, He needs nothing. And since He needs nothing (being complete in Himself) we learn from this that He created the world not from necessity. Therefore, since He did not create it out of necessity we must understand that He created it as a free gift." <sup>4</sup>

There naturally follows the question Why did God create a "free gift"? Since he has proved that God did not need the world before He created or after He created, Zera-  
chya feels that it logically follows that God created it for "our use" (the use of man).

At this point there is an aside, so to speak, a departure from his main theme of the chapter. However, it is extremely important for the remainder of the book to be understood. The statement is:

"And furthermore we know and realize that the Cre-

ator did not create the world for those evil ones and those who incite Him to anger, for this the intelligence cannot accept."<sup>5</sup> There follows an analogy, comparing the evil ones to the peeling of a fruit, which, though bad in itself, covers the choice fruit within. Also, the righteous are compared to the wheat which the sower sows, the evil ones are the weeds which grow up with the wheat. "The world is created not for the wicked but for the righteous, just as the tree is not created for its leaves and cultivated for the peeling but rather for the fruit which it produces."

Then there follows a rather involved proof of the creation of the world for the perfection of His name. "Furthermore, we see the heavens moving to and fro. All that moves must have a beginning to its movement. Once we know that there was a beginning to the movement we know that this beginning had a beginning which was its creation, for the beginning of motion is its beginning. And once we know that it had a beginning we know that before its creation the Creator had no need of it. And if the Creator had no need of it before its creation so did he have no need of it after its creation. For the <sup>power</sup> strength which the Creator had before its creation still remains after its creation. It does not increase, decrease or change. And because it is so we know that just as He had no need for it before its creation so does he have no need for it after its creation. And if you might say that that force which obliges the Creator to create the world is the

need (underlining is the writer's) of the Creator for the world then we say that the <sup>power of necessity can compel only him</sup> strength of the obligation forces <sup>is subject</sup> the obligated one to do something. And we know that there is nothing to force the Creator to do something but His strength forces the created things to become something out of nothing. <sup>6</sup> And if you say why are they obligated to do it? In order to <sup>make known His godliness and to show the glory of His greatness, and to rejoice in His deeds. For when God creates a righteous man He rejoices in him."</sup>

The perfection of God's name follows from the worship of Him. "For just as a king is not called a king until he has a nation, as it is said, 'In the multitude of nations is the king's glory' (Prov. 14:28).....'And I will be unto you for a God and you will be unto Me for a nation.' (Lev. 26.12)

<sup>smiter</sup> God is compared to a ~~plague~~ <sup>smiter</sup> which is not called a <sup>plague</sup> until it smites. "His strength was not lacking before He created the world yet through the creation His strength was added to. This is the reason for the creation of the world." <sup>8</sup>

For our author the world was made according to a perfect plan. He goes into detail explaining how the various parts of the body each perform a function which is unique in itself and which no other part of the body could do as well. Also this plan is so perfect that even had God not told the Israelites to make Him a tabernacle according to set specifications it would have been impossible for them to have made

Him one any different than the one which they finally did make. It was a perfect one adjusted to the needs of the occasion. Bahya has this same theory also which he borrows from the physico-theological argument of Aristotle.<sup>9</sup>

Israel is the great sign of the plan of God's work, and the choice proof of the justice of His works. The wicked are the sign of the profanation of God's name.

"When a man plans his work he seeks to emulate his Creator. For when a man is patient he desires to approximate God in this characteristic, and if he is charitable or just he is making himself godlike insofar as he is able to do so. And so it is with the rest of the virtues of man."<sup>10</sup> We find here that through the worship of God man seeks to pattern himself after God. It is the old Biblical idea of Noah walking with God. "The worship of the Lord and the reverence of Him is similar to mans' worship of their kings and their fear of them. Just as a king does not achieve complete <sup>ship</sup>kinghood unless his servants are righteous and his princes obedient and honor him with all their might so is the kingdom of God achieved through man's worship of Him and fear of Him. And even though His perfection would not be impaired by the lack of their worship, however, when the servant fulfills completely the will of his master and he is completely the servant in all things then his complete servitude is evidence of the lordship of his master, even though a deficiency in the servitude is not a reflection against the master's position."<sup>11</sup>

Zerachya explains that he is constantly using similes in order that man may best understand the nature of the true worship of Gos through references made to familiar things. This factor is one of the most important features of the book. Because of it the book does become readily understandable to the common person. Our author reduces abstractions to concrete familiar terminology wherever possible.

The soul is compared to "a flame of fire bound in wood and not able to separate itself from it until the end of the strength of the body and then the soul is able to return to its source in the most high place. It has been explained that the lower world is like the upper and the works of the dwellers on earth is like that of the dwellers on high and the two strengths strive to reach the above which is higher than they. And there is no difference in the work. Each one strives to unite itself with that which is higher than it." <sup>12</sup>

We see here the influence of the neo-Platonic ideas of the "Brethren of Purity." Where Zerachya had access to, or was interested in the writings of this Mohammedan school it is hard to tell. It would seem more likely that he took this from Bahya who was definitely influenced by Arabic Philosophy and by the "Brethren of Purity" in particular.

We have now discussed Zerachya's rational proof that the world was not created out of necessity. He states that he placed this proof first because it is easier for man to grasp it because of the analogies, similes, etc. Now for the

the Scriptural proof. We will not deal at any length with this proof as it is quite familiar and does not add anything particularly new. We have, in the introduction, cited some uses of Scriptural quotation used as proof for one thing or another. Zerachy does not dwell at any great length upon the Scriptural proof. In fact he allots only a half page out of approximately eighteen pages devoted to the "Secret of the Creation of the World." "So we find testimony in the Scripture that the world was not created out of necessity but spontaneously and as a show of grace, as the Scripture says, 'For I have said, 'Forever is mercy built' (Ps. 89:3) and we further find that all the good that the Creator does for His created he does not do out of any need or obligation but rather for His own sake, as it is said: 'For Mine own sake, for Mine own sake, I do, ' etc., (Is. 48:11) and in another place we see: 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.' (Hosea 14:5) and also: 'Know this day and lay it to thy heart that the Lord,' etc., (Deut. 4:39). We have already explained the logical proof, namely, that the Creator, blessed be He, created the world only that it might serve Him. Therefore, behold we have explained by means of Scripture and ~~reason~~ logic the secret of the creation of the world."

As we have noticed the secret of the creation of the world is learned in two ways, by the rational method of proof and by the Scriptural authority. Our author devoted by far the greater portion of his exposition to the logical proof

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This language does not impart any meaning

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believing that it was easier for the common man to grasp this method rather than the proof from the Scripture. This fact sheds a great deal of light upon the type of cultural environment in which Zerachya lived. Apparently the Arabic philosophers has made great inroads upon the traditional beliefs of the people at that time. Furthermore, it would seem, from the small amount of space devoted to the Scriptural proof, that Zerachya did not believe it would have nearly the argumentative value of the logical proof. There are many more Scriptural verses which he could have cited, had he the mind to do so. This does not detract in any way from Zerachya's attitude toward the value of this proof. We must remember that he hopes to clear up certain questions for others of his generation and is therefore greatly influenced by the people for whom he is writing.



C. The Worship of God (Chs. II-VI, XIII)

1. The Pillars of God's Worship (Ch. II)

We now come to a definition and description of the worship of God. At first our author deals with the theoretical nature of the worship and then he turns to the practical aspects.

There are two conditions without which the true worship of God is impossible, namely, the possession of a kind heart, for one who is good to men will also do good in the eyes of God; also the belief that only God is perfect, and that all other things are defective. "The worship of God rests on three pillars: one, the kind heart, for if a man is kind in his relations with other men he will be kind in his relations with God. And with regards to men, the Scripture says: "(And the child Samuel grew up and increases in favor) both with the Lord and also with men." (I Sam. 2:26).

"And the second pillar is faith that everything which exists independent of God is defective.

"The third pillar is to recognize, that God is perfect."<sup>14</sup>

Out of these two conditions there arise three more, love, fear and wisdom which fulfill the requisites for the true worship of God. "If there are present in man these three properties, his soul, by its very nature, forces him to love

God and when he loves Him then will his worship be completely perfect, for out of love comes fear. Anyone whom a man loves he fears (reveres). But, <sup>#</sup>is ~~not~~ possible to fear someone without loving him, therefore, I say that fear is always bound up with love but not always love with fear."<sup>15</sup> Abraham is cited as the exemplar of the worship of God out of fear derived from the love of God. This is the most exalted form of worship.

"The worship of the Lord derived from fear alone is not the worship of the righteous. For to the nations of the earth He said: 'Shall ye not fear me?' (Jer. 5:22) etc... But to the righteous he said: 'And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God.' (Deut. 6:5)...etc."<sup>16</sup>

There are ten characteristics which <sup>one possessing</sup> this love must have in order for it to be perfect love.

1. He must love God's law.
2. He must derive more pleasure from God's worship than from any other pleasure.
3. He must despise those whom God despises and love those whom God loves.
4. He should regard his desire for worldly goods as naught compared to his desire for the worship of God.
5. Every labor, imperfection, and punishment should be considered sweet when weighed against his love of God.
6. He shall not give <sup>P</sup>reference to any of his own work before that of God's work.

7. He should make known to men his love of God and boast thereof.

8. He shall not listen to the voice of any demagogue or seducer when he worships God.

9. In the event there are changes from good to bad he should not abandon God because of them.

10. His worship shall not be for the sake of receiving a reward, for in that case his worship is dependent upon something." <sup>17</sup>

There follows an elaboration upon these ten cardinal points which is ~~full~~ of Scriptural quotations exemplifying the points mentioned.

Zerachya is very careful to make the distinction between love and fear. There is the love which comes from accidental causes and which disappears when the accident no longer exists. There is fear which arises from the need of something. This is not the fear which is conducive to the true worship of God. Only that fear which comes from love is worthy. The way to distinguish between the two fears is to weigh one's love and fear upon the balances of the ten points enumerated. If there is fear which is the impure and wicked one then none of the ten points will be found. If there is a mixture of the true love and the wicked fear, then some of the points will be found. It depends upon which is predominant, the true love or the wicked fear, whether more or less of the points are found. "Therefore that worship which comes from fear is unstable

unless it is of the fear which is derived from love." <sup>18</sup>

<sup>Chapter of the ~~prashan~~ ~~prashan~~</sup>  
In his "Sha'ar Ahabat Elohim" Bahya states that

"The aim and goal of all ethical self-discipline is the love of God...Those that are imbued with this love find easy every sacrifice they are asked to make for their God; and no selfish motive mars the purity of their love. Thus was the love of Abraham and Job, of Daniel and all the saintly martyrs, filled with the joy of self-sacrifice... A man may be as holy as an angel, yet he will not equal in merit the one that leads his fellowmen to righteousness and to love of God." <sup>19</sup>

We clearly see that in Bahya is contained most of which Zerachya has to say. However, Zerachya is again much more simple and can be much more readily understood.

Another element which is necessary for the complete worship of God is wisdom. The three pillars of worship, love, fear, and wisdom, are interlaced so as to make one impossible without the other with the exception of love which can stand alone, although imperfectly. Wisdom is necessary because "the fool who is without intelligence, even though he loves his Creator, does not know how to do His will and does not know the ways of God. And he will forbid the permitted and permit the forbidden and he will not know and he will sin. His love will be as a branch without a root, and as a building without a foundation. However, if he has the love and acquires the wisdom then he will recognize the places of worship and when it is fitting to add and when it is fitting to take away.

And he will know the basis for the worship of God, its ways and paths. And so it is with any work that man is accustomed to do and knows well. If he is a fool he cannot do it as it is supposed to be done for there might occur times when something new comes up which he has not learned and does not know. If he is wise he will not be hurt after he has learned the fundamentals, for from the fundamentals come all the rest of the variations and he will understand the new subjects." <sup>20</sup>

Bahya likewise has this same conception of the importance of wisdom. In his <sup>chapter called</sup> "Sha'ar Avodath Elohim" he makes clear that the Law is necessary because it enables man to steer a clear course between the desire, on the one hand to lead a sensual life, and, on the other hand, there might be the desire for complete abnegation. The first is destructive of society and the second the destruction of the individual. Neither is desirable. The worship of God needs the knowledge of the Law to make it complete.

## 2. Faith and the Fundamental Factors in the Worship of God (Ch. III)

From the union of love, reverence of God, and wisdom there comes reason. This plus faith, which comes from reason, establishes the five principles which are the real foundations of the worship of God. The faith, or belief, must come from all three. If it is derived from only two of the three factors then there are serious divergences from the true worship. Furthermore, there must be equal parts of love, fear and wisdom in this composition. "When faith is

derived from only two of them, fear and love, then this faith is lacking. Also because of too much wisdom can faith be lacking, as for example, the Epicureans, the scoffers, and the philosophers who do not believe in the holy Torah. And this is because of the evil of their wisdom. If together with this evil wisdom there is an evil heart and evil characteristics then faith is completely destroyed. Not only through an evil heart is love destroyed but also through the learning of evil knowledge. And there is created in the heart evil things which destroy the flowering of the love and makes it a muddy fountain. And when this deficient love is joined with evil knowledge then all faith is destroyed."<sup>21</sup>

From reason comes faith. "Everything which is derived from reason or from one of the senses has two powers, one an inner and invisible strength, and one, an outer and visible strength. As for example, the four elements."<sup>22</sup> Every element has a power which guards it from destruction and distinguishes it from the other elements, e.g., such as the ability of fire to warm and the fire itself is the revealed essence. And so it is with water, dust, and air... Every plant has a power by which it grows and increases. And it keeps the plant from harm and distinguishes it from any other plant. The body of the plant is its outward appearance. It has two powers one revealed and one invisible."

"And so with animals. They have a strength of moving, feeling, and warmth and their outer strength is their

bodies. They also have three inner powers, one above the other. The first is the elemental strength out of which their bodies were created; and a higher one, and one still higher than the others.

And so men have a fine inner attribute and that is the soul of wisdom and it is more hidden than the power of life (i. e., the power of the growth of the plants) and the crude attributes of the body.

And so the constellation has an invisible inner soul which is higher than the soul of wisdom. And the crude attribute is the body of the constellation.

And so, also, the higher beings have an inner soul more exalted, finer than the attribute of the constellations, and also an outer attribute and that is the appearance which is visible to man, e. g., the appearance of the holy beings and angels. And if our intelligence was able to grasp higher than this then we would describe them by these attributes.

However, since God is more exalted and above the conceptions of our intelligence we conclude that he is not like the rest of the comprehensible beings possessing two  
23  
attributes.

This trichotomy of the body, soul, and spirit is well known in philosophical since at least Aristotle's time and perhaps earlier. We know that Bahya also had this trichotomy. Whether Zerachya took it from Bahya or knew of it from other sources we cannot say. In view of the widespread

prevalence of the concept it would seem reasonable that any philosopher of any note would surely be acquainted with it.

Each group joins itself without any trouble to its own kind because there is a common ground upon which they can meet. Man joins himself to man, animals to animals, etc. Since there is such a disparity between the attributes of man (i. e., his trichotomy) and the attributes of God which man cannot understand because they are of a different kind we must realize that they are ~~hind~~ beyond our comprehension. It is here that faith enters and becomes one of the five pillars of worship. There is a point at which reason must stop because of its very nature of being contained within the limits of man's body it can go no further.

A book such as "Hovos Halevovos" of Bahya is necessary as a guide for the heart, to teach it and direct it. What a man's heart is able to understand determines the quality of his worship. That is why such a book is of utmost importance. Zerachya is very frank about his opinion of Bahya's book and at no time refrains from praising it.

The rational factor in man is compared to a seed planted in the ground. The potentialities of the seed lay dormant and only reach fruition after careful attention. So it is with reason. "Just as every tree does not give forth good fruit, so every soul does not produce good reason. When the soil is good and the root is good, and careful attention is given, the resultant fruit will be good. If the foundations



of the body, which is the ground, are good, and the foundation of the soul, which is the root, is good, and if the discipline which is the attention, is good, then the resultant reason will be good."<sup>24</sup> The true goodness of love and fear come from reason. Without it there can be no real love and fear.

The characterizing feature of a wise man is that he does things in moderation. If he does all things in moderation he will be good in the eyes of man and of God. Man cannot worship God in a fitting manner without reason. There are four factors which keep from him the proper worship and destroy him. They are:

- "1. He does not know the right way.
2. He does not know the difference between good and evil.
3. He does not have the fear of God.
4. He does not believe that there is to be a reward for his deeds." (retribution)<sup>25</sup>

We learn that the worship of God is dependent upon the completeness of man's reason and knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

The worship of God is the ultimate goal of reason and wisdom. All the efforts should be directed toward this final result.

The righteous who have never sinned occupy the highest rung. They realize that all is vanity. They do not indulge in sensual pleasures. They busy themselves with the needs of the poor and the redemption of captives.<sup>27</sup>

There is a great divide between the highest intellect of man and the essence of the Creator. The Creator is infinite and the intellect is finite. If man were able to grasp the conception of God it would be a reflection upon the limit of God, not upon the magnitude of man's intellect. The reason for this is that man is created and God is the Creator. It is unreasonable to expect that the created could hope to understand all the aspects of the Creator.

"And know, truthfully, that there is no thing which is necessary to be attributed to God. Neither power, life, wisdom, existence or unity for God is above all these attributes... We are forced to recognize only two forces which appear in these attributes."God established the earth in wisdom" (Prov. 3:19). We must describe Him by "existence" in order to eliminate those attributes which being without existence possesses. Namely, for he who does not have existence is not exalted, nor does he have strength, nor does any work, good or evil, come from him. Therefore, we must say that He exists.

God is not far away because He is near; He is not near because he is far away. He appears to be far away because He has certain attributes which are not to be found in His created ones. In fact, sometimes there are the opposite attributes. (e. g., God is infinite, man is finite.) However, just as God was near to man when He created him out of nothing, and put into him life, reason and wisdom, so will He ever remain near unto him.

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Cap. 19  
The problem of negative attributes  
is not understood

### 3. A Brief Statement of the Worship of God (Ch. IV)

In this "portal" Zerachya gives a brief statement of the worship of God. It is an attempt to emerge from the realm of the theoretical and abstract and state specific rules by which the true worship may be achieved. There are six methods of worshipping God:

1. A person should associate with people who bestir him to worship, e.g., wise men, righteous men, the poor, the sick, and those who are in trouble.

2. To avoid the opposites of those mentioned above.

3. Every day he must set himself to the study of our teachers according to his ability. And he should study the Scriptures. He should apply himself to the works of the righteous such as Bahya ibn Pakuda.

4. He should keep away from secular wisdom except that he knows his faith will be strengthened thereby.

5. He must be mindful of retribution.

6. He must know all the aspects of worship. Some come from the soul (intellectual soul) others from the body. <sup>29</sup>  
First will be mentioned those which come from the soul.

a. Faith. This is to have a belief even in that which is beyond the powers of the rational factor to understand.

b. Love. It must be a complete love and an unselfish one. Also love of Torah, love of God's

will, love of the wise men and their ways, love of all who love the Creator, love of the poor and the stranger. But one must not love evil deeds and the earthly pleasures. And one should not love those things which keep man away away from God's worship.

- c. Assurance. A belief in the certainty of reward and punishment.
- d. Grace. He should worship God as is fitting. He should accept with good feeling all which comes from God. All the good things and disciplines which come to him are by the grace of God.
- e. Humility. He should not think himself greater than any other man. He should associate with the poor.
- f. Shame. He should be ashamed of his evil deeds.
- g. Jealousy. He should be jealous of the righteous more<sup>30</sup> so than of those who have repented. He should be jealous of the poor who, despite their troubles never desist from worshipping God. He should be jealous of the non-Jews.
- h. Reflection. He should reflect upon his origin and his destiny and upon the greatness of the Creator and upon the finitude of the world, etc.
- i. Strength of heart. He should be desirous of worshipping God and strong enough to withstand

the blandishment of those who would seek to distract him from that worship.

- j. Pity. He should have pity on the sick and on the poor, fools who have no fear, and upon his servants and household.
- k. Cruelty. To be cruel to those who oppress. And not to have mercy on evil doers.
- l. Giving. To give to the poor.
- m. Wisdom. He should study the Torah and the words of the wise men. And he should not busy himself with evil works which destroy God's worship.

With regards to those which come from the body, our author enumerates the various parts of the body and their functions with regard to worship. e.g., The eyes should be kept closed when there is evil to be seen.<sup>31</sup>

He concludes with the statement that the body should not be afflicted too much. This is in harmony with Bahya's conception.<sup>32</sup>

4. The five Pillars of Worship: Reason, Faith, Love, Fear, and Wisdom. (Ch. V)

This chapter discusses the pillars of worship which we have seen already mentioned. There is a great deal of repetition here probably for emphasis. Some greater detail is added, however.

Love is divided into three categories; one, the love

which is ~~is~~ for some selfish end, two, the love of comrade-ship, three, the love of the characteristics of the beloved. The latter is the fine and true love. It is eternal. This is the love a man should have for God and is the pillar referred to.

Love is dependent upon the lover and the beloved. If there are similar characteristics in the lover as in the beloved then all is good for likes attract and unlikes repel. Birds of a feather flock together.<sup>33</sup> If a man has these characteristics<sup>34</sup> he will be drawn towards God.

The fear of God should be similar to the fear of a servant for his master.

An important foundation for the worship of God, which has three degrees, is now brought to the fore. The lowest degree is reason. Reason is acquired through study, understanding, experience, and old age, and is the lowest of the degrees. And from this degree man advances to the rung of love, fear, and wisdom which are as three pillars. The highest degree is reached through faith and worship. From this rung man reaches the ultimate. He attains the grace of God and clings to Him.

Man's reward is God's love. There is no utilitarian motive, for we do not know the form which this reward, if it may be called such, takes.

There are twenty wonderful things to prove that there is reward after death:

1. Hanoch and Elijah: They became as angels and the

souls of the righteous shall be like theirs.

2. Moses: His soul did not perish after death but it ascended the heights. Likewise the souls of the righteous.

3. The Soul is able to grasp that distant and the near. It is superior to that which it grasps and all is contained in it. It is free of them. It is more exalted than they and its place of abode is more exalted. At the time of death it returns to the place where it had been previous to its existence in the body.

4. The position of the beast is humble, that of man more exalted. The soul of the beast is of the dust and seeks to return there. The soul of man is drawn upwards. It cannot go there while it is contained in the body. After its release from the body it soars upward.

5. The body of man is composed of four elements, fire water, wind and dust. After death each returns to its source. The soul returns to its source because it is part of a more exalted force. The Creator, through His powers of being, life, wisdom and unity formed the soul out of these attributes. These attributes ascend to the exalted place after separation from the body. These attributes are all one and not separate for the essence of the One who bears them is one.

6. The body is like a wick which is kindled by fire, from a rock. The soul is bound therein like the light of a candle in the wick. When it is extinguished the light of the candle goes upward and the fire to its place and the wick remains. If you ask what was the soul before it was in the body,

I ask what was the candle before it was in the wick? The answer is that the flame of the candle comes into being through force. It does not become useful until it is bound in the wick. The wick is like the body and the oil like sustenance. After the flame is extinguished it returns to the sphere of the fire. For the sphere of the fire is its source and gives strength to the stones or iron and then fire comes forth from them.

7. Without the soul the body could not worship God. The soul stems from the heavens. Since we know that it understands the majesty of the Creator, we know that it strives to return to the above.

8. The soul of a prophet is not worthy to ascend to the heights of prophecy until it is very pure and exalted. It is bound up in the body until it acquires the strength to ascend. The same power which binds it to the body aids it to ascend the heights after death. The souls of the righteous and wise are like these. We might say "a wise man is more excellent than a prophet."<sup>36</sup>

9. Every sphere depends upon its focal point and when this is destroyed the sphere is destroyed. The intellectual sphere is the all-embracing sphere. Its center is the world. The center of the world is man. The center of man is the soul. Since we know that the intellectual sphere is eternal, so is the soul eternal.

10. God is eternal and He created the world that it might worship Him. If those who worship Him do not receive



reward in this world then they must receive reward in the world after death. If they do not receive a reward after death then something must be hindering that reward. However, since we know that nothing can hinder God we must believe that those who worship Him will receive their rewards after death.

11. We see that <sup>the</sup>wicked live even more luxuriously than the righteous. (This must mean that the righteous will will receive their rewards after death.) <sup>37</sup>

12. People who suffer martyrdom because of their profession of God's unity. If an earthly king would reward one who lays down his life for him how much more so would God do so. It is a falsehood to say that God does not reward those who serve Him.

13. Wisdom and knowledge are eternal and can never be destroyed. The soul protects itself by knowledge and, in fact, is knowledge. Since we have equated knowledge and the soul we know the soul is eternal.

14. The angels do not have body or form. However, they often assume the form of man which is the highest because God is said to assume this form. Any soul which has the form or appearance of man is therefore drawn to the angels if it is not held back by evil deeds.

15. The body is made from the earth and the soul is taken from God Himself. After death the soul returns to God just as the body returns to the earth.

16. The power of understanding comes from reason. And from the two comes the rational factor or speech. This is a godly quality. When the soul is divided from the body by

the rational factor it ascends to the highest place.

17. There are three souls; the highest is that of the angels, the middle one, that of man, and the lowest, the animal soul. The soul of man is the product of these two opposites yet it contains a third quality found in neither of the other two. The quality of the human soul depends upon the predominance of one or the other of the two other souls.

18. The soul has the power to study everything in the world. It also has the power to study itself. The more it understands itself the higher it becomes. This is because all knowledge is contained in the soul. If it becomes highly exalted then death has no power over it. It will, without doubt, join the highest place when it is separated from the body because it understands most everything while it is yet in the body.

19. The works of man are divided into two parts: the animal part which is food and drink, sexual intercourse and pleasure; the angelic part which is reason, wisdom, ethical living and rationality. The choice lies within the power of the soul. It can choose to like either one or the other. So we see that the righteous soul never dies.

5. The Explanation of Those Matters which  
Aid and Hinder the Worship of God (Ch. VI)

Worship is like the remedy for an illness. It is both the prevention and the cure. Passion is to the soul like

sickness is to the body. There follows a listing of those parts of man which seek to destroy worship and the cure for each of them.

1. Passion is the root of all evil for if man gives vent to his passion there is no evil which he will not commit. Passion is the worst of the ten aspects of evil each of which can be cured only by denying it completely and doing the opposite which the passion desires.

Food-- the desire for food can be cure only by absten-  
tion from excessive eating and drinking. <sup>39</sup>

Sexual desire-- to cure this one should seek the company of the righteous and the wise.

Wealth-- one should seek the company of the poor and downtrodden.

Pride--seek the company of the humble.

Business-- think of death which puts an end to all deeds.

Clothes-- wear sackcloth and ashes. <sup>40</sup>

Chariots (desire for riding in beautiful vehicles)-- walk a great deal and humble your heart.

Luxury-- keep away from pleasures.

If passion gets too strong he should remember the day of death when he will leave all. And it is better that he should leave all willingly and thereby secure God's favour than that he should leave against his will thereby incurring God's wrath.

This training of one's passion should be a gradual process. Additional correctives should be added daily so that a person might not become disgusted and give up everything.

He should be jealous of the evil ones who have repented and take their example. He should learn what wise men do and not follow the fools.

2. Anger: When a man is angry worship does not dwell in his heart and his heart is not in his prayer. To cure anger he should know what arouses it. Association with wise men will cure him. Righteous and wise men stipulate first that they will control their anger. A man is not called a wise man until he is master of his anger. A man will be able to notice his improvement after a few months.

3. Hypocrisy: A hypocritical person will act more pious in order to seem so in the eyes of his people. This is worship of people rather than of God. The cure for this is to know that God can see the difference between such prayer and the true worship. Furthermore, anyone who is a hypocrite is a fool because he thinks that he is fooling God. There is no greater folly than this.

4. Insolence: A man who is not ashamed of his deeds before men cannot be a true worshipper of God. "They are not ashamed, neither do they know dishonor."<sup>41</sup> One should envy the poor when they hear them praised by other people. When he is ashamed before man he will be humble in the presence of

his God.

5. Laziness: If a man is too lazy to finish his own business he will never finish the worship of God. It comes from foolishness and lack of sense. To overcome this he should associate with those who worship God day and night.

6. Accidents; lucky and unlucky: If a man has a steadfast faith, these will not move it. Man should not put too much emphasis upon the passing events of this world. He should realize that they were destined to come. When he understood all this his worship will be established.

7. Evil Companionship: If he associates with evil companions he will unwittingly acquire their evil habits. To offset this he should associate with righteous and wise people and acquire their characteristics.

8. Unbelievers: This is the hardest for which to find a cure. In fact, there is no remedy. Therefore, man must be careful to guard his faith.

9. Scoffers and revilers: Man must not listen to these people if he is to truly worship God. Man can never escape the tongues of the debunkers no matter what he does. He should realize that only two kinds of people scoff at him; either fools or wise men. If a fool scoffs it is not worthwhile to pay any attention to him. If a wise man scoffs it is because he is jealous of you because he does not possess your virtue.

10. Wisdom: Epicurean and philosophic wisdom destroy

man's worship. They do not realize their own deficiencies and are like beasts who are used to crude foods and cannot appreciate the finer things. Philosophy destroys man's faith little by little while he is unaware of it. Philosophy is like the Mediterranean Sea. If one goes into the sea to search for pearls he will lose his life. So it is with philosophy. In the beginning there are things which bolster faith. Unless one is an expert in these things he will not recognize those things which will destroy his faith.

11. Jealousy: One might be jealous of merchants and others who are honored because of wealth. He must guard himself from the desire to emulate them.

12. Folly: A foolish person will see another turning from God to worldly pursuits and he will say I will do likewise. This is the height of folly.

13. Disgust at not being able to see the reward for his worship: One who prays because he is in trouble and then becomes disgusted because it apparently does not aid him is foolish. A wise man does not ask of God anything of this world.

14. Miserliness and similar things: A miserly man cannot worship God because for the sake of a coin he will do away with all discipline. Man should learn that the performance of commandments is not to be done for any reward or utilitarian advantage to be derived therefrom.

The specific features of worship are;

1. One should accustom oneself to the commandments and worship of God.
2. Man should repent for the sins of his youth.
3. Learn Torah and the words of our teachers and the words of God.
4. Be careful of the power of those things which disturb the worship of God.
5. Read all the wonders and miracles which God performed for the righteous.
6. Be careful not to forget the matter of prayer particularly at the beginning.
7. The nature of fasts.
8. Not to make one's worship too obvious.
9. Set a specific time for the worship of God.
10. Divide business among the hours of the day and night and put them in order.
11. Put in order the matters of business and your faith.
12. Busy yourself with the needs of the poor and be strong to aid the downtrodden.
13. Always be sure to visit the graveyard. There you will learn all is vanity.
14. Moderate your habits of eating, drinking and pleasure.
15. Entreat God always to keep you from evil desire even until your death.
16. How to teach your children from childhood on.
17. If one is single he should take a wife.

18. He should direct his attention to the love of God.

There follows an elaboration upon these general topics which really are clear in themselves. One very interesting observation is made which shows the progressive thinking of Zerachya. He is quite in agreement with modern psychologists in advocating that disciplines should be applied gradually lest there develop an antipathy toward all discipline.

Zachary

#### 6. All the Aspects of Worship (Ch. XIII)

After all the foregoing discussion of the definition and description of worship our author has a summary chapter in his thirteenth "portal".<sup>43</sup> He repeats all the aspects of worship and elaborates upon some which he thinks may not be clear. He turns from the theoretical aspects of worship to the practical aspects and offers suggestions for the improvement and stimulation of worship.

A person should secure a book (e. g., the Book of Job) which tells of God's greatness and the trials of the afflicted. He should read it at least once a week.

Before man can approach God he must repent for his past misdeeds. And after he is cleansed only then can he walk in the paths of the righteous, and draw near unto God. When he loves God it is a sign that his soul has a godly quality and desires to walk in God's paths. He will strive to emulate God's characteristics of righteousness, pity, forgiveness, abhorrence of sin, etc. No day must pass that he does not read the Torah and the works of our teachers.



Man must close his eyes when he prays because that is an aid to "Kavanah". A person's body must be kept clean because an unclean body denotes an unclean soul. The purpose of fasting is to discipline the body and good deeds and piety are in the realm of the soul. Merely fasting is not enough. An example of a righteous act is to invite a poor man to one's table.

A person should not flaunt his worship before people to avoid the scoffers. His reward will be doubled. He should pray day and night, offer supplications, refrain from approaching his wife and be sparing in the amount of food and drink he consumes. He should busy himself with the needs of the poor, accompany the dead to the cemetery.

If a man does not have money of his own he should see to it that others who do have money give sufficiently. He should visit **sick** people three times a day and bring them good news. The service of God makes men free, whereas when a man serves other men he is a servant of servants. If a man is rich he should not dress in elaborate clothes but rather in good taste.

It is possible for a man who has done good deeds all of his life to die in wickedness because even at the time of his death Satan may seek to cause the evil desire to triumph. Therefore, man must always seek to have God save him from the evil desire.

"If a man has children he must teach them from their

youth to know the Lord. He must keep them away from evil companions and not teach them evil wisdom which will destroy their faith. And he must reprove them so that the fear of him will constantly be upon them. If a man is single he should take a wife as a helpmate then his worship will be meet and he will be saved from half of the evil passion. Then his worship will be pure and whole. And when he enters upon his worship he should join himself to a righteous man and learn from his deeds or secure a companion and both join in worship. Then one will be envious of the other's (worship) and he will remind his brother and through this worship will be enhanced." <sup>44</sup>

This chapter gives conclusive evidence of the high moral character of Zerachya. We see a truly religious man, one not overburdened with the excess of ritual worship which was the common expression of the religious life. His prescription for the true service of God is primarily the moral life. Maimonides had much of the same idea. His statements concerning sexual moderation and their relationship to the proper worship of God are quite similar to Zerachya's. <sup>45</sup>

This chapter is the most valuable in the entire book for it gives in simple clear language the practical methods by which the true worship of God may be attained. In view of his avowed purpose to write a book which everyone might understand, this chapter is the one in which he achieves his purpose. It is quite modern in some of his aspects and the reading of it by many of our contemporaries could do no harm.

D. Penitence (Chs. VII-X)

1. The Matter of Repentance and Related Subjects (Ch. VII)

The soul knows all things which are known and at the same time knows itself. It knows itself and is known by itself. The soul is the middle being, between the Creator and that which is created. It has the strength of both. The former strength makes it immortal. Since it has this power to know itself it is responsible for the evil it commits or the good it does. The soul has the power to warn of the tendency toward evil. If it does not fulfill its function it is deserving of punishment.

This power of guarding is to be found only among those who have the power to reason. Those who do evil deeds are comparable to sick people. The people who are not wise are not punished because they do not know any better. Only those who by virtue of their nearness to God have learned what is right and then do evil, those are the people whom God pun-  
46  
ishes.

The condition of the soul is greatly dependent upon the body for the blood nourishes it. Ills of the soul may be derived from illls of the body. There are five causes for the sickness of the soul: Appearance, hearing, the work of the tongue and lips, the activity of the hands, and the motion of the feet. These are the visible ones but there is one hidden one, the power of thought. From thought stems passion which is the

source of all evil. This thought is pure before it is in the body. There it struggles between the forces of the body and the more exalted powers. Concerning the influences upon the thought processes of the body, the rabbis say, "The heart and the eye are the agents of sin."<sup>47</sup>

The cure for the sicknesses of the mind (thought) is repentance. It cleanses the heart of all impurity and makes it ready to receive the pure worship. An example of this remedy is: If a man suffers from the disease of love of money he should indulge in charitable deeds to counteract this desire. The cure does not take effect immediately, but only after many days. Whatsoever form a man's passion might take, the way to overcome it is to do the opposite of the desire. e. g., If a man has a great craving for food let him fast days during the week and eat bread and water then his desire will decrease.<sup>48</sup>

The matter of the cure of the soul is divided into two parts; the cure of the thought and the cure of the deed. The first cure must be effected before the latter. The soul shall weigh the measure of his repentance and is the scales tip in favor of the weight of his good deeds then he shall know his repentance has been complete. If this does not happen then the gates of repentance will not be opened for him and he will have to continue his service.<sup>49</sup>

*Inadequate*

2. Concerning the Knowledge of God (Ch. VIII)

Before man can worship God he must know what He is and then serve Him. There are certain powers which man has by virtue of his being a created being. They are his finitude, quantity, quality and form. By their very nature they are limited as to what they can understand. They came into being after their creation therefore it is not reasonable to assume that through them the Creator, Who existed before them, can be known.

Man can know something only by its attributes. He must have known the attributes which describe something at some time during his life otherwise they could have no meaning. e.g., If a man is born blind he can never know what the sun is like. All the attributes which are described to the sun are beyond his ken because he has never experienced them. So it is with God. His attributes are such as are beyond man's experience. He is the Creator and man is the created and there is an unbridgable gap between the two. The very fact that we with our meager equipment cannot know God is the best proof for His existence. If we could acquire knowledge of Him He would be finite because we are finite. Therefore we must know that He exists even though we cannot know Him. He is One and all is contained in Him. Once we realize this we do not have to bother about particulars. If we have complete faith in His Unity then all else follows as a matter of course. <sup>50</sup>

*God's light  
incomplete*

3. Evidence of God's Favor and How Man May Recognize Whether He Has Found Favor in the Eyes of God (Ch. IX)

A man should weigh his soul and if he finds that it tends to go in the direction of the righteous it is a sign of God's favor. If a man finds that he has never had any trials and all has been well with him then he is not in God's favor. God chastised those whom he loves as a father chastises his son. When one does not approach the performance of a Mitzvah with joy then it is a sign that God does not love him.

There are other examples of a similar nature which our author believes is the proof of God's favor.

4. Repentance (Ch. X)

Complete repentance absolves man from all his sins and he is pure as the day of his birth. However, just as the newly born baby has no merit, so does the repentant one have no merit. His sheet is clean with no marks either for him or against him.

A repentant sinner is not considered to be the equal of a righteous person, one who never committed any sin. We have already mentioned the misinterpretation of the Talmudic quotation by Zerachya in which he attempts to cite evidence for the support of his contention that the repentant sinner is on a lower level than the righteous man. <sup>51</sup> God performs more

*Page  
Shelamed*

miracles for the sinners that they should repent. God does not need to reveal His love to the righteous because they already acknowledge Him. There are eight times when a man may repent. In the degree of their preferability, they are:

1. Immediately upon committing the sin.
2. After many days have passed.
3. The pleasures derived from the sin have passed.
4. When he is sick.
5. When he is in great trouble.
6. When one discovers an admonisher or teacher.
7. When he is old and feeble.
8. When he is about to die.<sup>52</sup>

From this we see that generally speaking there is no time in his life that a man may not repent.

Repentance is not accepted readily. It must be accompanied by many days of intense devotion and fasting.<sup>53</sup>

We see from all that Zerachya Ha Yewani has said about the subject of repentance that he had a rather sane outlook upon this question which has concerned the teachers of ethics throughout the ages. His presentation is clear and succinct and he does not try to overwhelm his readers with cumbersome problems of morality. His view seems to be a good common sense one. His insistence upon the righteous occupying a more exalted position than the repentant is interesting. The common view was that the repentant sinner was the more to be honored. This position is an indication of the man's tremen-

dous respect for virtue. It is more logical than the opinion that he who repents once is equal to the man who has never sinned. Zerachya leaves the way open for the penitent to achieve greatness by giving him a clean slate on which can be inscribed deeds of merit.



## E. Related Matters of Ethical Conduct

### 1. The Position of the Righteous (Ch. XI)

A righteous man is like the brach of a tree nearest the root. Those branches are fewest in number and so are the righteous. There are many created things. The most exalted among them are the soul, reason, and intelligence. Above them is the <sup>will</sup> longing (for the Creator) and above all is the <sup>First Cause</sup> prime concept, namely, the Creator.

The wicked are many in number, whereas the righteous are few. Strive to be among the few.

### 2. The Secrets of the World to Come (Ch. XII)

The future world is beyond any of the spheres. It cannot be compared to anything on this world. The righteous soul ascends to this world after its separation from the body. The soul is compared to a captured bird. When it is freed it returns to its nest. The wicked soul is like a bird whose wings have been clipped and it cannot fly until its wings have grown again.

The world will be recreated at the time of the Messiah. No longer will the bodies of men need food and drink for sustenance. They will be pure because they will not be dependent upon food which brings on other desires. No longer will death have any power. Man will be immortal as the angels. He will bide his time until God calls him to ascend.

In opposition to Miamonides' belief in the non-existence of the body in the world to come<sup>54</sup> Zerachya offers the statement that God can create any kind of a body which he desires. "And they did not eat or drink just as Hanooh and Elijah remained without eating or drinking and Moses who stood forty days without eating."<sup>55</sup>

There again is evidenced here the ascetic influence upon our author which we have noticed before.

### 3. Man's Meditation upon His Soul (Ch. XIV)

Man should always meditate upon the miracles which God has wrought for His righteous people. He should always remember that there is hope for him just as there was for the righteous people such as Job, Moses, etc. One should never think that his evil is too great for repentance. Man should look all about him and he will see that all was created for his benefit. He should be mindful of the Torah which God gave him that he might learn His will. Man should not be forgetful of all the troubles which are in the world.

Just as the Torah is our life and the length of days so our teachers are the life of the Torah and through them it exists and is renewed. Never should one forget the care with which our fathers and mothers watch over us. Man should meditate upon all the vicissitudes of life and thereby recognize the wonders which God performs for him.<sup>56</sup>

4. The Proper Time for the Worship of God (Ch. XV)

Commenting on the Biblical verse: "Seek ye the Lord where He may be found, call ye upon Him when He is near," (Is. 55:6) our author asks: Are there times when God may be found and other times when He is not to be found? He comes to the conclusion that this is so. God may be found at the following times.

1. When man acquires reason. Until then he cannot know his Creator.

2. Before he commits any sins and his soul is yet pure. Only when a man's soul is pure can he find God. After he has sinned he must first repent fully.

3. At the time when the community is fasting. The prayer of a community or congregation is more acceptable than the prayer of a solitary person.

4. Before he has become associated with evil companions and his faith is still undisturbed.

5. When he is free. For man does not find God unless he seeks Him for His own sake.

The opposites of these are the unpropitious times to seek the Lord. e.g. at the time of trouble, and the time of death, etc.

God also will answer man before he calls upon Him. "Before they call I will answer" (Is. 65:24). Man should figure out how many of the five opportunities are left to him for God's worship and he should avail himself of them

before they are destroyed.

5. The World to Come vs. the Present World (Ch.XVI)

The precious things of the world to come are without number just as the evil and undesirable things of this world are impossible to enumerate. There is peace, quiet, rest, etc., in the future world as opposed to fear, labor, etc., in our world.

The righteousness of man will endure forever in the future world whereas here a man may be righteous all the days of his life but at the very end all may go for naught. This world does not provide rest for the righteous as you can see from all the good things which the wicked possess. In the world to come the opposite will be the case.

The pleasures of the future world will be pure and upright not like the pleasures of this world, e.g. the company of women. All the fools will be wise so that they may know God. The future world is the perfect world. The righteous will be happy as their good deeds merit.<sup>57</sup>

6. Man Should Remember the Day of His Death (Ch.XVII)

Man should always be mindful that his days upon the earth are but transitory and pass away like a shadow. While there is yet the spark of life in his body man should give thanks unto the Lord and praise Him. "God will save us from a harsh judgment, he will redeem us from death, he will enlighten

our eyes, and will our hearts to rejoice." <sup>58</sup>

7. The Difference between the Righteous and the  
Wicked (Ch. XIX)

XVIII

The wicked never learns his evil ways until he is chastised. When he has wealth he does not turn from evil to do good. The righteous never forgets the poor and he always remembers to help the oppressed. He knows that he is but a mortal spirit. The wicked are proud and boast of their position but the righteous are humble. The righteous asks why God has thought him to be worthy of all the good which he gets. The righteous always fears that all the good which he receives in this world will force him to enter the future world empty.

The wicked man is never satisfied with his inherited portion and always seeks to steal more. He is envious of his companion. The wicked man fears greatly when he is ill and vows to repent if he recovers. The righteous one has no fear of death when he is ill for he knows that he is going out of darkness into light. He knows that he is chastened in order that he might be pure to enter the world to come. He vows to continue his worship after he is cured.

A wicked man who has intelligence loses his faith and scoffs at the righteous calling them fools. He does not believe in the resurrection of the dead or the Day of Judgment or in the words of our rabbis. If the righteous man is wise

then his faith is increased twofold.

When a wicked man performs charitable deeds he brags about it to his fellow men and he thinks there is no one like him. If he escapes from trouble he thinks it was his righteous deeds that saved him. However, a righteous man does not consider his deeds to be anything out of the ordinary. He conceals his charitable deeds from the eyes of men and does not boast about them. When he escapes from danger he attributes it to the grace of God rather than to his own righteousness.

A wicked man teaches his children matters of business from their childhood on and does not teach them the words of God. A righteous man teaches his children the words of God and corrects them at all times. About him it is said "He that walketh in his integrity as a just man, happy are his children after him." (Prov. 20.7)<sup>59</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In view of the period in which it was written the Sepher HaYashar may be said to have fulfilled the purpose the author had in mind when he wrote it. It is a pleasant popularization of a very difficult subject which often defies any attempt at popularization.

Our author is successful in his attempt to translate the "duties of the heart" into a practical code of life which anyone can follow. At times it would appear that the metaphysical problems with which he struggles are too much for him. This is true but it is no fault of our author. These problems have defied solution by the finest minds throughout all ages. It is no derogatory criticism to say that Zerachya Ha Yewani does not solve them.

There is reflected throughout the volume the spirit of the age in which he lived. We do not discover any original contribution which our author could be said to have made. Much of his material he has lifted bodily from Bahya although he tried to popularize it. This he does successfully and since he constantly refers to the "Hovos Halevovos" as being a book which everyone should read I think he may be excused.

The "Sepher HaYashar" is not a monumental work. It cannot be said to occupy the same position, scholastically speaking, as does the above mentioned work of Bahya.

No definite philosophical system is evolved, no profound conclusions are reached. It is precisely what the author said it would be, "a book to make straight the pathway of the worship of God."<sup>60</sup>



NOTES TO "SEPHER HAYASHAR"

1. The poet mentioned here is unknown. However, it is evident from the sentiment expressed in the quotation that he was a profound thinker. The quotations which Zerachya introduces by נחמיה נחמיה are of high quality and give evidence to the contention that he must have lived in an environment where there was a flourishing literary society. Dr. Isaiah Sonne contends that this place was southern Italy where during the period of Zerachya's life (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries) there was a rather highly developed cultural life.
2. Apparent reference to the gourd referred to in the Book of Jonah. Chapter IV:6 ff.
3. "Hovos Halevovos" translated by M. Hyamson. p. 13.
4. Sepher Hayashar, page 2.
5. Sepher Hayashar, Page 3.
6. Sepher Hayashar, page 4. This is similar to Bahya who states: "The premises which clearly lead to the inference that the world has a Creator Who created ex nihilo are three: 1) that a thing does not make itself; 2) that causes are limited in number; and since their number is limited they must have a First Cause unpreceded by a previous cause; 3) that everything that is a compound must have been brought into existence.....The

demonstration of these three propositions is as follows:

Concerning anything which now exists and which (at one time) had not existed, one of two things must be predicated. Either it brought itself into existence or another brought it into existence. If we assume that it made itself, one of two things must be predicated of it: Either it made itself before it existed or after it already was in existence. Both are impossible. For if we say that it made itself after it already had existed, it did nothing. There was no need to make itself; it had already existed. Consequently it did nothing. If, on the other hand, we say that it made itself before it existed-- at that time it was nothing. And out of nothing neither action nor remission can proceed; since that which is nothing can do aught. Hence it is impossible that a thing can make itself.

The second proposition is demonstrated as follows: Whatever is finite must have a beginning. (i. e., What appears as a definite effect of a cause must have a First Cause.) For it is evident that what has no beginning is not finite. Since, when a thing has no beginning, there is no point where one could stop (i. e., an endless series of causes stretching back to infinity, an effect observable at the present time is inconceivable. The present would never be reached.) Consequently, everything that has an end, had, we know, a beginning, a First

Cause, unpreceded by any other Cause. When we realize the finite character of the Causes existing in the world (i. e., that all phenomena we observe are definite effects of causes) we must conclude that they all had a Beginning unpreceded by any other beginning, a First Cause unpreceded by any other Cause; since there are no causes unlimited in number (i. e., a series of causes of a definite effect cannot conceivably be infinite).

Furthermore, it is obvious that anything which has parts has a whole. For the whole is nothing else than the sum of its parts. That the infinite should have parts is inconceivable. For a part is defined as one quantity separated from another, the lesser being the measure of the greater, as Euclid has set forth at the beginning of the Fifth Book of his Geometry.

Let us assume a thing actually finite; and that we take a part from it. The remainder will undoubtedly be less than it was before. If this remainder is infinite, one infinite will be greater than another infinite, which is impossible. If the remainder is finite, and we put back the part that we took away, the whole will be finite. But ex hypothesi the whole was infinite. So the same thing would be finite and infinite, which is impossible, and self-contradictory. Accordingly it is impossible to take away a part from that which is infinite; since whatever has parts is undoubtedly finite." Hovos Halevovos, M. Hyamson ed., pages 29-30. The last

part of this proof and the third are not necessary to quote here. We can readily see that Zerachya does not have nearly as well developed a philosophical method as does Bahya.

7. Sepher Hayashar, p. 6.
8. *ibid.*, p. 6.
9. "The harmony of all things in nature, the interdependence of all creatures, the wondrous plan and wisdom displayed in the structure of the greatest and smallest of animal beings, from the elephant to the ant, all point to one great designer." (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 448, col. 2.)
10. Sepher Hayashar, p. 12.
11. *ibid.*, p. 13.
12. *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
13. *ibid.*, p. 18.
14. *ibid.*, p. 18-19; Although Zerachya enumerates three pillars on which the worship of God rests it can easily be understood that the second and third pillars are corollaries and may be considered as one.
15. *ibid.*, p. 19.
16. *ibid.*, p. 20.
17. *ibid.*, p. 21.
18. *ibid.*, p. 28.
19. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 453.
20. Sepher Hayashar, p. 29 ff.

21. Sepher Hayashar, p. 34.
22. The four elements which Zerachya observes to be elemental are dust, air, fire and water. These are the elements which Aristotle believed to be prime and they are taken over by the neo-Platonists.
23. Sepher Hayashar, pp. 36-37.
24. *ibid.*, p. 38.
25. *ibid.*, p. 41.
26. There is a confusion of thought here. Zerachya does not seem to know exactly where to place reason in his scheme. At first he seems to feel that reason is the product of love, fear, and wisdom. (see page S.H. p33) At this point he says "the three of them, love fear, and wisdom, stem from one source, namely, reason." (see Sepher Hayashar p. 42.) This confusion is due to the attempt to oversimplify a very complex philosophical category. Unfortunately we find this to be the case time and time again. e. g., page 43 "Worship comes from the power of wisdom."
27. This reference to the redemption of captives as one of the greatest of all Mitzvahs is interesting. It is a reflection of the period in which our author lived. Jews were constantly being captured and held for ransom by unscrupulous people who used this method to get money. The inferior minority position of the Jew made this possible. Due to the frequency of the occurrence of the wicked practice many Jews had to be ransomed by the com-

munities from which they came or in some instances, the nearest Jewish community. Thus, the ransoming of captives was a great burden and deserving of reward.

The reference to the foregoing of sensual pleasures, and the wearing of beautiful garments, etc., mentioned in the description of the righteous man is unquestionably the result of the ascetic influence of the "Brethren of Purity." We shall notice later that there was a distinct influence of the Christian ascetics.

28. Sepher Hayashar, p. 51.

29. Bahya makes a distinction between the duties of the heart and the duties of the limbs. "The science of the Torah, moreover, falls into two parts: The first aims at the knowledge of practical duties and is the science of external conduct. The second deals with the duties of the heart, namely, the sentiments and thoughts, and is the science of the inward life."

-- "Duties of the Heart" Hyamson translation, p. 2.

"The great importance of these duties (i. e., the duties of the heart) is also made manifest by the fact that the punishment in the Bible for unintentional misdeeds is more lenient than for intentional, proving that for punishment the mind must share with the body in the performance of the deed. The same is true of reward, that none is receive\_d for performing a good deed if it is not done "in the name of heaven."

They are even more important than the duties of the limbs, for unlike the latter the obligation of the heart is always in force, and is independent of periods or circumstances. Their number, too, is infinite, and not limited as are the duties of the limbs, to six hundred and thirteen.

"Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy"-- Husik, pp. 83-84.

30. ובריק לקרא באומות העולם ועובדי ע"ז הנאדים  
נפשותם בכל שני עינוי תנסגדיו במסגרי והולכים  
באפסי ארץ מהלך אצל אלה ביום וקרא בלילה  
ו'צדיק ממונה בהלך וריק. וכן מה שישל הפגאון  
והשטנים עובדי ע"ז על אגם כמה וכמה מה יש  
לעשות העדה לאבן העולם והלא יצטרך לקרא  
בהם ולעשות כפלי כפלים כפי יכולתו.

ibid., pp. 59. This appears to refer to the Christian ascetics who afflicted themselves. It is an indication of Zerachya's ascetic belief. It is rather a compensation for his former Epicureanism.

31. ibid. 58-63.

32. "But there are different modes of seclusion from the world. Some, in order to lead a life devoted to the higher world, flee this world altogether, and live as hermits far away from all civilization, quite contrary to the design of the Creator; others retire from the world's turmoil and strife and live a secluded life in their own homes; a third class, which comes nearest to the

precepts of the Law, participates in the world's struggles and pursuits, but leads a life of abstinence and moderation, regarding this world as a preparation for a higher one." Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 453, col. 1.

33. Sepher Hayashar, p. 68.
34. He expresses here the neo-Platonic conception of the intellectual soul of man seeking to unite with the universal soul of which it is a part, or rather an emanation. Sepher Hayashar, p. 68.
35. For similarity to neo-Platonic conception of the unity of God and Bahya's acceptance thereof see Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 448.
36. Sepher Hayashar, p. 81.
37. *ibid.*, p. 83. Be sure to note translator's comment at foot of page.
38. Please see note 29. Also Sepher Hayashar, pp. 76-89.
39. This show the ascetic influence upon our author. See note 30.
40. From this we shouldn't believe that Zerachya was such a severe ascetic. It is merely the cure for excessive pride in wearing beautiful clothes and shouldn't be taken as advice for everyone.
41. Jeremiah VI:15 Sepher Hayashar, p. 96.
42. *ibid.*, p. 110.



43. *ibid.*, pp. 160-178.
44. *ibid.*, p. 178.
45. "It is proper for a man to practice self-control and exercise himself in additional holiness and pure thought and correct morals to be saved from going astray. He must guard against intimacy which is the greatest cause of sinning. He should likewise accustom himself to keeping far away from levity, intemperance, and erotic subjects, because these are important factors which conduce to immorality. Nor should he live unwedded; since marriage tends to purity. But above all this, advised the Rabbis, let him turn himself and his thoughts to the study of the Torah and enlarge his mind with wisdom; for lustful desire only prevails in a heart which is empty of wisdom."  
-- Yod Hazakah, Issure Biah XXII, 20 f. cited in "The Teachings of Miamonides, A. Cohem.
46. *Sepher Hayashar*, p. 125.
47. *Yerushalmi Berachot*      פ"א ה"ב .  
There is a slightly different reading here:  
פ"א ה"ב      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א  
In the *Sepher Hayashar*, p. 128, the reading is:  
פ"א ה"ב      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א      ו' ע"א  
Whether Zerachya had a different text or quoted from memory and made a slight deviation from the text is not certain.
48. *Sepher Hayashar*, p. 132.

49. *ibid.*, p. 135. "The keeping account of one's own soul is when a man busies himself in silent discussions between himself and his reason with the concerns of his religious and his worldly life, so that he may ascertain what are his spiritual and mental possessions, and what are his obligations. Every human being is bound, in proportion to his mental gifts, to keep account with his soul, and to calculate what services of heart and mind he owes to the Creator. And more is required of those gifted with clearer perception, or who have been specially blessed, than from the others; because both their debt of gratitude and their powers of fulfillment are greater.

-- "The Duties of the Heart" of Rabbi Bach<sup>y</sup> Edwin Collins, p. 44 ff.

50. This theory of the attributes of God can be seen in Bahya "Plurality is an accidental property superadded to the substance of a thing and comes under the category of quantity. As the Diety is the Creator of substance and accident, none of these attributes can be ascribed to His Glorious Being. For, it having been clearly demonstrated from Scripture and Reason, that God is above all comparison with, and similarity to, any of His creatures, and seeing that plurality which adheres to the substance of anything that is plural is an accidental property, any such quality cannot be fittingly ascribed to the Creator's

glorious essence. And if He cannot be described as plural, he must certainly be One, since between unity and plurality there is no middle term. Hence, God is not more than one; He is therefore One; as Hannah said (I Sam. II:2) "There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside Thee."

--"Duties of the Heart" translated by Hyamson, p. 37.

51. Please see Introduction, note 22.

52. Sepher Hayashar, p. 150. See also "The Duties of the Heart" of Rabbi Bahye, Edwin Collins, p. 54 ff.

53. Sepher Hayashar, p. 154. Maimonides says the following:  
"It is of the manifestations of repentance that the penitent should cry unremittingly before God with weeping and supplications, practise charity according to his means, keeping himself far from the object of his sin, and alter his name -- as though to say, I am a different person and not the same man who committed those actions. He must amend his whole conduct and turn toward the right path. Another thing he should do is to leave the place of his domicile because exile atones for iniquity, since it causes a man to be humbled and thus become meek and lowly of spirit."

-- Yad, Teshubah I, 3, II, 1-5. quoted in "Teachings of Maimonides", A. Cohen, p. 212 ff.

54. "Behold it has been explained that the entire necessity for the existence of the body is for one function, and

that is the reception of food for the preservation of the body and the propagation of its kind for the preservation of the species. When the function is removed because its necessity no longer exists, viz., 'In the world to come there is no eating, drinking, or sexual intercourse' -- that is clear evidence of the non-existence of the body."

--Tehiyyat ha Metim, Responsa II 9c, quoted in "Teachings of Maimonides", A. Cohen, pp. 235-236.

55. Sepher Hayashar, p. 158.
56. See note 49.
57. Maimonides says upon this subject something similar: "The good which is treasured up for the righteous is the life of the world to come; it is a life which is deathless and a happiness free from adversity.... The reward of the righteous is their meriting this bliss and enjoying this happy state. The punishment of the wicked is that they do not merit this higher form of life, but are cut off and die. Whoever does not merit that life suffers death without ever recovering life again; he is cut off in his wickedness and perishes like the beast." --Yad, Teshubah VIII,1. Quoted in "Teachings of Maimonides", A. Cohen.
58. Sepher Hayashar, p. 195.
59. ibid., p. 200.
60. ibid., Introduction.

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