

NOTES TO THE GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED / Morechim Nevuchim
By Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb

Introduction – Purposes of the sefer: explain terms; explain prophetic allegories; “explain” masseh bereishis and maaseh merkava [=chochma elokis]. Study of nature [=maaseh bereishis] is close to chochma elokis and so inappropriate to reveal it also. Therefore the prophets described maaseh bereishis in allegories, and also at the beginning of the Torah. [[So note that beginning of Torah is also allegory.]] Flashes of insight into foundations of chochma elokis compared to prophecy. These flashes of insight cannot be communicated – that is another reason for using hints and allegories. Torah begins with maaseh bereishis since former is necessary to understanding the latter. Chazal say that it is impossible to fully understand maaseh bereishis so the Torah described it in ambiguous terms that will satisfy the uneducated and will lead the scholars to deeper understanding. The term “divrei Torah” often refers to secret matters. The detrimental effect of giving in to physical desires and the greatness of the physical being faithful to the spirit/intellect.

Seven reasons for contradictions: 1 different sources; 2 change of opinion; 3 non-literal meaning; 4 conditions of application; 5 educational need for incomplete introduction of idea; 6 many logical steps needed to reveal contradiction; 7 need to hide content. Contradictions found in Mishna and beraisa = 1; in Talmud = 1,2; prophecy = 3,4; in philosophers = 5; in others including midrashos and aggados [!?!] = 6; in this work = 5,7.

I: 1: Unity of G-d can only be established if G-d is not physical; hence need to explain terms that seem to describe G-d as physical. Tzelem means the essential form of the thing; for man it is his intellectual apprehension. That is what is meant by his being created b'tzelem elokim.* [Cf. chapter 2]

I: 2: “You shall be as *elohim* knowing tov and ra” means like *rulers*, not like *G-d*.** [See II:6]

Wise man’s objection: Adam was created as an animal without knowledge of good and evil and then as a result of his sin was granted this knowledge that made him like G-d, which is the highest praise of being truly human!?!]

Answer: (a) * and ** show he has misread the verses; (b) only a being with understanding is given commands, so he had intellect before the sin; (c) Adam knew emes/sheker but not tov/ra. When his intellect was complete he knew only emes/sheker – he was incapable of knowing tov/ra at all. [But the converse is not explicitly stated, but the words “he was wholly absorbed in the study of what is proper and what improper” might imply this.]

He inclined to physical desires [description of tree] and so G-d deprived him of full intellect, and that lead to the sin, and the sin lead to understanding tov/ra [in place of full intellect which would have remained with emes/sheker only], and the final result is living

like an animal as stated in the curse. [[Note that the words the text applies to the woman Rambam applies to the man – compare Ramchal.]]

[[So now Adam has some (imperfect) understanding of emes/sheker, since he can understand true/false for propositions, and he has understanding of tov/ra. He lost perfect understanding of emes/sheker which would have included also actions.]]

[[Notice that the wise man was invested in physical pleasures – that is what lead him to ignore the obvious meaning of the verses. He projected his animal existence on Adam. And in the same way Adam by giving in to his physical desires lost that ideal human condition. Compare Introduction.]]

[[Fixation on emes/sheker reveals tov/ra to be unreal, hence impossible to take them seriously. Compare watching a film knowing it is only a film.]]

“G-d opened [Hagar’s] eyes” as proof that pkoach means intellectual understanding
[[?!?]]

Chapters in which intellectual understanding is a central topic (and less central if in () and more central if bold): I:3,4,5,7,8,(9),10,(15),18,(19),21,28,**31-5**,

I:5 Preconditions for successful intellectual exploration of any deep topic – and certainly for chochmas elokim: mastery of all preliminary studies, midos tovos, freedom from physical desires and humility. M”R hid his face [and therefore was granted to gaze at “Hashem’s picture”.] Atzilei benei Yisroel took the vision in physical terms and added satisfying their physical desires [they ate and drank]. The whole subject is intellectual apprehension of G-d.

I:6 Man/woman as symbols for chomer and tzura. [See I:17]

I:10 M”R went up to G-d = he achieved a high position in intellectual understanding.

I:11 G-d’s unchanging nature includes not having any real relation to anything else.

I:15 angel ascending/descending = prophets receiving from above and then descending to direct other people.

I:17 Not only chochmas elokim must be hidden from the masses, but also [the true account of] nature. So did the philosophers as well. E.g. male = tzura and female = chomer. [See I:6]

I:21 Hashem passed by **H**is face = He passed by the process which M”R wanted and substituted something else – apprehension of divine actions in place of apprehension of the divine essence. That grasp is beyond human powers unless he receives divine assistance [as did M”R], and requires humility as a precondition. [[Or perhaps: the grasp

of that which is normally beyond human powers requires divine assistance and humility....]]

I:22 Evil is a privation.

Chapters dealing with shechina/hashgacha I:22-5,27, (28)

I:23 Shechina = hashgacha – withdrawal of both implies abandoned [“hufkar”] – good and evil occur to him b’mikre

I:26 dibra Torah k’lashon benei adam in general – including physicality and anything that seems to us a perfection – the common imagination

I:27 Onkelos usually translates phrases that imply physicality in a way that avoids physical implications. But when those phrases occur within a quote he translates them literally – and it is correct to do so. [From this we should learn the differences between visions of the night, waking visions, and speeches introduced by “Hashem spoke...” without any description of the conditions of speech. ???]

I:28 Shechina = ohr nivra.

I:31 Questions beyond human investigation: whether the number of stars is odd or even; the number of types of living things, mineral or plants. Anything that can be demonstrated will not be disputed. [[!?!]] Habit and laziness are enemies of acquiring the truth.

I:32 Over-straining intellect weakens it to the point where it cannot understand even items within its range. The importance of staying within the range of the intellect is the difference between R Akiva and Elisha acher.

I:33 We do not start instruction with chochma elokis and interpret the writings of the prophets because this requires much preliminary training, without which there will be confusion and denial. This is why dibra Torah k’lashon benei adam – so that the beginner will be instructed in the basics. True knowledge is based on conclusive proof or forcible arguments. Without them one has only true belief – which is still worthwhile.

I:34 Five reasons not to start instruction with chochma elokis. 1. Difficulty of subject. 2. Intellectual inadequacy of student at the beginning of his instruction. 3. Length of necessary preliminaries.

“You, however, know how all these subjects are connected together; for **there is nothing else in existence but God and His works, the latter including all existing things besides Him: we can only obtain a knowledge of I-Em through His works**; His works give evidence of His existence, and show what must be assumed concerning Him, that is to say, what must be attributed to Him either affirmatively or negatively. It is thus

necessary to examine all things according to their essence, to infer from every species such true and well established propositions as may assist us in the solution of metaphysical problems.”

4. Moral perfection [good midos] is a necessary condition for understanding chochma elokis = maaseh merkava. 5. providing for bodily needs [even in appropriate measure].

I:35 “For in the same way as all people must be informed, and even children must be trained in the belief that God is One, and that none besides Him is to be worshipped, so must all be taught by simple authority **that God is incorporeal; that there is no similarity in any way whatsoever between Him and His creatures**: that His existence is not like the existence of His creatures, His life not like that of any living being, His wisdom not like the wisdom of the wisest of men.... Anything predicated of God is totally different from our attributes; no definition can comprehend both; therefore His existence and that of any other being totally differ from each other, and the term existence is applied to both homonymously, as I shall explain. “ [[Even though he says that common people will not believe anything non-physical exists. See I:46.]

“But the question concerning the attributes of God, their inadmissibility, and the meaning of those attributes which are ascribed to Him; concerning the Creation, His Providence, in providing for everything; concerning His will, His perception, His knowledge of everything; concerning prophecy and its various degrees: concerning the meaning of His names which imply the idea of unity, though they are more than one; all these things are very difficult problems, **the true" Secrets of the Law" the " secrets" mentioned so frequently in the books of the Prophets, and in the words of our Teachers, the subjects of which we should only mention the headings of the chapters, as we have already stated, and only in the presence of a person satisfying the above-named conditions.**”

“Without incorporeality there is no unity, for a corporeal thing is in the first case not simple, but composed of matter and form which are two separate things by definition, and secondly, as it has extension it is also divisible.”

“He is never subject to external influence, as passivity [[hispa-alus = being affected by]] implies a change, while God is entirely free from all change,”

I:36 “you will not find the expressions" burning anger," " provocation," or" jealousy" applied to God except in reference to idolatry; and that none but the idolater called" enemy adversary," or" hater of the Lord.””

Gradations in missing the truth – the worst is avoda zara.

“You must know that idolaters when worshipping idols do not believe that there is no God besides them: and no idolater ever did assume that any image made of metal, stone, or wood has created the heavens and the earth, and still governs them. Idolatry is founded

on the idea that a particular form represents the agent between God and His creatures... The infidels, however, though believing in the existence of the Creator, attack the exclusive prerogative of God, namely, the service and worship **which was commanded, in order that the belief of the people in His existence should be firmly established**, in the words, " And you shall serve the Lord," etc. (Exod. xxiii. 25)."

" How great, then, must be the offence of him who has a wrong opinion of God Himself, and believes Him to be different from what He truly is, i.e., assumes that He does not exist, that He consists of two elements, that He is corporeal, that He is subject to external influence, or ascribes to Him any defect whatever. **Such a person is undoubtedly worse than he who worships idols in the belief that they, as agents, can do good or evil.**" [[Even though the latter person also has a false belief about how G-d runs the world – without intermediaries.]]

"If you think that there is an excuse for those who believe in the corporeality of God on the ground of their training, their ignorance or their defective comprehension, you must make the same concession to the worshippers of idols: their worship is due to ignorance, or to early training," they continue in the custom of their fathers." (T.B. Hullin, 13a) You will perhaps say that the literal interpretation of the Bible causes men to fall into that doubt [[compare Raavad!!]], *but you must know that idolaters were likewise brought to their belief by false imaginations and ideas.*" [[What is this last comparison?]]

"There is no excuse whatever for those who, being unable to think for themselves, do not accept [the doctrine of the incorporeality of God] from the true philosophers. I do not consider those men as infidels who are unable to prove the incorporeality, but I hold those to be so who do not believe it, especially when they see that Onkelos and Jonathan avoid [in reference to God] expressions implying corporeality as much as possible."

I:37 "Panim" is a word for anger. "Face to face" for M"R *and Jewish people at Sinai* means without intermediary [= angel]. Even that which is before Hashem [= special creatures] cannot be seen = understood. Panim is also a word for hashgacha [as in birkas kohanim].

I:39 "Heart" refers to the physical organ, and to thought and to will and to wisdom [the latter being applied to G-d].

"As to the passage," And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (Ib. vi. 5), I explain" with all thine heart" to mean" with all the powers of thine heart," that is, with all the powers of the body, for they all have their origin in the heart: and the sense of the entire passage is : make the knowledge of God the aim of all thy actions, as we have stated in our Commentary on the Mishnah (Aboth, Eight Chapters, v.), and in our Mishneh Torah, yesode hatorah, chap. ii. 2. " [[Perhaps this comment unites all three meanings of "heart": set your will to use your thought to understand Him.]]

I:41 Man's essence is a **speaking** soul [[compare Maharal]].

“it is stated that ***Providence abandoned*** the Israelites, and left them on the brink of death... He showed mercy to them, and ***His will to continue their trouble and misery*** ceased.” [[So being abandoned by providence = the presence of His will to continue their troubles!?! So here “providence” means particularly protection.]]

I:42 One usage of “life” = wisdom.

“The term *hai* has also been employed in reference to the acquisition of wisdom. Comp. "So shall **they** be life (*hayyim*) unto thy soul" (Prov. iii. 22): "For whoso findeth me findeth life" (ib. viii. 35): "For **they** are life (*hayyim*) to those that find them" (ib. iv. 22). Such instances are numerous. In accordance with this metaphor, true principles are called life, and corrupt principles death. Thus the Almighty says, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil" (Dent. xxx. 15), showing that "life" and "good," "death" and "evil," are identical, and then He explains these terms. In the same way I understand His words, "That ye may live" (ib. v. 33), in accordance with the traditional interpretation of "That it may be well with thee" [scil. in the life to come] (ib. xxii. 7). In consequence of the frequent use of this figure in our language our Sages said, "The righteous even in death are called living, while the wicked even in life are called dead." (Talm. B. Berakkoth, P. 78). Note this well.”

I:43 Angels have no body.

I:44 Why does he start with the explanation that “ayin” means well?

I:46 Existence of a thing can be shown via accidents that do not reveal its essence.

“The same is the case with the information concerning the Creator given to the ordinary classes of men in all prophetic books and in the Law. For it was found necessary to teach all of them that God exists, and that He is in every respect the most perfect Being, that is to say, He exists not only in the sense in which the earth and the heavens exist, but He exists and possesses life, wisdom, power, activity, and all other properties which our belief in His existence must include, as will be shown below. That God exists was therefore shown to ordinary men by means of similes taken from physical bodies; that He is living, by a simile taken from motion, because ordinary men consider only the body as fully, truly, and undoubtedly existing; ... That, however, which is neither itself a body, nor a force within a body, is not existent according to man's first notions, and is above all excluded from the range of imagination.”

Therefore the sources associate with G-d physical action and the physical senses [of apprehension – see below] and their physical organs. The real message is through a double association: organ to sense to apprehension - e.g. eye to vision to knowledge of events. [In Hebrew verbs of sensation apply across the senses and the meaning is just general perception. This includes “The people saw the voices”. [[[!]]]] Of course literally this would contradict G-d’s unity. The truth is that everything He does is done via His

essence alone. Ultimately this will exclude all attributes/descriptions since they all refer to powers, and powers will contradict unity.

The only internal organ associated with G-d is the heart – given its several meanings above. [Review of seemingly contradictory verses.] No organs of digestion etc. – those activities are considered imperfections even in us.

Chazal declared against physical descriptions being literally true in their dictum: “Great is the strength of the prophets in that they liken a creature to its Creator, as in ‘and over the resemblance of the throne a resemblance like the appearance of a man’. In any case, they are explicit that the descriptions apply only to created beings, not to the Creator. “Great strength” -> there is reason to resist! [[The reason to resist is that in truth there is no real similarity between the Creator and any creature – see below.]]

I:47 All senses imply being affected, so in truth they are all equally false of G-d. Why then are only tasting and touching? Because the latter require physical contact which even common people reject for G-d. the others do not require physical contact, and they are necessary to convey the essential truth that He knows our actions. Similarly imagination is not attributed to G-d, but thought and understanding are.

I:48 The methodology of Onkelos.

I:49 Angels are created beings, but not physical – sechalim nivdalim. Therefore they have no physical form at all, and so are described in prophecy with varying forms to communicate something about their activity in context. The physical descriptions of angels in the prophets are meant to verify their existence in the eyes of the common man [just as the physical descriptions of G-d – but the descriptions of the angels are somewhat inferior to those of G-d to indicate their secondary position].

I:50 Belief refers to an idea/picture in the mind that is supposed to represent the state of the world. Mere words do not express belief. One who says G-d has many attributes but that in G-d the many attributes are one has words only, since the words are contradictory they express no idea. [Compare the Christian words that G-d is three and one.]

“Renounce desires and habits, follow your reason, and study what I am going to say in the chapters which follow on the rejection of the attributes; you will then be fully convinced of what we have said: you will be of those who truly conceive the Unity of God, not of those who utter it with their lips without thought”

I:51 There are axioms which are obvious but due to perversity of critics the philosophers had to demonstrate them, like the existence of motion, *free will* [[!!]] etc. Such is the denial of attributes to G-d. [[!!]] Many examples of violating verbal consistency in futile attempts to describe G-d.

I:52 Five types of attributes and their relation to G-d.

1. Essential definition – this is only the explanation of the term. Inadmissible for G-d since the terms in the definition refer to causes of the thing named by the term defined, and G-d has no causes.
2. Part of a definition [one element of a compound definition] – inadmissible as 1.
3. Qualities – there are four types
 - a. Midos of nefesh [doctor, wise, sick] – but G-d is not nefesh, so inadmissible.
 - b. Physical – inadmissible
 - c. Qualities of being affected [and therefore changing] [emotions, senses] – inadmissible.
 - d. Quantity – inadmissible.

[All of 1-3 imply G-d is compound – see below.]

4. Relations – many relations do not imply multiplicity in the relata, but nevertheless are inadmissible, as below. There is no relation between G-d and time or space: time is an attribute of [physical] motion [time -> order and measure [[duration]]], and so time applies to physical bodies, and since G-d is not physical He has no relation to time [[perhaps ‘relation’ here has a strong sense?]]; likewise no relation to space.
For other relations: any relation implies that the relata share a common quality. But *since G-d has necessary existence, and everything else has only contingent existence*, they cannot share a common quality. Compare items from ontologically distinct categories like 100 feet and the heat of pepper, or wisdom and sweetness.
5. Qualities that describe actions – admissible for G-d since they do not imply multiplicity of agencies nor anything added to His essence.

I:53 Belief in attributes [like belief in physicality of G-d] is due to following the simple meaning of verses.

One agent can effect many actions without possessing distinct elements – e.g. the effects of fire all due to heat. All the more so for an agent who acts via will. Compare man’s wisdom by which he understands many subjects.

I:54 M”R master of the **wise**. Two requests – to know His descriptions [toarim] and to know His essence [“Show me Your **glory**” and the answer was “You cannot see My face and live”]. The former answered here, the latter I:58-60.

*Descriptions = actions [“Make me know your **ways**...” – and the answer is “I will make all My goodness {= the whole creation, as in “He saw all that He made and it was very good”} pass before you – to completely understand their nature, and therefore “he is faithful in all My house”] – “and I will know You” -> one who knows His actions knows Him; “to find favor in Your eyes” -> he who knows Him finds favor in His eyes. The proof that knowing Him consists in knowing His actions is that the answer to M”R’s request is entirely attributes of action. [The thirteen attributes – but not “of mercy”!!]*

His actions do not spring from midos of nefesh like ours – we are only describing the themes of the actions themselves. Mercy etc flow from Him not due to being affected by circumstances but rather from the law of His chesed, and punishment likewise does not flow from anger but from the justice of punishment [when He commands destroying all idol worshippers, the reason is that otherwise they will lead you astray – not the He is angered by them etc.]. When the leader of the nation is a prophet [[?]] his actions must resemble those of G-d as much as possible, and should be free of being affected *as much as possible* [[note last qualification]]. The leader's actions should be vastly more mercy than punishment, just as His midos are all mercy *except for the last* [visiting the sin of the fathers etc.]. The sin of the fathers applies to the children only for avoda zara since **the fathers are called “those who hate Hashem”** and the maximum of descendents a man can see in his lifetime is the fourth generation. And this applies even to minor children. [[Nowhere does the Rambam explain why it is right for minor children to suffer. And here it seems even more difficult that the second and third generations will include responsible adults that are punished for the sin of the fathers.]] And this will be done even to Jews in ir hanidachas. [[Others disagree.]]

Why were only these midos mentioned in the answer, especially since M”R already knew all His midos since he knew the whole creation? Because he asked only for instructions how to lead the nation – “...and see this nation is Your people”.

“it has been considered sufficient to mention only these (thirteen) out of all His acts: namely, because they are required for the good government of a country; **for the chief aim of man should be to make himself, as far as possible, similar to God : that is to say, to make his acts similar to the acts of God**, or as our Sages expressed it in explaining the verse, "Ye shall be holy" (Lev. xxi. 2):" He is gracious, so be you also gracious: He is merciful, so be you also merciful.”” [[Note that he does not say that our midos should be G-dlike.]]

I:55 We must deny of G-d physicality and being affected [latter implies change, and that another causes a change in Him], and also must deny any lack/privation [[?]] and lack of any perfection. Also must deny any similarity to any creature. Verses. These denials must be supported by proofs; for this purpose knowledge of natural science is necessary.

I:56 Similarity and relation imply each other, so impossibility of relation [above I:11, I:52 [4]] implies impossibility of similarity. Any two things sharing an essence [differing only in quantity] must be similar. Thus those who believe in divine attributes should believe that they have no relation to attributes with the same word applied to creatures. Otherwise there will be a similarity between G-d and a creature. Even “exists” is ambiguous between G-d and creatures – not the same quality at all. [Friedlander:] Since according to those who believe in divine attributes they are essential to G-d and accidental to the creatures who possess them, again they should admit that the two attributes have nothing in common. Therefore [[?]] it is inappropriate to believe in any attributes that will add to His essence, since the term denoting the attribute will have to be absolutely ambiguous.

I:57 Existence is an attribute for anything that has a cause of its existence. [[Perhaps: describing anything as substance + attribute is to enable describing change; if there is a cause of A's existence then A could cease to exist by removal of that cause. So it is appropriate to describe existence as an attribute of A.]] But there is no cause of G-d's existence, [[so His existence cannot change]] so He does not possess the attribute of existence – existence is His essence. Similarly He does not possess the attribute of unity/oneness, even though He is one. And the same will hold for all the other attributes/predications.

“First” [kadmon] means only “uncreated” [bilti mechudash] [[negative theology]] since literally “first” can only apply to something in time. So “first” and “last” are always literally false.

I:58 True description of G-d is only negative. Negative descriptions do not imply positive knowledge except by accident [[as in his example of the boat – because we have a super-class within which negations imply the positive descriptions of the rest of the class – but this does not apply to G-d.]] We only know that He exists – i.e. that it is impossible that He should not exist. [[So not-not-P is not equivalent to P; this impossibility is relative – the idea is that the world is not self-supporting, so there must be something else - see next paragraph.]]

“Consequently it is a false assumption to hold that He has any positive attribute: for He does not possess existence in addition to His essence: it therefore cannot be said that the one may be described as an attribute [of the other]; much less has He [in addition to His existence] a compound essence, consisting of two constituent elements to which the attribute could refer: still less has He accidents, which could be described by an attribute. Hence it is clear that He has no positive attribute whatever. The negative attributes, however, are those which are necessary to direct the mind to the truths which we must believe concerning God; for, on the one hand, they do not imply any plurality, and, on the other, they convey to man the highest *possible* knowledge of God; e.g., it has been established by proof that some being must exist besides those things which can be perceived by the senses, or apprehended by the mind; when we say of this being, that it exists, we mean that its non-existence is impossible.”

There follow examples of negative theology – “alive”, “first”, *, “all powerful”, “wise”, “possessing will”. * = His existence “overflows” to give existence to myriad of others. [[This does not sound like negative theology – rather actions. But some of the examples are also explained in terms of qualities of actions.]]

So all qualities that we ascribe to G-d are actions or negative. The negations are in the spirit of a category mistake, as when we say that a wall does not see. [[!]] Similarly we only assert negations of the heavens since we do not understand what they are.

I:59 How can there be superiority for those who know G-d if there is no positive description of G-d to be known? The more qualities that can be negated by proof, the more knowledge and merit one has. When you assert a quality of G-d positively you make two mistakes: even if that quality is a perfection for us, it is not so for Him; and you add something to His essence. Only He understands Himself. [Therefore silence is praise for Him.] We describe G-d in prayer only because those descriptions were revealed in M”R’s prophecy and the men of the Great Assembly prescribed them for prayer. True praise of G-d is not speech but true understanding.

I:60 “I WILL give you in this chapter some illustrations, in order that you may better understand the propriety of forming as many negative attributes as possible, and the impropriety of ascribing to God any positive attributes. A person may know for certain that a "ship" is in existence,It is clear that this tenth person has almost arrived at the correct notion of a "ship" by the foregoing negative attributes [[This is so because we have a general conception of the possible attributes of physical things, so when we negate some attributes others automatically apply. But this is not true for G-d. Does this affect the proposed conclusion that we are achieving knowledge of G-d by negating attributes?]]....In the same manner you will come nearer to the knowledge and comprehension of God by the negative attributes. But you must be careful, in what you negative, to negative by proof, On the other hand, there is a great danger in applying positive attributes to God. For it has been shown that *every perfection we could imagine*, even if existing in God in accordance with the opinion of those who assert the existence of attributes, *would in reality not be of the same kind as that imagined by us*, but would only be called by the same name, according to our explanation; *it would in fact amount to a negation*. Suppose, e.g., you say He has knowledge, and that knowledge, which admits of no change and of no plurality, embraces many changeable things; His knowledge remains unaltered, while new things are constantly formed, and His knowledge of a thing before it exists, while it exists, and when it has ceased to exist, is the same without the least change: *you would thereby declare that His knowledge is not like ours: and similarly that His existence is not like ours. You thus necessarily arrive at some negation, without obtaining a true conception of an essential attribute: on the contrary, you are led to assume that there is a plurality in God, and to believe that He, though one essence, has several unknown attributes*. For if you intend to affirm them, you cannot compare them with those attributes known by us, and they are consequently not of the same kind. You are, as it were, brought by the belief in the reality of the attributes, to say that God is one subject of which several things are predicated: *though the subject is not like ordinary subjects, and the predicates are not like ordinary predicates*. This belief would ultimately lead us to associate other things with God, and not to believe that He is One.I do not merely declare that he who affirms attributes of God has not sufficient knowledge concerning the Creator, admits some association with God, or conceives Him to be different from what He is: but I say that he unconsciously loses his belief in God. [[But then what is the point of teaching such ideas to the masses? They end up with no true belief at all! See I:34-5.]]...Again, he who conceives an incorrect notion of an object, must necessarily have a correct idea of the object to some extent, he, however, who says *that taste belongs to the category of quantity has not, according to my opinion, an*

incorrect notion of taste, but is entirely ignorant of its nature, for he does not know to what object the term "taste" is to be applied. --

According to this explanation you will understand, that those who do not recognize, in reference to God, the negation of things., which others negative by clear proof, are deficient in the knowledge of God, and are remote from comprehending Him. Consequently, the smaller the number of things is which a person can negative in relation to God, the less he knows of Him as has been explained in the beginning of this chapter; but the man who affirms an attribute of God, knows nothing but the name: for the object to which, in his imagination, he applies that name, does not exist: it is a mere fiction and invention, as if he applied that name to a non-existing being, for there is, in reality, no such object. God, praised be His name, exists, and His existence has been proved to be absolute and perfectly simple, as I shall explain. If such a simple, absolutely existing essence were said to have attributes, as has been contended, and were combined with extraneous elements, it would in no way be an existing thing, as has been proved by us; and when we say that that essence, which is called "God," is a substance with many properties by which it can be described, we apply that name to an object which does not at all exist....! As to those attributes of God which occur in the Pentateuch, or in the books of the Prophets, we must assume that they are exclusively employed, as has been stated by us, to convey to us some notion of the perfections of the Creator,[[Is this negative theology, or dibra Torah b'lashon benie adam?]] or to express qualities of actions emanating from Him."

I:61 "IT is well known that all the names of God occurring in Scripture are derived from His actions, except one, namely, the Tetragrammaton,..... Even the name Jdonay," Lord," which has been substituted for the Tetragrammaton, is derived from the appellative "lord" : comp." The man who is the lord (adone) of the land spake roughly to us" (Gen. xliii. 30).The derivation of the name, consisting of yod, hi, vau, and he, is not positively known.... [it] denotes something which is peculiar to God, and is not found in any other being. It is possible that in the Hebrew language, of which we have now but a slight knowledge, the Tetragrammaton, in the way it was pronounced, conveyed the meaning of "absolute existence."....other names of God have reference to qualities, and do not signify a simple substance, but a substance with attributes, they being derivatives. On that account it is believed that they imply the presence of a plurality in God, I mean to say, the presence of attributes, that is, of some extraneous element superadded to His essence.As, however, it has been proved, that God is not a substratum capable of attributes, we are convinced that those appellatives when employed as names of God, only indicate the relation of certain actions to Him, or they convey to us some notion of His perfection.The following promise was therefore made, implying that mankind will at a certain future time understand this subject, and be free from the error it involves : " In that day will the Lord be One, and His name One" (Zech. xiv. 9). The meaning of this prophecy is this: He being One, will then be called by one name, which will indicate the essence of God; but it does not mean that His sole name will be a derivative [viz., " One"]. In the Pirke Rabbi Eliezer (chap. iii.) occurs the following passage:" Before the universe was created, there was only the Almighty and His name." Observe how clearly the author states that all these appellatives employed as names of God came into existence after the

Creation. [[Compare Zohar!!!]] This is true: for they all refer to actions manifested in the Universe.It has thus been shown that the shem ha-meforash (the proper name of God) is the Tetragrammaton, and that this is the only name which indicates nothing but His essence, and therefore our Sages in referring to this sacred term said 'My name' means the one which is peculiar to Me alone."

I:62 discussion of various secret divine names – YHVH, twelve letters, forty-two letters – not just pronunciation, but phrases explaining what can be understood of G-d = secrets of the Torah. Against magical use of names.

I:63 "BEFORE approaching the subject of this chapter, we will first consider the words of Moses, And they shall say unto me, What is His name ? what shall I say unto them" (Exod. iii. 13),Moses was correct in declaring," But, behold, they will not believe me, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee" (ib. iv. 1): for any man claiming the authority of a prophet must expect to meet with such an objection so long as he has not given a proof of his mission. Again, if the question, as appears at first sight, referred only to the name, as a mere utterance of the lips, the following dilemma would present itself : either the Israelites knew the name, or they had never heard it: if the name was known to them, they would perceive in it no argument in favour of the mission of Moses,If, on the other hand, they had never heard it mentioned,what evidence would they have that this was really the name of God ? Moreover, after God had made known that name to Moses, and had told him," Go and gather the elders of Israel. . . . and they shall hearken to thy voice" (ib. xvi. 18), he replied," Behold, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice," although God had told him," And they will hearken to thy voice" : whereupon God answered," What is that in thine hand ?" and he said," A rod" (ib. iv. 2....Any one who in those days laid claim to authority, based it either, like Abraham, on the fact that, by reasoning and by proof he had been convinced of the existence of a Being who rules the whole Universe, or that some spiritual power was conferred upon him by a star, by an angel, or by a similar agency; but no one could establish his claim on prophecy, that is to say, on the fact that God had spoken to him, or had entrusted a mission to him: before the days of Moses no such assertion had ever been made. You must not be misled by the statements that God spoke to the Patriarchs, or that He had appeared to them. For you do not find any mention of a prophecy which appealed to others, or which directed them..... When God appeared to our Teacher Moses, and commanded him to address the people and to bring them the message, Moses replied that he might first be asked to prove the existence of God in the Universe, and that only after doing so he would be able to announce to them that God had sent him.Then God taught Moses how to teach them, and how to establish amongst them the belief in the existence of Himself, namely, by saying Ehyeh asher Ehyeh, a name derived from the verb hayah in the sense of" existing," for the verb hayah denotes cc to be," and in Hebrew no difference is made between the verbs" to be" and" to exist." The principal point in this phrase is that the same word which denotes" existence," is repeated as an attribute.This is, therefore, the expression of the idea that God exists, but not in the ordinary sense of the term: or, in other words, He is" the existing Being which is the the existing Being," that is to say, *the Being whose existence is absolute*..

God thus showed Moses the proofs by which His existence would be firmly established among the wise men of His people. Therefore the explanation of the name is followed by the words, "Go, gather the elders of Israel," and by the assurance that the elders would understand what God had shown to him, and would accept it, as is stated in the words, "And they will hearken to thy voice." Then Moses replied as follows: They will accept the doctrine that God exists convinced by these intelligible proofs. But, said Moses, by what means shall I be able to show that this existing God has sent me? Thereupon God gave him the sign."

Other names and their significance with respect to G-d's existence are mentioned.

I:64 "The name of G-d" signifies G-d's name/G-d's essence/G-d's word or command – verses. "The glory of G-d" signifies created light [to show importance of a place]/essence of G-d ["Show me your Glory"]/glorification of G-d by man or creature. Man alone praises G-d in words; expressions of other creatures praising G-d mean they cause man who appreciates the wisdom of the Creator in them to praise.

I:65 "G-d's speech" is a creation. "Speaking" signifies speech/thought/will. G-d described as commanding is anthropomorphism for having His desire accomplished.

I:66 Everything made by nature is described as "The work of G-d" – so too the tablets [which Chazal say were made at the end of the sixth day of creation]. [!!!] [But "nature" here refers to what G-d created. It is opposed to "artificial" = made by man.]

I:67 "He rested" means he ceased acting. [[Compare English.]] Or: He caused the creation to rest, or He established. "'he established" or "he governed" the Universe in accordance with the properties it possessed on the seventh day" : that is to say, while on each of the six days events took place contrary to the natural laws now in operation throughout the Universe, on the seventh day the Universe was merely upheld and left in the condition in which it continues to exist" "The word (va-yinnafash) is a verb derived from nefesh, the homonymity of which we have already explained (chap. xls.), namely, that it has the signification of intention or will: (va-yinnafash) accordingly means : "that which he desired was accomplished, and what he wished had come into existence."

I:68 "We have thus shown that the identity of the intellect, the intelligens and the intelligibile, is not only a fact as regards the Creator, but as regards all intellect, when in action." There is, however, this difference, that from time to time our intellect passes over from mere potentiality to reality, and that the pure intellect, i.e., the active intellect, finds sometimes obstacles, though not in itself, but accidentally in some external cause. ...God alone, and none besides Him, is an intellect constantly in action, and there is, neither in Himself nor in anything beside Him, any obstacle whereby His comprehension would be hindered. Therefore He always includes the intelligens, the intellectus, and the intelligibile, and His essence is at the same time the intelligens, the intelligibile, and the intellectus, as is necessarily the case with all intellect in action."

I:69 Contrary to the philosophers , there is no difference between “agent” and “cause” when you distinguish between postnatal and actual. G-d is the cause of the universe and everything therein in the senses of efficient, formal and final cause. In all three he is first since these cause form series of related causes and He is at the beginning of each series. The first cause is the real cause of the whole series. By saying he is the first formal cause we do not refer to Aristotle’s meaning which is physical. We mean that just as when a thing loses its form it ceases to exist [[as that thing]], so if we imagine the non-existence of G-d the universe also cease to exist. So He is called chei ha-olamim. He is the ultimate final cause in the sense that the ultimate purpose of everything is to fulfill His will [= His essence]. [*According to others the final end is to fulfill His wisdom [= His essence].*] [*So elsewhere in the book when he says “will or wisdom” only will is his view.*]

“Some of the scholars belonging to the Mutakallemim (Mohammedan theologians), ...to say that the non-existence of the Creator, if that were possible, would not necessarily imply the non-existence of the things created by Him, i.e., the Universe : for a production need not necessarily cease to exist when the producer, after having produced it, has ceased to exist. They would be right, if God were only the maker of the Universe, and if its permanent existence were not dependent on Him.God, however, is Himself the form of the Universe, as we have already shown, and it is He who causes its continuance and permanency. ...Now you understand the greatness of the error into which they have fallen through their assumption that God is only the agents, and not the End or the Form.”

I:70 “Consider and learn how they described the relation of God to the sphere, asserting that the latter is His instrument, by means of which He rules the universe. For whenever you find our Sages saying that in a certain heaven are certain things, they do not mean to say that in the heavens there are any extraneous things, but that from a certain heaven the force emanates which is required for the production of certain things, and for their continuing in proper order.” “Reflect on the fact that the souls of the righteous as well as the souls and the spirits of those to be born are mentioned here ! How sublime is this idea to him who understands it! For the soul that remains after the death of man is not the soul that lives in a man when he is born; the latter is a mere faculty[[potential intellect]], while that which has a separate existence after death is a reality[[intellect in action]]: again, the soul and the spirit of man during his life are two different things: therefore the souls and the spirits are both named as existing in man: but separate from the body only one of them exists. [[Neshama = animal life force disappears at death; nefesh = intellectual power remains after death.]]” “Consider how these excellent and true ideas, comprehended only by the greatest philosophers, are found scattered in the Midrashim” “Let this subject constantly remain in your memory when you study what I am going to say: for it -- i.e., the motion of the uppermost sphere is the greatest proof for the existence of God, as I shall demonstrate.”

I:71 “KNOW that many branches of science relating to the correct solution of these problems, were once cultivated by our forefathers, but were in the course of time neglected... no portion of" the secrets of the Law" (i.e., metaphysical problems) would be permitted to be written down or divulged for the use of all men.... The natural effect of this practice was that our nation lost the knowledge of those important disciplines.

Nothing but a few remarks and allusions are to be found in the Talmud and the Midrashim, like a few kernels enveloped in such a quantity of husk, that the reader is generally occupied with the husk, and forgets that it encloses a kernel.”

Haphazard and prejudiced development of Islamic and Christian philosophy.

“We merely maintain that the earlier Theologians, both of the Greek Christians and of the Mohammedans, when they laid down their propositions, did not investigate the real properties of things: first of all they considered what must be the properties of the things which should yield proof for or against a certain creed; and when this was found they asserted that the thing must be endowed with those properties: then they employed the same assertion as a proof for the identical arguments which had led to the assertion, and by which they either supported or refuted a certain opinion.” “first Mutakallemim had discussed those subjects with the sole object of defeating certain views of the philosophers, and demonstrating the insufficiency of their proofs. ...the first Mutakallemim tried to prove a proposition when it was expedient to demonstrate its truth; and to disprove it, when its rejection was desirable, and when it was contrary to the opinion which they wished to uphold, although the contradiction might only become obvious after the application of a hundred successive propositions. ...I tell you, however, as a general rule, that Themistius was right in saying that the properties of things cannot adapt themselves to our opinions, but our opinions must be adapted to the existing properties.” “They [Mutakallemim] set forth the propositions which I shall describe to you, and demonstrated by their peculiar mode of arguing that the Universe had a beginning. The theory of the creatio ex nihilo being thus established, they asserted, as a logical consequence, that undoubtedly there must be a Maker who created the Universe. Next they showed that this Maker is One, and from the Unity of the Creator they deduced His Incorporeality.” “It must be rejected, because all the proofs for the creation have weak points.” I think that the utmost that can be effected by believers in the truth of Revelation is to expose the shortcomings in the proofs of philosophers who hold that the Universe is eternal,... this question, namely, whether the Universe has been created or is eternal, cannot be answered with mathematical certainty; here human intellect must pause. We shall have occasion to speak more fully on this subject, but for the present it may suffice to state that the philosophers have for the last three thousand years been continually divided on that subject, as far as we can learn from their works and the record of their opinions... Such being the nature of this theory, how can we employ it as an axiom and establish on it the existence of the Creator? In that case the existence of God would be uncertain... The true method, which is based on a logical and indubitable proof, consists, according to my opinion, in demonstrating the existence of God, His unity, and His incorporeality by such philosophical arguments as are founded on the theory of the eternity of the Universe. I do not propose this method as though I believed in the eternity of the Universe, for I do not follow the philosophers on this point, but because by the aid of this method these three principles, viz., the existence of God, His unity and His incorporeality can be fully proved and verified, irrespectively of the question whether the universe has had a beginning or not.

“My method, as far as I now can explain it in general terms, is as follows. The universe is either eternal or has had a beginning: if it had a beginning, there must necessarily exist a being which caused the beginning; this is clear to common sense; for a thing that has had a beginning, cannot be the cause of its own beginning, another must have caused it. The universe was, therefore, created by God. If on the other hand the universe were eternal, it could in various ways be proved that apart from the things which constitute the universe, there exists a being which is neither body nor a force in a body, and which is one, eternal, not preceded by any cause, and immutable. That being is God. You see that the proofs for the Existence, the Unity and the Incorporeality of God must vary according to the propositions admitted by us. Only in this way can we succeed in obtaining a perfect proof, whether we assume the eternity or the creation of the universe. For this reason you will find in my works on the Talmud, whenever I have to speak of the fundamental principles of our religion, or to prove the existence of God, that I employ arguments which imply the eternity of the universe. I do not believe in that eternity, but I wish to establish the principle of the existence of God by an indisputable proof, and should not like to see this most important principle founded on a basis which every one could shake or attempt to demolish, and which others might consider as not being established at all... yet I shall not contradict the laws of nature, or reject any such part of the Aristotelean theory as has been proved to be correct.”

“I have already told you that nothing exists except God and this universe, and that there is no other evidence for His Existence but this universe in its entirety and in its several parts. Consequently the universe must be examined as it is: the propositions must be derived from those properties of the universe which are clearly perceived, and hence you must know its visible form and its nature. Then only will you find in the universe evidence for the existence of a being not included therein.”

I:72 “KNOW that this Universe, in its entirety, is nothing else but one individual being: that is to say, the outermost heavenly sphere, together with all included therein, is as regards individuality beyond all question a single being like Said and Omar.”

General description of number and motion of the spheres and their role in creating the four elements.

“The spherical bodies, on the other hand, have life, possess a soul by which they move spontaneously; they have no properties by which they could at any time come to a state of rest: in their perpetual rotations they are not subject to any change, except that of position. The question whether they are endowed with an intellect, enabling them to comprehend, cannot be solved without deep research... The elements themselves are subject to being transformed from one into another; for although one substance is common to all, substance without form is in reality impossible, just as the physical form of these transient beings cannot exist without substance. [[Contrast angels that are pure form.]] As the human body consists both of principal organs and of other members which depend on them and cannot exist without the control of those organs, so does the universe consist both of principal parts, viz., the quintessence, which encompasses the four

elements and of other parts which are subordinated and require a leader, viz., the four elements and the things composed of them.... the heart, is in constant motion, and is the source of every motion noticed in the body: it rules over the other members, and communicates to them through its own pulsations the force required for their functions. The outermost sphere by its motion rules in a similar way over all other parts of the universe, and supplies all things with their special properties. Every motion in the universe has thus its origin in the motion of that sphere: and the soul of every animated being derives its origin from the soul of that same sphere.... All this is effected through the action of light and darkness [[??]], which are regulated by the position and the motion of the spheres round the earth.”

“it [the universe] is a single being living through the motion of the sphere, which may be compared to the heart of an animated being. You must therefore consider the entire globe as one individual being which is endowed with life, motion, and a soul. This mode of considering the universe is, as will be explained, indispensable, that is to say, it is very useful for demonstrating the unity of God; it also helps to elucidate the principle that He who is One has created only one being.... In man there is a certain force which unites the members of the body, controls them, and gives to each of them what it requires for the conservation of its condition, and for the repulsion of injury-the physicians distinctly call it the leading force in the body of the living being: sometimes they call it "nature." The Universe likewise possesses a force which unites the several parts with each other, protects the species from destruction, maintains the individuals of each species as long as possible, and endows some individual beings with permanent existence [[angels, spheres, human nefesh]].... Bear in mind, however, that in all that we have noticed about the similarity between the Universe and the human being, nothing would warrant us to assert that man is a microcosm; for although the comparison in all its parts applies to the Universe and any living being in its normal state, we never heard that any ancient author called the ass or the horse a microcosm. This attribute has been given to man alone on account of his peculiar faculty of thinking. I mean the intellect, viz., the hylic intellect which appertains to no other living being. ... if a man, being deprived of his intellectual faculties, only possessed vitality, he would in a short time be lost. The intellect is the highest of all faculties of living creatures: it is very difficult to comprehend, and its true character cannot be understood as easily as man's other faculties.

There also exists in the Universe a certain force which controls the whole, which sets in motion the chief and principal parts, and gives them the motive power for governing the rest. Without that force, the existence of this sphere, with its principal and secondary parts, would be impossible. It is the source of the existence of the Universe in all its parts. That force is God: blessed be His name ! It is on account of this force that man is called microcosm: for he likewise possesses a certain principle which governs all the forces of the body, and on account of this comparison God is called "the life of the Universe”

“You must understand that in the parallel which we have drawn between the whole universe, on the one hand, and the individual man, on the other, ...three points a discrepancy may be noticed. First, the principal organ of any living being which has a heart, derives a benefit from the organs under the control of the heart... This is not the

case in the constitution of the universe. That part which bestows authority or distributes power, does not receive in return any benefit from the things under its control: whatever it grants, is ...only for the sake of imitating the ways of the Most High. Second, the heart is within the body while the superior part of the universe encompasses the rest... Thirdly. The faculty of thinking is a force inherent in the body, and is not separated from it, [[But then how can it exist separately after death? Unless becoming active does that...]] but God is not a force inherent in the body of the universe, but is separate from all its parts.

How God rules the universe and provides for it is a complete mystery: man is unable to solve it. For, on the one hand, it can be proved that God is separate from the universe, and in no contact whatever with it; but, on the other hand, His rule and providence can be proved to exist in all parts of the universe, even in the smallest. Praised be He whose perfection is above our comprehension.

II:Introduction *“There is, however, one proposition which we do not accept-namely, the proposition which affirms the Eternity of the Universe, but we will admit it for the present, because by doing so we shall be enabled clearly to demonstrate our own theory”*

“The belief that the locomotion of an animal is not preceded by another motion, is not true: for the animal is caused to move, after it had been in rest, by the intention to obtain those very things which bring about that locomotion. A change in its state of health, or some image, or some new idea can produce a desire to seek that which is conducive to its welfare and to avoid that which is contrary”

“Aristotle frequently attempts to establish this proposition [[the eternity of the universe]]; but I believe that he did not consider his proofs to be conclusive. It appeared to him to be the most probable and acceptable proposition.... I, however, think that this proposition is admissible, but neither demonstrative, as the commentators of Aristotle assert, nor, on the other hand, impossible, as the Mutakallemim say.”

II:2 “THE fifth essence, i.e., the heavenly spheres, must either be transient, and in this case motion would likewise be temporary, or, as our opponent assumes, it must be eternal.”

II:3 “THE theory of Aristotle in respect to the causes of the motion of the spheres led him to assume the existence of Intelligences.... It includes maxims which are identical with those taught in Scripture, and it is to a still greater extent in harmony with doctrines contained in well-known genuine Midrashim, as will be explained by me. For this reason I will cite his views and his proofs, and collect from them what coincides with the teachings of Scripture, and agrees with the doctrine held by our Sages.”

II:4 The spheres, intelligences, active intellect, angels, and the relation of all ultimately to G-d.

“This is the theory, and opinion of Aristotle on these questions...In the chapters which follow I will show how far the teaching of Scripture is in harmony with these views, and how far it differs from them.”

II:5 Verses and text of prayer [kidush hachodesh] support the spheres being animate and intellectual – aware of themselves and what is above and below them. [[Note use of text of prayer as source.]] “The opinion of Aristotle, that the spheres are capable of comprehension and conception, is in accordance with the words of our prophets and our theologians or Sages” [[Note the direction of agreement.]]

II:6 “As for the existence of angels, there is no necessity to cite any proof from Scripture, where the fact is frequently mentioned. The term *elohim* signifies "judges" : comp." The cause of both parties shall come before the 'judges" ' (*ha-elohim*; Exod. xxii. 8). It has been figuratively applied to angels, and to the Creator [[!!!]] as being judge over the angels. When God says, "I am the Lord your God," the pronoun "your" refers to all mankind [[!!!]]; but in the phrase *elohe ha-elohim*, He is described as the God of the angels, and in *adone ha-adonim*, as the Lord of the spheres and the stars, which are the masters of the rest of the corporeal creation.”

“*Malach* [Angel]” means “agent” [[not “messenger” as in Friedlander]], so any being entrusted with a mission is called a *Malach*. This includes all the forces of nature since they do His will – so when it is said that He formed you it means via the forces of nature which are His angels = agents. [The greatness of the Creator that designed nature as His agents.] As Chazal say that an angel does only one thing, just as each natural force has one characteristic function. It also includes the intelligences which serve as intermediaries between G-d and the world. Statements from Chazal that the forms in which angels appear are only in prophetic visions – in reality the angels have no physical form at all – they are only specific actions.

“There is nothing in the opinion of Aristotle on this subject contrary to the teaching of Scripture. The whole difference between him and ourselves is this : he believes all these beings to be eternal, co-existing with the First Cause as its necessary effect; but we believe that they have had a beginning, that God created the Intelligences, and gave the spheres the capacity of seeking to become like them: that in creating the Intelligences and the spheres, He endowed them with their governing powers. In this point *we differ from him.* “

II:7 “WE have already explained that the term "angel" is a homonym, and is used of the intellectual beings, the spheres, and the elements: for all these are engaged in performing a divine command. But do not imagine that the Intelligences and the spheres are like other forces which reside in bodies and act by the laws of nature without being conscious of what they do. The spheres and the Intelligences are conscious of their actions, and select by their own free will the objects of their influence, (although not in the same manner as we exercise free will) and rule over other things, which only concern temporary beings. I have been led to adopt this theory by certain passages in Scripture: e.g., an angel says to Lot : "For I cannot do anything," etc. (Gen. XiX. 21): and telling

him to deliver himself, the angel says : " Behold I have accepted thee concerning this thing" (ver. 21).

Again: " Take heed before him, and listen to his voice," etc. (Exod. xxiii. 21). These passages show that angels are conscious of what they do, and have free will in the sphere of action intrusted to them, just as we have free will within our province, and in accordance with the power given to us with our very existence. The difference is that what we do is the lowest stage of excellence, and that our influence and actions are preceded by nonaction; whilst the Intelligences and the spheres always perform that which is good, they contain nothing except what is good and perfect, as will be shown further on, and they have continually been active from the beginning." [[Unclear whether "free will" for angels includes the real possibility of doing other than what they are commanded, as in human free will.]]

II:8 "...our Sages have, *in this astronomical question*, abandoned their own theory in favour of the theory of others. Thus, it is distinctly stated," The wise men of other nations have defeated the wise men of Israel' It is quite right that our Sages have abandoned their own theory: for *speculative matters* every one treats according to the results of his own study, and every one accepts that which appears to him established by proof.

II:9-10 Arrangement of spheres and stars according to ancient astronomy. The number four. Some remarks of chazal about angels.

II:11 Astronomy is a mixture of proof and hypothesis. Hypothesis needs to explain the phenomena with the simplest explanation.

"We must, however, add that the part which benefits the part below it in the order described does not exist for the sole purpose of producing that benefit. For if this were the case it would lead to the paradox that the higher, better, and nobler beings existed for the sake of beings lower in rank, whilst in reality the object should be of greater importance than the means applied for attaining it. No intelligent person will admit that this is possible." [[And hence the spheres etc. do not exist solely for man – see below.]]

"We have already mentioned that these theories are not opposed to anything taught by our Prophets or by our Sages. Our nation is wise and perfect, as has been declared by the Most High, through Moses, who made us perfect : " Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. iv. 6). But when wicked barbarians have deprived us of our possessions, put an end to our science and literature, and killed our wise men, we have become ignorant; this has been foretold by the prophets, when they pronounced the punishment for our sins:" The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isa. xxix. 14). We are mixed up with other nations; we have learnt their opinions, and followed their ways and acts."

II:12 Review of aspects of physics. A thing which begins to exist must have a cause of its beginning to exist – no simultaneous existence of infinity of causes. Causes are physical and non-physical. All physical causation is via contact. A cause operates at a particular

time and not others due to either relation to the object on which it operates [if the cause is physical] or the preparation of the object to receive the cause [if the cause is non-physical – e.g. the cause of the possession of a form]. [[Compare spiritual explanations like non-physical causes.]] Non-physical causes operate continuously – therefore the only explanation for the effect occurring at a particular time can be that the object operated on was only prepared at that time. Our description of G-d as cause is only to indicate that He is the source of the effect, not to describe the nature of His agency. Imagination = the evil inclination.

II:13 Opinions on origin of universe among those who believe in G-d. 1. Torah: creation. . “We say that God existed before the creation of the Universe, although the verb existed appears to imply the notion of time; we also believe that He existed an infinite space of time before the Universe was created; but in these cases we do not mean time in its true sense. We only use the term to signify something analogous or similar to time. For time is undoubtedly an accident, and, according to our opinion, one of the created accidents, like blackness and whiteness: it is not a quality, but an accident connected with motion. This must be clear to all who understand what Aristotle has said on time and its real existence.”

“For this reason, viz., because time belongs to the things created, it cannot be said that God produced the Universe in the beginning. ...If you admit the existence of time before the Creation, you will be compelled to accept the theory of the Eternity of the Universe. For time is an accident and requires a substratum. You will therefore have to assume that something [beside God] existed before this Universe was created, an assumption which it is our duty to oppose.” [[It seems that the phrase “in the beginning” implies the independent/prior existence of time.... – indeed: “*In the beginning of time*” at least linguistically presupposes a “time” that can be referred to.]]

2. Philosophers: “something comes from nothing” is a logical impossibility, like a round square. So there is an eternal substance which G-d fashioned into our universe. And the heavens are destructible. Thus Plato. [[Does Plato say that G-d creates that eternal substance? Seems that he cannot hold G-d creates it from nothing. But then how does Plato’s opinion make miracles possible? Perhaps miracles only require change of form, e.g. from one of the four elements to another, and since G-d is continuously attaching the forms to the original matter He can change those forms. And that is why the heavens are destructible. See II:25.]]

3. Aristotle: nothing comes from nothing, and the heavens are indestructible. And G-d cannot change His will – that is why the present form of the universe is eternal.

“All who follow the Law of Moses, our Teacher, and Abraham, our Father, and all who adopt similar theories, assume that nothing is eternal except God, and that the theory of Creatio ex nihilo includes nothing that is impossible, whilst some thinkers even regard it as an established truth.”

II:14 “No notice will be taken of the opinion of any philosopher but that of Aristotle: his opinions alone deserve to be criticized [[Hebrew: analyzed]], and if our objections or doubts with regard to any of these be well founded, this must be the case in a far higher degree in respect to all other opponents of our fundamental principles.”

II:15 Proof via quotations that Aristotle did not think that he had proved the eternity of the universe, but rather adopted it as the theory open to least objection.

II:16 “I intend to show that the theory of the Creation, as taught in Scripture, contains nothing that is impossible; and that all those philosophical arguments which seem to disprove our view contain weak points which make them inconclusive, and render the attacks on our view untenable. Since I am convinced of the correctness of my method, and consider either of the two theories-viz., the Eternity of the Universe, and the Creation-as admissible [[i.e. no proof and no refutation – see end of introduction to part II.]], I accept the latter on the authority of Prophecy, which can teach things beyond the reach of philosophical speculation. [[Because speculation cannot establish the truth we can trust prophecy. But if speculation were to succeed, then we could not trust philosophy?!? See II:23,25...]] [For the belief in prophecy is, as will be shown in the course of this treatise, consistent even with the belief in the Eternity of the Universe. [[See II:32.]] When I have established the admissibility of our theory, I will, by philosophical reasoning, show that our theory of the Creation is more acceptable than that of the Eternity of the Universe; and although our theory includes points open to criticism, I will show that there are much stronger reasons for the rejection of the theory of our opponents”. [[See II:19,22]]

II:17 “It is therefore quite impossible to infer from the nature which a thing possesses after having passed through all stages of its development, what the condition of the thing has been in the moment when this process commenced: nor does the condition of a thing in this moment show what its previous condition has been. The Aristotelians oppose us, and found their objections on the properties which the things in the Universe possess when in actual existence and fully developed. We admit the existence of these properties, but hold that they are by no means the same as those which the things possessed in the moment of their production; and we hold that these properties themselves have come into existence from absolute non-existence. Their arguments are therefore no objection whatever to our theory: In short, the properties of things when fully developed contain no clue as to what have been the properties of the things before their perfection..... For the state of the whole Universe when it came into existence may be compared with that of animals when their existence begins.... This remark is not superfluous, if the Scriptural account of the Creation be taken literally [[??]]; in reality, it cannot be taken literally,[[See II:30 – the departures from literal reading there are not related to the present points.]]... Aristotle, or rather his followers, may perhaps ask us how we know that the Universe has been created: and that other forces than those it has at present were acting in its Creation, since we hold that the properties of the Universe, as it exists at present, prove nothing as regards its creation ? We reply, there is no necessity for this according to our plan; for we do not desire to prove the Creation, but only its

possibility: and this possibility is not refuted by arguments based on the nature of the present Universe, which we do not dispute. When we have established the admissibility of our theory, we shall then show its superiority. In attempting to prove the inadmissibility of Creatio ex nihilo, the Aristotelians can therefore not derive any support from the nature of the Universe.”

II:18 Three “proofs” of the Aristotelians that the universe is eternal based upon conceptions of G-d. [[Notes of assertions – not summary of the arguments.]]

“The circumstance that a purely spiritual being does not effect at one time that which it effects at another, does not necessitate a transition from potentiality to actuality: such a transition is necessary in the case of forces connected with bodies. ... What we infer, and what we are justified in inferring, is this: the Active Intellect is neither a corporeal object nor a force residing in a body: it acts intermittently, and yet whatever the cause may be why it does not always act, we do not say that the Active Intellect has passed from a state of potentiality to that of actuality: or that it implies the possibility [of change], or that an agent must exist that causes the transition from potentiality to actuality. [[Care must be exercised in understanding the dialectic: the critic is trying to prove eternity, so he must show that the relevant characteristics of G-d are correct. We are allowed to take refuge in ignorance – G-d or AI operates in ways different from material bodies so the critic’s inferences are without foundation.]]”

The essence of will for a created being is inconstancy – what is willed changes from time to time. But this need not be true for a non-physical being.

Everything in creation is according to G-d’s wisdom [which for us – as opposed to the critic - = His will, and is completely not understood. So we owe no explanation why something happens according to His will at one time rather than another.]. [[Compare argument for the creation of the heavens based upon their lack of order.]]

II:19 “It has been shown that according to Aristotle, and according to all that defend his theory, the Universe is inseparable from God; He is the cause, and the Universe the effect; [[Does this mean He is the cause of its existence? Ex nihilo? If so, how does he differ from Plato. Of course Plato says the world does not issue from G-d by necessity – what is the ground of this?]] and this effect is a necessary one: and as it cannot be explained why or how God exists in this particular manner, namely, being One and incorporeal, so it cannot be asked concerning the whole Universe why or how it exists in this particular way. For it is necessary that the whole, the cause as well as the effect, exist in this particular manner, it is impossible for them not to exist, or to be different from what they actually are. [[So that which is necessary cannot be explained. It seems that explanation is always of why A rather than B.]] This leads to the conclusion that the nature of everything remains constant, [[And hence there cannot be miracles.]] that nothing changes its nature in any way, and that such a change is impossible in any existing thing. It would also follow that the Universe is not the result of design, choice, and desire; for if this were the case, they would have been non-existing before the design

had been conceived. We, however, hold that all things in the Universe are the result of design, and not merely of necessity; He who designed them may change them when He changes His design. But not every design is subject to change; for there are things which are impossible, and their nature cannot be altered, as will be explained. Here, in this chapter, I merely wish to show by arguments almost as forcible as real proofs, that the Universe gives evidence of design”

“There is one substance common to all spheres: each one has its own peculiar form. Who thus determined and predisposed these spheres to receive different forms ? Is there above the spheres any being capable of determining this except God ?... Everything is, according to him, the result of a law of Nature, and not the result of the design of a being that designs as it likes,... But when he treats of the properties of the spheres, he does not clearly show the causal relation, nor does he explain the phenomena in that systematic way which the hypothesis of natural laws would demand.... There are, besides, other phenomena which speak strongly against the hypothesis that all is regulated by the laws of Nature,”

“According to our theory of the Creation, all this can easily be explained; [[Here “explained” means “is consistent with” – creation allows us to accept phenomena without explanation since we do not know the reason of the Creator. The claim that the cause is nature forces a certain order and causation – if that is absent then nature is not the right explanation, and creation is left.]] for we say that there is a being that determines the direction and the velocity of the motion of each sphere: but we do not know the reason why the wisdom of that being gave to each sphere its peculiar property.”

There follow many details of the stars and spheres that nature cannot explain.

“The best proof for design in the Universe I find in the different motions of the spheres, and in the fixed position of the stars in the spheres.”

“We have thus been brought to examine two questions :-- (1) Is it necessary to assume that the variety of the things in the Universe is the result of Design, and not of fixed laws of Nature, or is it not necessary ? (2) Assuming that all this is the result of Design, does it follow that it has been created after not having existed, or does *Creatio ex nihilo* not follow, and has the Being which has determined all this done always so ?”

II:20 Aristotle: chance events do not recur frequently, so the motions of the heavens are not due to chance. Hence the heavens could not have come into existence spontaneously. He says that they are the necessary result of G-d’s activity, but this does not at all mean design. [[Very difficult discussion.]]

II:21 Some recent philosophers say that the universe is eternal as the product of G-d, but the product is necessary, hence not design. We who assert design therefore deny their sense of necessity. Their picture is necessity all the way from G-d to the intelligences to the active intellect to the variety of our world – the whole process one of cause and effect.

II:22 Many objections to the idea that nature = cause and effect produce the heavens and the world. All the objections point out lack of order – nature is defined by certain types of order that are missing from the heavens and the world. But design is consistent with lack of order [since we do not know the purposes of the Designer].

“It may perhaps be asked why I have enumerated all the doubts which can be raised against the theory of Aristotle: whether by mere doubts a theory can be overthrown, or its opposite established ? This is certainly not the case. But we treat this philosopher exactly as his followers tell us to do. For Alexander stated that when a theory cannot be established by proof, the two most opposite views should be compared as to the doubts entertained concerning each of them, and that view which admits of fewer doubts should be accepted.”

“Being convinced that the question whether the heavens are eternal or not cannot be decided by proof, neither in the affirmative nor in the negative, we have enumerated the objections raised to either view, and shown how the theory of the Eternity of the Universe is subject to stronger objections, and is more apt to corrupt the notions concerning God [than the other]. Another argument can be drawn from the fact that the theory of the Creation was held by our Father Abraham, and by our Teacher Moses.” [[That is: he is not appealing to the authority of prophecy, but to the reputation of Avrohom and Moses as wise, to add to the reasons for accepting design. And this in response to those who would use the reputation of Aristotle as a reason to accept his theories – see next chapter.]]

II:23 when comparing objections, not only number but strength also must be taken into account. This evaluation requires objectivity [no preference for one theory over the other], knowledge of natural sciences and moral goodness [freedom from desires and passions]. [[!!!]]

“Only demonstrative proof should be able to make you abandon the theory of the Creation: but such a proof does not exist in Nature.” [[Notice: demonstrative proof would be sufficient to abandon creation – see II:25; by implication, only demonstrative proof should do so – that excludes theories of empirical science [see II:17]; such a proof does not exist in nature – perhaps because of II:17.]

II:24 Difficulties in giving a natural explanation of the motions of the heavens – as opposed to merely predicting observations without explanation.

“I have explained to you already viva voce, that these difficulties do not concern the astronomer: for he does not profess to tell us the existing properties of the spheres, but to suggest, whether correctly or not, a theory in which the motion of the stars is circular and uniform, and yet in agreement with our observation.”

II:25 Rambam II:25 [Rav Moshe Meiselman]

BACKGROUND

Now in part I, chapters 1-50 the Rambam develops his method of linguistic analysis for the Tanach. There are two rules:

(a) The range of acceptable meanings is determined by the actual usages in the Tanach. We cannot go beyond actual usages. So we can say that “heart” means “central part”, since there is a verse referring to the heart of the heavens. But we cannot say it means “water carrier” on the grounds that we know the heart is a pump, since there is no verse in which it is used to mean pump.

(b) The acceptable meanings for a text form a hierarchy – some are preferable to others. The Rambam does not give a full definition of the hierarchy and its principles. But intuitive simplicity and literal reading are important factors – each of them contributes to a meaning being preferred. To assign a less preferred meaning to a text requires a reason. The Rambam does not give a full account of all possible reasons. But one reason he uses repeatedly is philosophical demonstration: If a philosophical demonstration contradicts a preferred meaning and a less preferred meaning is consistent with the demonstration, that is a good reason to use the less preferred meaning.

[What we called above “assigning a meaning” Kapach calls *biur*, i.e. clarification/explanation. His term implies truth/correctness/objectivity. It also implies that this is a linguistic-literary clarification, based on the general understanding of the language, and related essentially to the use of the language by this author, preferably in the same text.]

Thus the Rambam never contradicts the meaning of the Torah. There must always be a way to find an acceptable meaning [a *biur*] via (a) and (b). So the question of *biur* for verses referring to embodiment or creation *ex nihilo* must be limited to usages that are found explicitly in the Tanach. The first fifty chapters of the Guide do this for embodiment.

Rambam says that non-corporeality is proved. But he does not say how. One might think he means [only!] philosophical proof. But see I:54 - there he proves non-corporeality via verses! There is no reason to limit his reference to proof in II:25 to philosophical demonstration alone. He should be taken to mean both together.

Torah texts contradicting eternity are not sufficient to rule out eternity,
Because

Torah texts contradict non-corporeality, and yet we accept non-corporeality. [We *reinterpret* the texts; we could do the same for eternity.]

Why then do we reject eternity? Two reasons:

1. Incorporeality has been *DEMONSTRATED* [and that implies text must be reinterpreted]

but

eternity has not been demonstrated [so we do not have reason to reinterpret], and it contradicts peshat of Torah text. [So we do not use reinterpretation to support a position that has not been demonstrated - the fact that it has not been demonstrated means that it could be contradicted by various arguments, and those arguments should not be opposed by reinterpretation.]

2. Incorporeality does not destroy the law [so we are free to accept Incorporeality, and so via 1 we can use reinterpretation]

but

eternity as understood by Aristotle destroys the law - all miracles and all promises of the prophets become impossible [so we are not free to use reinterpretation] [see below in text - this would require contradicting the *external meanings* of the Law with regard to which *no intelligent man has any doubt* that they are to be taken in their external meaning. And if eternity as understood by Aristotle were demonstrated then that would refute the Torah. [[But it would not justify reinterpretation.]]

Reinterpretation can be used to reconcile *eternity [Plato]* since only the verses of creation ex

nihilo need reinterpretation, whereas eternity as understood by Aristotle would require reinterpretation for all of the miracles and the promises of the prophets, and that is impossible.

[[Hence the crucial need for Rambam's argument that there is no demonstration for eternity [Aristotle].]]

Eternity [Plato] does not destroy the law, and we COULD reinterpret the text. But we should

not do this unless we had a DEMONSTRATION of eternity [Plato].

So the reason for using the less preferred meaning for the terms that seem to indicate corporeality is that corporeality contradicts both other verses and philosophical demonstration. Now the eternity of the world [Plato] has neither problem - there are no verses that literally contradict eternity [Plato] [i.e. that literally assert creation ex nihilo], and there is no philosophical demonstration against eternity [Plato]. Still, there are verses concerning creation that are unclear – they might indicate eternity and they might indicate creation ex nihilo. To interpret the verses in accordance with eternity [Plato] requires deciding in favor of one biur over another for those verses. That preference needs reason. If there were a demonstration of eternity [Plato] that would be reason enough. [[So this case is not strictly parallel to corporeality - there we had to reinterpret verses that literally assert corporeality, but have secondary meanings consistent with non-corporeality. Does the text tolerate treating them as not strictly parallel?]]

Thus if there were a demonstration of eternity as understood by Aristotle, that would falsify the Torah since there is no other interpretation of the miracles and the prophecies.

[[When he says at the end of the chapter that all reasonable people will agree that the verses should not be taken out of their plain/literal/etc meaning, this is what he means - there are no other uses in the Tanach to justify a non-literal meaning of those verses. None at all. So he is not saying that the non-literal meaning is less preferred but there is not adequate reason to move to the less preferred meaning. His position is stronger - there is no non-literal meaning available at all That lack of parallel is due to the assumption there are no verses literally asserting creation ex nihilo. Is this true for the whole Tanach?]]

II:26 In Pirkei d'Rebbi Eliezer there are statements that seem to contradict creation. Rambam admits he does not understand that aspect of the statements, and then derives source that the substance of the heavens is different from the substance of the earth and praises the author. [[Note attitude to chazal!]]

II:27 The Torah allows the possibility of the eternal continuation of the creation [in its present state] – neither verses nor statements of chazal contradict this. The idea that anything which has a beginning must have an end belongs only to natural philosophy, not to super-natural creation.

II:28 Some people misunderstood Koheles to say that the world has no beginning. They were misled by statements there that the world has no end [a doctrine which is true [!!!]], and they concluded therefore that the world must have no beginning. But that inference is wrong. "l'olam" connotes eternal only when "ed" is added. It also explains that miracles are for the sake of creating fear of G-d.

"David has also in other passages clearly spoken of the incorruptibility of the heavens, the perpetuity and immutability of their laws, and of all the heavenly beings. He says," Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, etc. For He commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass" (Ps. cxlviii. 1-6): that is to say, there will never be a change in the decrees which God made, or in the sources of the properties of the heavens and the earth, which the Psalmist has mentioned before." [[This is the source for the forward eternity of the world – verses, not philosophy!!]]

II:29 Understanding the language of the prophets. In particular, no statements that the world will end – they refer to political and social changes, all of which are consistent with the continuation of nature as we know it.

"Our opinion, in support of which we have quoted these passages, is clearly established, namely, that no prophet or sage has ever announced the destruction of the Universe, or a change of its present condition, or a permanent change of any of its properties. When our Sages say," The world remains six thousand years, and one thousand years it will be

waste," they do not mean a complete cessation of existing things; the phrase "one thousand years it will be waste" distinctly shows that time will continue: besides, this is the individual opinion of one Rabbi, and in accordance with one particular theory."
[[Thus he uses the fact that this is an individual opinion as a legal reason to reject it.]]

When I, however, said that no prophet ever announced" a permanent change of any of its properties, I intended to except miracles " [[That is: by using the qualifier "permanent" he excluded miracles. He accepts miracles limited in time or in space – see previous chapter.]]

"We have thus clearly stated and explained our opinion, that we agree with Aristotle in one half of his theory. For we believe that this Universe remains perpetually with the same properties with which the Creator has endowed it, and that none of these will ever be changed except by way of miracle in some individual instances, although the Creator has the power to change the whole Universe, to annihilate it, or to remove any of its properties. The Universe, had, however, a beginning and commencement, for when nothing was as yet in existence except God,"

"First, the account given in Scripture of the Creation is not, as is generally believed, intended to be in all its parts literal. For if this were the case, wise men would not have kept its explanation secret, and our Sages would not have employed figurative speech [in treating of the Creation] in order to hide its true meaning, nor would they have objected to discuss it in the presence of the common people. The literal meaning of the words might lead us to conceive corrupt ideas and to form false opinions about God, or even entirely to abandon and reject the principles of our Faith." [[Not completely clear which principles of faith would be threatened by a literal reading of Genesis, but see III:29, p. 319 where it sounds like the false conclusion from the literal reading of Genesis would be the eternity of the universe (which fits the context here well).]] [[Note that the only reason given here to reject literal reading of Genesis is that it would contradict principle of faith which themselves will be derived from verses, so in the end it is a conflict of verses – this fits the methodology of II:25.]]

II:30 [Maaseh Bereishis] "Reishis A" must co-exist with A [though it may start before A]; "techilas A" may be like Reishis, but may also simply precede A and not co-exist with A. "B'reishis" means "using a principle/foundation He created...". Statements of chazal that seem to imply the existence of time before our world [and hence eternity]

"We find that some of our Sages are reported to have held the opinion that time existed before the Creation. But this report is very doubtful, because the theory that time cannot be imagined with a beginning, has been taught by Aristotle, as I showed you, and is objectionable. Those who have made this assertion have been led to it by a saying of one of our Sages in reference to the terms" one day ... a second day." Taking these terms literally, the author of that saying asked, What determined" the first day," since there was no rotating sphere, and no sun ? and continues as follows : Scripture uses the term" one day" : R. Jehudah, son of R. Simon, said:" Hence we learn that the divisions of time have

existed previously." R. Abahu said, "Hence we learn that God built worlds and again destroyed them." This latter exposition is still worse than the former. Consider the difficulty which these two Rabbis found in the statement that time existed before the creation of the sun. We shall undoubtedly soon remove this difficulty, unless these two Rabbis intended to infer from the Scriptural text that the divisions of time must have existed before the Creation, and thus adopted the theory of the Eternity of the Universe. But every religious man rejects this. The above saying is, in my opinion, certainly of the same character as that of R. Eliezer, "Whence were the heavens created," etc., (chap. xxvi.). [[Perhaps he means that the report that Chazal believed in eternity is a false report – Chazal did not really believe this – and their statements have to be treated as he did in chap. 26 where he rejected such a reading.]] In short, in these questions, do not take notice of the utterances of any person. [[“Any person” = those giving the report, or perhaps even Chazal?]] I told you that the foundation of our faith is the belief that God created the Universe from nothing; that time did not exist previously, but was created: for it depends on the motion of the sphere, and the sphere has been created.” [[So time is given by the motion of the sphere. Compare II:8.]]

- = non-literal interpretation; # = non-literal because literal would contradict principles of faith.

“You must know that the particle *et* in the phrase *et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arez* ("the heavens and the earth") signifies "together with" ... God created with the heavens everything that the heavens contain, and with the earth everything the earth includes. *# They further say that the simultaneous Creation of the heavens and the earth *#”

“these lights [of the luminaries mentioned in the Creation of the fourth day] are the same that were created on the first day, but were only fixed in their places on the fourth day. *#”

“And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the surface of the deep. And the wind of God moved upon the face of the waters." The term "earth" [mentioned here, and in the first verse] includes all the four elements, whilst further on it is said, "And God called the dry land Earth" (Gen. i. 10). *?... It is also important to notice that the words, "And God called a certain thing a certain name," are invariably intended to distinguish one thing from others which are called by the same common noun. *? *hoshek* (fire). *? for by placing air over water, *hoshek* (fire), which is "upon the face of the deep," is undoubtedly above air *? The phrase, "And he divided between the waters," etc., does not describe a division in space, as if the one part were merely above the other, whilst the nature of both remained the same, but a distinction as regards their nature or form. *”

The original *mayim* is proto-water which then becomes three things: H₂O in our realm, something very different above, and the *rekia* that separates the two. “It is therefore clear that there has been one common element called water, which has been afterwards distinguished by three different forms: one part forms the seas, another the firmament, and a third part is over the firmament, and all this is separate from the earth. The

Scriptural text follows here a peculiar method in order to indicate some extraordinary mysteries”* [[Perhaps extraordinary mysteries means metaphysical truths. Then one motivation of non-literal reading of Genesis is to recover those hints?]] “When the creation of any part of the Universe is described that is permanent, regular, and in a settled order, the phrase" that it is good" is used. But the account of the firmament, with that which is above it and is called water, is, as you see, of a very mysterious character.... But if the account be understood in a figurative sense and according to its true meaning, it is still more mysterious.... Our Sages have already explained that the herbs and trees, which God caused to spring forth from the ground, were caused by God to grow, after He had sent down rain upon them; and the passage beginning," And there went up a mist from the earth" (ii. 6), refers to that which took place before the creative act, related in the words," Let the earth bring forth grass," etc. (i. ii.). [[So the events of chap. 2 take place during the events of chap. 1.]] All our Sages agree that this took place on the sixth day, and that nothing new was created after the close of the six days. None of the things mentioned above is therefore impossible, because the laws of Nature were then not yet permanently fixed. [[See I:67, p. 99]]

Adam and Chava are form and matter. * [[Chava created from Adam = G-d created matter by using angels who are pure form??]] “How great is the ignorance of those who do not see that all this necessarily includes some [other] idea [besides the literal meaning of the words] [Hebrew: she zeh kulo l’inyan b’hechrach]].”

Chazal’s account of serpent and rider – chomer seducing tzura it seems.

“And the Lord God took the man, i.e., raised him, and placed him in the Garden of Eden," i.e., He gave him rest. The words" He took him,"" He gave him," have no reference to position in space, but they indicate his position in rank among transient beings, and the prominent character of his existence.” [[There is no implication here that the Garden is a fiction. Only the physical descriptions of G-d handling Adam are without literal meaning.]]

Adam gave names implies that all languages – including Hebrew – are conventional.

“According to my opinion the verb yazar denotes to make a form, a shape, or any other accident (for form and shape are likewise accidents).” [[This is ambiguous between 1. creating the abstract accident – the quality, and 2. impressing the accident/quality on matter.]]

“But in reference to the Universe, viz., the heavens and the earth, which comprises the totality of the Creation, Scripture employs the verb bara, which we explain as denoting he produced something from nothing;... But although none can be a master unless there exists something that is in his possession, this attribute cannot be considered to imply the belief in the eternal existence of a materia prima, since the verbs bara," he created," and 'asah," he made," are also employed in reference to the heavens.”

II:31 In the Decalogue, the prohibition of avoda zara is only an explanation of the first [[!]] therefore Shabbos is the third. Since beliefs become permanent only through publicity, [and all peoples must believe in the creation] so in the future all people will keep Shabbos. [[!]] “The Sabbath is therefore a double blessing : it gives us correct notions, and also promotes the well-being of our bodies” [[Compare taamei hamitzvos in part III.]]

II:32 Opinions concerning prophecy – preparation, who is chosen, when and how it occurs etc. Torah: moral and intellectual perfection are necessary but not sufficient – G-d chooses for His reasons. “As to the revelation on Mount Sinai, all saw the great fire, and heard the fearful thunderings, that caused such an extraordinary terror; but only those of them who were duly qualified were prophetically inspired, each one according to his capacities.” [[Very difficult!! See next chapter.]]

II:33 “IT is clear to me that what Moses experienced at the revelation on Mount Sinai was different from that which was experienced by all the other Israelites, for *Moses alone* was addressed by God, and for this reason the second person singular is used in the Ten Commandments; Moses then went down to the foot of the mount and told his fellow-men what he had heard. Furthermore, the words, "In order that the people hear when I speak with thee" (Exod. xix. 9), show that *God spoke to Moses*, and the people only heard the mighty sound, not distinct words. [[Contrast Hil. Yesodei Hatorah 8:1 where he says that we heard G-d speaking to Moses the words “Moseh moshe go tell them such and such.”]]...it is not said "You heard words"; and even where the hearing of the words is mentioned, only the perception of the sound is meant... There is, however, an opinion of our Sages frequently expressed in the Midrashim, and found also in the Talmud, to this effect: The Israelites heard the first and the second commandments from God, i.e., they learnt the truth of the principles contained in these two commandments in the same manner as Moses, and not through Moses. ***For these two principles, the existence of God and His Unity, can be arrived at by means of reasoning, and whatever can be established by proof is known by the prophet in the same way as by any other person; he has no advantage in this respect. These two principles were not known through prophecy alone.*** [[The word “alone” indicates that there was also prophecy for the first two commandments – for everyone? For a subset of the people? How is this consistent with the beginning of the chapter? And what is the relation between what is communicated by prophecy and what is known by logic?]].... the Israelites heard on that occasion a certain sound which Moses understood to proclaim the first two commandments, and through Moses all other Israelites learnt them when he in intelligible sounds repeated them to the people. [[This indicates that the prophecy of the first two communicated no content to the people.]] ..It was after this first sound was heard that the people were seized with the fear and terror described in Scripture, and that they said, "Behold the Lord our God has shown us, etc., and now why shall we die, etc. Come thou near," etc. [[So these verses cannot be used to support the idea that the people did not hear the words from G-d. ***And see III:24*** where it is again fairly clear that everyone received the message of the words via his own experience.]]

... But the voice of the Lord, that is, the voice created for that purpose, which was *understood* to include the diverse commandments, was only heard once [[Understood by whom? The whole people? But then it contradicts all of the preceding....?]] ... When the people heard this voice their soul left them; and *in this voice they perceived* the first two commandments. [[?!?]] It must, however, be noticed *that the people did not understand the voice in the same degree as Moses did*. [[But some understanding they did have?]] ... it is impossible for any person to expound the revelation on Mount Sinai more fully than our Sages have done, since it is one of the secrets of the Law. *It is very difficult to have a true conception of the events, for there has never been before, nor will there ever be again, anything like it. Note it.*”

II:34 All prophets other than Moses receive prophecy through an angel.

II:35 All prophecy discussed in the Guide excludes that of Moses. “The general distinction between the wonders of Moses and those of other prophets is this: The wonders wrought by prophets, or for them, are witnessed by a few individuals.... And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, etc., in all the signs and the wonders, etc., in the sight of all Israel.” Two things are here mentioned together; namely, that there will not arise a prophet that will perceive as Moses perceived, or a prophet that will do as he did; then it is pointed out that the signs were made in the presence of Pharaoh, all his servants and all his land, the opponents of Moses, and also in the presence of all the Israelites, his followers.”

The miracle of Joshua stopping the sun was not universally witnessed [[!]], and the day was perceived as being as long as the longest summer day.

II:36 “PROPHECY is, in truth and reality, an emanation sent forth by the Divine Being through the medium of the Active Intellect, in the first instance to man's rational faculty, and then to his imaginative faculty; it is the highest degree and greatest perfection man can attain: it consists in the most Perfect development of the imaginative faculty. Prophecy is a faculty that cannot in any way be found in a person, or acquired by man, through a culture of his mental and moral faculties: for even if these latter were as good and perfect as possible, they would be of no avail, unless they were combined with the highest natural excellence of the imaginative faculty.... Part of the functions of the imaginative faculty is, as you well know, to retain impressions by the senses, to combine them, and chiefly to form images” There follows a discussion of dreaming and visions, and the natural conditions necessary for the ideal development of the imagination. “We have thus described three kinds of perfection: mental perfection acquired by training, perfection of the natural constitution of the imaginative faculty, and moral perfection produced by the suppression of every thought of bodily pleasures, and of every kind of foolish or evil ambition...Moses... he did not receive prophetic inspiration through the medium of the imaginative faculty, but directly through the intellect.”

II:37 . “In some cases the influence of the [Active] Intellect reaches only the logical and not the imaginative faculty; ... : this is the condition of wise men or philosophers. If,

however, the imaginative faculty is naturally in the most perfect condition, this influence may, ..., reach both his logical and his imaginative faculties: this is the case with prophets. But it happens sometimes that the influence only reaches the imaginative faculty on account of the insufficiency of the logical faculty, arising either from a natural defect, or from a neglect in training. This is the case with statesmen, lawgivers,[[!]] diviners, charmers, and men that have true dreams..." Different levels of wisdom.

I:38 Levels of prophecy. "The prophets must have had these two forces, courage and intuition, highly developed, and these were still more strengthened when they were under the influence of the Active Intellect.... Again, through the excellence of their intuitive faculty, they could quickly foretell the future... The true prophets undoubtedly conceive ideas that result from premisses which human reason could not comprehend by itself... It is through the intellect that the influence reaches the imaginative faculty"

II:39 "WE have given the definition of prophecy, stated its true characteristics, and shown that the prophecy of Moses our Teacher was distinguished from that of other prophets; we will now explain that this distinction alone qualified him for the office of proclaiming the Law, a mission without a parallel in the history from Adam to Moses, or among the prophets who came after him; it is a principle in our faith that there will never be revealed another Law. Consequently we hold that there has never been, nor will there ever be, any other divine Law but that of Moses our Teacher."

"There were prophets before Moses, as the patriarchs Shem, Eber, Noah, Methushelah, and Enoch, but of these none said to any portion of mankind that God sent him to them and commanded him to convey to them a certain message or to prohibit or to command a certain thing..... Even when it was commanded that he [Avrohom], his sons, and his servants should be circumcised, he fulfilled that commandment, but he did not address his fellow-men prophetically on this subject."

The torah as law is perfect – balanced. We should only evaluate the relation of the law to those people who are appropriately balanced in their lives.

II:40 Man is naturally social, and is the highest form in creation [but not the purpose of the whole since the spheres are higher, more noble etc – see below.!!]]. Therefore man is the combination of the most disparate elements and therefore men vary more than the individual of other classes. Therefore the Torah must use general rules that will fit different individual only approximately – that does not detract from its perfection. The Torah is therefore appropriate to nature though not of natural origin.

Human communities need leaders in order to perfect themselves, so rulers naturally arise. The rulers themselves and their laws contain various benefits and shortcomings. But "You will also find laws which, in all their rules, aim, as the law just mentioned, at the improvement of the material interests of the people: but, besides, tend to improve the state of the faith of man, to create first correct notions of God, and of angels, and to lead

then the people, by instruction and education, to an accurate knowledge of the Universe: this education comes from God; these laws are divine.”

II:41 Different levels of prophecy. “There are four different ways in which Scripture relates the fact that a divine communication was made to the prophet. (1) The prophet relates that he heard the words of an angel in a dream or vision; (2) He reports the words of the angel without mentioning that they were perceived in a dream or vision, assuming that it is well known that prophecy can only originate in one of the two ways," In a vision I will make myself known unto him, in a dream I will speak unto him" (Num. xii. 6). (3) The prophet does not mention the angel at all; he says that God spoke to him, but he states that he received the message in a dream or a vision. (4) He introduces his prophecy by stating that God spoke to him, or told him to do a certain thing, or speak certain words, but he does not explain that he received the message in a dream or vision, because he assumes that it is well known, and has been established as a principle that no prophecy or revelation originates otherwise than in a dream or vision, and through an angel.... but the phrase," And Elohim (an angel) came to a certain person in the dream of night," does not indicate a prophecy [[!!]], and the person mentioned in that phrase is not a prophet; the phrase only informs us that the attention of the person was called by God to a certain thing, and at the same time that this happened at night. For just as God may cause a person to move in order to save or kill another person, so He may cause, according to His will, certain things to rise in man's mind in a dream by night.... Onkelos makes the distinction dear; he translates, in the last two instances, *ata memar min kodam adonai*," a word came from the Lord," and not *ve-itgeli*," and the Lord appeared." “

II:42 “if the fact that an angel has been heard is only mentioned at the end, you may rest satisfied that the whole account from the beginning describes a prophetic vision. ... Do not imagine that an angel is seen or his word heard otherwise than in a prophetic vision or prophetic dream,” This is the very controversial idea that many long sequences of action were only perceived in visions or dreams – examples in the text.

II:43-4 Varieties of dreams and visions, and allegorical elements in visions. Different speakers addressing the prophet.

II:45 Degrees of prophets, starting with only colloquial use of the term. [And note that prophecy may be at any frequency.]

“(1) The first degree of prophecy consists in the divine assistance which is given to a person, and induces and encourages him to do something good and grand...(2) The second degree is this : A person feels as if something came upon him, and as if he had received a new power that encourages him to speak. He treats of science, or composes hymns, exhorts his fellow-men, discusses political and theological problems; all this he does while awake, and in the full possession of his senses. Such a person is said to speak by the holy spirit.....(3) The third class is the lowest [class of *actual prophets*, i.e.) of those who introduce their speech by the phrase," And the word of the Lord came unto me," or a similar phrase. The prophet sees an allegory in a dream-under those conditions

which we have mentioned when speaking of real prophecy -- and in the prophetic dream itself the allegory is interpreted. (4) The prophet hears in a prophetic dream something clearly and distinctly, but does not see the speaker. (5) A person addresses the prophet in a dream (6) An angel speaks to him in a dream; (7) In a prophetic dream it appears to the prophet as if God spoke to him (8) Something presents itself to the prophet in a prophetic vision; he sees allegorical figures (9) The prophet hears words in a prophetic vision; (10) The prophet sees a man that speaks to him in a prophetic vision: (11) He sees an angel that speaks to him in the vision”

Explanation of description of prophet hearing G-d speak.

II:46 Many events in the lives of prophets which the verses seem to describe as real physical events were really experienced by the prophet in a vision or dream.

II:47 There are many exaggerations in verses [including Chumash] – cities walled to the heavens, etc. But dimensions of Og can be taken literally. The exceptionally long lives were literally true, whether due to natural causes or miracle. Figurative phrases throughout the prophets – use reason to discover them since they cannot be literally true.

II:48 “It is clear that everything produced must have an immediate cause which produced it; that cause again a cause, and so on, till the First Cause, viz., the will and decree of God is reached. The prophets therefore omit sometimes the intermediate causes, and ascribe the production of an individual thing directly to God, saying that God has made it. ... As regards the immediate causes of things produced, it makes no difference whether these causes consist in substances, physical properties, freewill, or chance-by freewill [[bechira]] I mean that of man -- or even in the will of another living being. The prophets [omit them and] ascribe the production directly to God and use such phrases as, God has done it, commanded it, or said it: in all such cases the verbs "to say," "to speak," "to command," "to call," and "to send" are employed. What I desired to state in this chapter is this : According to the hypothesis and theory accepted, it is God that gave will [[ratzon]] to dumb animals, freewill [[bechira]] to the human being, and natural properties to everything; And God spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah" (ii. 11). The act is ascribed to God, because He gave the fish the will, and not because He made it a prophet or endowed it with a prophetic spirit.”

III:Introduction The mysteries of maaseh merkava – although they are clear to the philosopher [[?!]] – must be communicated only by hints. Rambam says the knowledge of this subject was entirely lost and he is only speculating without divine inspiration.

III:1 The four faces are of people who look like animals.

III:2 Form of the chayos –joined below and separated above - and their motion – in the direction of the face. They run and return like lightening around the whole world. They fulfill the divine will. The ofanim are below and reflect the motion of the chayos. The

body of the ofanim is described are covered with ayniyim = eyes, or colors, or likenesses of things. They move in straight lines. [[Perhaps chayos = form and ofanim = matter.]]

III:3 Chayos and ofanim are angels; chayos = cheruvim. Bodily description of the ofanim – flesh, hands and wings, but no bodily form.

III:4 Ofanim = heavenly spheres. “You will not find it strange that I mention the explanation of jonathan, son of Uzziel, whilst I gave a different explanation myself: for you will find many of the wise men and the commentators differ sometimes from him in the interpretation of words and in many things respecting the prophets. Why should it be otherwise in these profound matters ? Besides, I do not decide in favour of my interpretation. It is for you to learn both-the whole of his explanation, from what I have pointed out to you, and also my own opinion. God knoweth which of the two explanations is in accordance with that which the prophet intended to say.” [[Against multiple true interp[retations – how general is the rejection?]]

III:5 Three visions: ofanim, chayos and the man above the chayos. The tana'im in the Mishna discuss the exact extent of the portion that can be taught. [[So the tana'im were familiar with the text and its hidden meaning, and Rambam credits them with this.]]

III:6 “THE sublime and great subject which Ezekiel by prophetic impulse began to teach us in the description of the Mercabah, is exactly the same which Isaiah taught us in general outlines, because he did not require all the detail.”

III:7 Time and place of visions is important. The qualifier “likeness” is used for the chayos and the heavens above them, but not for the ofanim. Variations in the appearance of the chayos. The rainbow. Chashmal = speech without sound. The glory of G-d is not identical to G-d. [[...in this context.]] End of discussion of maaseh merkava.

III:8 General discussion of the negative effect upon man of being composed [in part] of chomer. [[Following maaseh merkava since (one of) its subject(s) was form and matter?]]

Destruction of transient bodies due to their matter – forms are indestructible. Man’s sicknesses and deformities are a result of his matter, as are all his sins. All his merits are due to his form. [[For Rambam form of man = intellect.]] “it was impossible, according to the wisdom of God, that substance should exist without form, or any of the forms of the bodies without substance, [[Note the limitation to “forms of bodies” – the angels are form without matter.]] and it was necessary that the very noble form of man, which is the image and likeness of God, as has been shown by us, should be joined to the substance of dust and darkness, the source of all defect and loss. [[“Necessary” for some purpose; after death the soul will in fact exist without connection to matter.]] For these reasons the Creator gave to the form of man power, rule, and dominion over the substance” General denigration of the bodily desires, needs and function. “His aim must be the aim of man as man, viz., the formation of ideas, and nothing else. The best and sublimest among them is the idea which man forms of God, angels, and the rest of the creation according to his

capacity. Such men are always with God, and of them it is said, "Ye are princes, and all of you are children of the Most High" (Ps. lxxxii. 6). This is man's task and purpose."

Thoughts of sin are worse than [the physical aspects of] the sin itself since the former corrupt the noblest part of man. Detailed description of the elevation above the body of the man who lives by his intellect. Hebrew is called the holy language since it has not explicitly terms for disgraceful bodily functions.

III:9 "THE corporeal element in man is a large screen and partition that prevents him from perfectly perceiving abstract ideals: this would be the case even if the corporeal element were as pure and superior as the substance of the spheres; how much more must this be the case with our dark and opaque body.... Thus the prophets frequently hint at the existence of a partition between God and us. They say He is concealed from us in vapours, in darkness, in mist, or in a thick cloud: or use similar figures to express that on account of our bodies we are unable to comprehend His essence." [[So why do the verses misleadingly describe G-d as hidden?]]

III:10 The absence of a property in a thing is a real condition and can be said to be caused by removing the property from the thing or by creating the thing in a condition lacking the property or by failing to preserve the property. Thus G-d creates darkness and evil [both being privations]. "Borei" is used for creation from nothing. "After this explanation you must recall to memory that, as has been proved, the [so-called] evils are evils only in relation to a certain thing, and that which is evil in reference to a certain existing thing, either includes the nonexistence of that thing or the non-existence of some of its good conditions. **The proposition has therefore been laid down in the most general terms, "All evils are negations.** Thus for man death is evil: death is his non-existence." [[Even though after death the soul exists eternally without the body – is that not the man!?!]]

"After these propositions, it must be admitted as a fact that it cannot be said of God that He directly creates evil, or He has the direct intention to produce evil: this is impossible. His works are all perfectly good. He only produces existence, and all existence is good: whilst evils are of a negative character, and cannot be acted upon. Evil can only be attributed to Him in the way we have mentioned. He creates evil only in so far as He produces the corporeal element such as it actually is: it is always connected with negatives, and is on that account the source of all destruction and all evil. Those beings that do not possess this corporeal element are not subject to destruction or evil: consequently the true work of God is all good, since it is existence. The book which enlightened the darkness of the world says therefore," And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). Even the existence of this corporeal element, low as it in reality is, because it is the source of death and all evils, is likewise good for the permanence of the Universe and the continuation of the order of things, so that one thing departs and the other succeeds... In Bereshit Rabba (chap. i.) the same idea is expressed thus:" No evil comes down from above."

III:11 The great evils of the world are due to ignorance and false opinions. Therefore the prophet says that at the end of days when knowledge of G-d will fill the world there will be peace and good.

III:12 General discussion of the fact that the good of the world is much greater than the evil, and the consequence of avoiding the opposite false opinion for one's conception of G-d and providence. One contributing factor is that "The whole mankind at present in existence, and a fortiori, every other species of animals, form an infinitesimal portion of the permanent universe."

"I explain this theory in the following manner. The evils that befall an are of three kinds :

- (1) The first kind of evil is that which is caused to man by the circumstance that he is subject to genesis and destruction, or that he possesses a body. [[And he explained above (in very genal terms) the good of having transient beings composed of form and matter, and mentioned above that "it was necessary that the very noble form of man, which is the image and likeness of God, as has been shown by us, should be joined to the substance of dust and darkness, the source of all defect and loss".... (2) The second class of evils comprises such evils as people cause to each other,... (3) The third class of evils comprises those which every one causes to himself by his own action. This is the largest class, [[including both injurious actions and bad character traits]] Observe how Nature proves the correctness of this assertion. The more necessary a thing is for living beings, the more easily it is found and the cheaper it is: the less necessary it is, the rarer and dearer it is."

III:13 The purpose of creation [[very difficult discussion]].

"INTELLIGENT persons are much perplexed when they inquire into the purpose of the Creation. I will now show how absurd this question is, according to each one of the different theories [above-mentioned]. An agent that acts with intention must have a certain ulterior object in that which he performs.... the being which has absolute existence, which has never been and win never be without existence, is not in need of an agent.... The question," What is the purpose thereof ?" cannot be asked about anything which is not the product of an agent; therefore we cannot ask what is the purpose of the existence of God. He has not been created.... that is to say, (1) a final cause must exist for everything that owes its existence to an intelligent being: but (2) for that which is without a beginning, a final cause need not be sought, [[Note that (1) does not imply (2) – compare Plato.]]. After this explanation you will understand that there is no occasion to seek the final cause of the whole Universe, neither according to our theory of the Creation, [[because we do not know G-d's purposes – see below]] nor according to the theory of Aristotle, who assumes the Eternity of the Universe. [[(2)]] For according to Aristotle, who holds that the Universe has not had a beginning, an ultimate final cause cannot be sought even for the various parts of the Universe [[This does not seem to follow from the fact that the universe has no beginning – maybe the fact that all is due to necessity fills the gap – and maybe that fact contributes to the lack of purpose for the universe as a whole – that would distinguish Aristotle from Plato.]] Aristotle

considers all this as the result of a permanent order of things. Natural Philosophy investigates into the object of everything in Nature, but it does not treat of the ultimate final cause, of which we speak in this chapter. It is a recognized fact in Natural Philosophy that everything in Nature has its object, or its final cause, which is the most important of the four causes,... The existence of such a final cause in the various parts of Nature has compelled philosophers to assume the existence of a primal cause apart from Nature; it is called by Aristotle the intellectual or divine cause, and this cause creates one thing for the purpose of another. [[Since purpose only exists with respect to an intelligent agent who acts for that purpose.]] Those who acknowledge the truth will accept as the best proof for the Creation the fact that everything in Nature serves a certain purpose, so that one thing exists for the benefit of another; this fact is supported by numerous instances, and shows that there is design in Nature; but the existence of design in Nature cannot be imagined unless it be assumed that Nature has been produced. [[Note validation of argument from design.]]... the ultimate purpose [in these productions] is to arrive at perfection. [[And not mere existence is the purpose – contrast above.]] Now it is dear that man is the most perfect being formed of matter; he is the last and most perfect of earthly beings, and in this respect it can truly be said that all earthly things exist for man,... But of those who accept our theory that the whole Universe has been created from nothing, some hold that the inquiry after the purpose of the Creation is necessary, and assume that the Universe was only created for the sake of man's existence, that he might serve God. Everything that is done they believe is done for man's sake; even the spheres move only for his benefit, in order that his wants might be supplied. The literal meaning of some passages in the books of the prophets greatly support this idea. [[Note that strictly the Rambam is not opposing the idea that the creation has a purpose – that would be implied that G-d is an intelligent agent; he is opposing the necessity of our inquiring after that purpose. The inquiry requires in addition to the existence of the purpose our competence to conduct the inquiry....]]” First, If A can exist without B then B’s existence cannot be explained as serving as a means for A – let A = man and B = the heavens. Second, what is the purpose of serving G-d? We will have to say it was G-d’s wisdom or His will which gives no answer. [[So again, if the answer is wisdom, there is a purpose, but we cannot know it. Further, it seems that without knowledge of the ultimate purpose there is no knowledge of purpose – what is wrong with intermediate purposes?]] then he says that chazal imply that it is His will [[and not wisdom?]] which excludes a final cause altogether. [[This finally sounds like there is no purpose at all. See I:69 where it seems that his view is that wilol is correct and wisdom is wrong.]]

“I consider therefore the following opinion as most correct according to the teaching of the Bible, and best in accordance with the results of philosophy [[note the order]]; namely, that the Universe does not exist for man's sake, *but that each being exists for its own sake, and not because of some other thing. Thus we believe in the Creation, and yet need not inquire what purpose is served by each species of the existing things, because we assume that God created all parts of the Universe by His will; some for their own sake, and some for the sake of other beings, [[why does this not contradict *?]] that include their own purpose in themselves. In the same manner as it was the will of God that man should exist, so it was His will that the heavens with their stars should exist, that

there should be angels, and each of these beings is itself the purpose of its own existence. When anything can only exist provided some other thing has previously existed, [[This too should contradict *]] God has caused the latter to precede it; as, e.g., sensation precedes comprehension.” Nowhere do verses imply the purpose of creation. Even the heavenly bodies – it is only stated that they were created in such a way as to be able to perform those functions. It is absurd to think that stars, spheres and angels [= intelligences] were created to serve man since they are higher and more noble than man. Many verses describe the inferiority of man.

III:14 The enormity of the heavens show how far we are from understanding G-d, [[And hence how little we could understand His purpose...?]] and how absurd it is to think the heavens are for our sake – all the more so for the intelligences. It is no argument to say that maybe the heavens exist for the whole of mankind: that would apply if the objection were only a matter of physical size or number. But since the objection depends upon comparison of quality of essence, numbers do not count. “In short, this question supports our belief in the Creation; and this is the principal object of this chapter.” [[?!? Maybe via his reasoning above that anything which has no order and therefore is not natural is consistent with creation and therefore creation is the best explanation? And why is this the subject of the chapter?]]

“You must, however, not expect that everything our Sages say respecting astronomical matters should agree with observation, for mathematics were not fully developed in those days: and their statements were not based on the authority of the Prophets, but on the knowledge which they either themselves possessed or derived from contemporary men of science. But I will not on that account denounce what they say correctly in accordance with real fact, as untrue or accidentally true. On the contrary, whenever the words of a person can be interpreted in such a manner that they agree with fully established facts, it is the duty of every educated and honest man to do so.”

III:15 The nature of the impossible. “THAT which is impossible has a permanent and constant property, which is not the result of some agent, and cannot in any way change, and consequently we do not ascribe to God the power of doing what is impossible. ... all philosophers consider that it is impossible for one substratum to have at the same moment two opposite properties... Likewise it is impossible that God should produce a being like Himself, or annihilate, corporify, or change Himself.”

“I wonder whether this gate of research is open, so that all may freely enter, and whilst one imagines a thing and considers it possible, another is at liberty to assert that such a thing is impossible by its very nature: or whether the gate is closed and guarded by certain rules, so that we are able to decide with certainty whether a thing is physically impossible. I should also like to know, in the latter case, whether imagination or reason has to examine and test objects as to their being possible or not; likewise how things imagined, and things conceived intellectually, are to be distinguished from each other. For it occurs that we consider a thing as physically possible, and then some one objects, or we ourselves fear that our opinion is only the result of imagination, and not that of

reason. In such a case it would be desirable to ascertain whether there exists some faculty to distinguish between imagination and intellect, [and if so,] whether this faculty is different from both, or whether it is part of the intellect itself to distinguish between intellectual and imaginary objects. All this requires investigation, but it does not belong to the theme of this chapter. “ [[Note that this subject is still very difficult for philosophy!!!]]

III:16 The problem of evil according to the philosophers: Either G-d is ignorant of events in the world, or he knows them – and then either 1. He manages them well, or 2. He is too weak to manage them or 3. He neglects them as unworthy [which implies He is evil]. But 1 is contradicted by the evil we observe, and 2 and 3 are inadmissible for G-d. Hence G-d must be ignorant. This result is false and impious!!

Philosophical objection: concluding that He is ignorant is worse than His being weak or neglecting – so what they sacrifice is greater than what they saved. So they sought reason why His knowledge is impossible and hence not a sacrifice: knowledge of individual is via the senses and He has no senses; individuals are infinite in number and cannot be known; individuals change and so knowledge of them implies change; and He cannot know the future since the future does not know exist so it is not a possible object of knowledge now and knowledge of the possibility of a thing is not knowledge of its actuality. All this is nonsense. “In short, you see that if these philosophers would find human affairs managed according to rules laid down by the common people, they would not venture or presume to speak on this subject.”

III:17 Divine Providence – four non-Jewish theories.

1. Atheist [including Jews – see Jer. 5:12]: no G-d, hence no divine providence – all is due to chance. Refuted by Aristotle via the order in nature. [[Note argument from design.]]

2. Aristotle: That which is ordered/rule governed/lawful is the result of providence = nature and not subject to change. The disordered affairs of our world are due to chance. This is the view of heretics who say G-d has abandoned the earth.

3. [Contradicts 2 - Ashariyah] – nothing is due to chance – all is ordered/rule governed/lawful and hence the result of providence. Every individual event is the result of a divine will that that event should happen. If there be an injustice, then that is G-d’s will. All events are predestined, hence there is no reason for commandments or reward and punishment. There is no final cause for G-d’s wills. [[Do these last two follow from the premise that there is no chance or is this an independent element in their view?]]

4. Mu’tazila: Man has free will – hence commandments and reward and punishment are appropriate. G-d’s actions are from wisdom and just. G-d knows and exercises providence over individual events. Absurdities: bad conditions of man and animals have to be accepted as good for them, even in future life for animals! They even contradicted

themselves in that they believe that G-d knows everything and that man has free will. [[!!!So we see that Rambam held the contradiction to be impossible to solve – hence his explanation is to deny any description to G-d and hence avoid asserting knowledge.]]

5. The Torah – (a) prophetic books and sages; (b) later Jewish authors; (c) Rambam's own theory. [[How does/can (c) differ from (a)?]]

Conditions for each of (a)-(c). It is G-d's will that man has complete free will [unlike animals that move through will, but not free – note mistake in Friedlander's translation.] Wrong cannot be ascribed to G-d in any sense – **all the goods and evils of man individually and collectively are due to justice. This applies to each and every pleasure and pain.** "They clearly say:" There is no death without sin, no sufferings without transgression." (B. T. Shabbath, 55a.) " [[Note that Rambam decides the machlokes in the gemora in a matter of hashkafa.]]

(a): "Our Sages declare it wherever opportunity is given, that the idea of God necessarily implies justice; that He will reward the most pious for all their pure and upright actions, although no direct commandment was given them through a prophet; and that He will punish all the evil deeds of men, although they have not been prohibited by a prophet, **if common sense warns against** them, as e.g., injustice and violence... he who does a good thing without being commanded, receives nevertheless his reward" [[This last is aino metzuveh v'oseh – how is this related to the previous?]] The idea of sufferings of love taught by some sages is supported by no verse. [[And Rambam clearly rejects that gemora – on the grounds that it is an individual opinion.]]

[[What happened to (b)?]]

(c): "My opinion on this principle of Divine Providence I will now explain to you. In the principle which I now proceed to expound I do not rely on demonstrative proof, but on my conception of the spirit of the Divine Law, and the writings of the Prophets. The principle which I accept is far less open to objections, and is more reasonable than the opinions mentioned before. [[And so it is philosophically acceptable.]] It is this: In the lower or sublunary portion of the Universe Divine Providence does not extend to the individual members of species except in the case of mankind. It is only in this species that the incidents in the existence of the individual beings, their good and evil fortunes, are the result of justice, in accordance with the words, "For all His ways are judgment." But I agree with Aristotle as regards all other living beings, [[But note that he disagrees with Aristotle with respect to individual people.]] and a fortiori as regards plants and all the rest of earthly creatures. For I do not believe that it is through the interference of Divine Providence that a certain leaf drops [from a tree], nor do I hold that when a certain spider catches a certain fly, that this is the direct result of a special decree and will of God in that moment; [[It is not clear whether Rambam is denying control, or just that the event is an end – see next chapter for these two conceptions.]] Divine Providence is connected with Divine intellectual influence, and the same beings which are benefited by the latter so as to become intellectual, and to comprehend things comprehensible to rational beings, are

also under the control of Divine Providence, which examines all their deeds in order to reward or punish them. It may be by mere chance that a ship goes down with all her contents, as in the above-mentioned instance, or the roof of a house falls upon those within; but it is not due to chance, according to our view, that in the one instance the men went into the ship, or remained in the house in the other instance: it is due to the will of God, and is in accordance with the justice of His judgments, the method of which our mind is incapable of understanding. I have been induced to accept this theory by the circumstance that I have not met in any of the prophetic books with a description of God's Providence otherwise than in relation to human beings.... All that is mentioned of the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a perfect proof that Divine Providence extends to every man individually... Our opinion is not contradicted by Scriptural passages like the following: "He giveth to the beast his food" (Ps. cxlvii. 9)... All these passages refer to Providence in relation to species, and not to Providence in relation to individual animals... There is a rule laid down by our Sages that it is directly prohibited in the Law to cause pain to an animal, and is based on the words: "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass?" etc. (Num. xxii. 32). But the object of this rule is to make us perfect; that we should not assume cruel habits: and that we should not uselessly cause pain to others: that, on the contrary, we should be prepared to show pity and mercy to all living creatures, except when necessity demands the contrary:... I do not ascribe to God ignorance of anything or any kind of weakness; I hold that Divine Providence is related and closely connected with the intellect, because Providence can only proceed from an intelligent being, from a being that is itself the most perfect Intellect. Those creatures, therefore, which receive part of that intellectual influence, will become subject to the action of Providence in the same proportion as they are acted upon by the Intellect."

III:18 Divine providence in the sense of protection. Species have no extra-mental existence [[nominalism – note this, especially with respect to his acceptance of providence for the existence of species.]] "the result of the existing Divine influence, that reaches mankind through the human intellect, is identical with individual intellects really in existence, with which, e.g., Zeid, Amr, Kaled and Bekr, are endowed." [[?]] the greater the share is which a person has obtained of this Divine influence, on account of both his physical predisposition and his training, the greater must also be the effect of Divine Providence upon him, **for** [[?]] the action of Divine Providence is proportional to the endowment of intellect, as has been mentioned above. The relation of Divine Providence is therefore not the same to all men; the greater the human perfection a person has attained, the greater the benefit he derives from Divine Providence. This benefit is very great in the case of prophets, and varies according to the degree of their prophetic faculty: as it varies in the case of pious and good men according to their piety and uprightness. "[[So both intellectual perfection and moral perfection affect the extent of divine providence.]] ... Consider how the action of Divine Providence is described in reference to every incident in the lives of the patriarchs [[i.e. protection]]... Now consider how by this method of reasoning we have arrived at the truth taught by the Prophets, that every person has his individual share of Divine Providence in proportion to his perfection. For philosophical research leads to this conclusion, if we assume, as has been mentioned above, that Divine Providence is in each case proportional to the person's

intellectual development. It is wrong to say that Divine Providence extends only to the species, and not to individual beings, as some of the philosophers teach. For only individual beings have real existence, and individual beings are endowed with Divine Intellect; Divine Providence acts, therefore, upon these individual beings.

III:19 G-d is perfect in every respect, including omniscience, despite the existence of evil. "He that planted the ear –shall He not hear? He that formed the eye shall he not see?" This means: Since he made the ear and eye, He must understand the senses of hearing and vision, and thus must possess all the knowledge that those senses can deliver. [[Does this last follow? Or is this just a plausible reading of David's meaning?]] the philosophical objections to G-d's knowledge are the result of our inability to understand His existence and nature.

III:20-1 G-d's knowledge [[difficult discussion]]. Philosophical difficulties with G-d's knowledge of future, infinity, species, transient things. But His "knowledge" = His essence which we cannot know; we use the terms "knowledge", "intention" and "management" are only homonyms and completely not understood with respect to G-d. Thus the many verses asserting G-d's omniscience cannot be opposed by philosophical objections which apply only to the knowledge we know. "THERE is a great difference between the knowledge which the producer of a thing possesses concerning it, and the knowledge which other persons possess concerning the same thing... He fully knows His unchangeable essence, and has thus a knowledge of all that results from any of His acts.... These sublime and profound themes admit of no proof whatever, neither according to our opinion who believe in the teaching of Scripture, nor according to the philosophers who disagree and are much divided on this question. In all questions that cannot be demonstrated, we must adopt the method which we have adopted in this question about God's Omniscience. [[But when demonstration is possible we must follow it.]]

III:22 The book of Job is most probably a fiction.

"And the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the adversary came also among them." Such a phrase is only used in reference to one that comes without being expected or invited; he only comes among others whose coming has been sought. The adversary is then described as going to and fro on the earth, and walking up and down thereon. He is in no relation to the beings above, and has no place among them.... whatever evils and misfortunes befell Job as regards his property, children, and health, were all caused by this adversary... Job, as well as his friends, were of opinion that God Himself was the direct agent of what happened, and that the adversary was not the intermediate cause. [[What difference does this make? Perhaps: if Satan is the intermediary cause then the events are merely means to some other end, and then one cannot infer anything about G-d's justice without knowing the end. But if G-d is the immediate cause then the events must be the purpose and hence one can infer G-d's purposes from them?]] It is remarkable in this account that wisdom is not ascribed to Job... his misfortunes are enumerated in the same order as they rank in man's estimation

[property, children, personal physical suffering]... Now consider that the phrase, "to present themselves before the Lord," is used in reference to the sons of God, both the first and the second times, but in reference to the adversary, who appeared on either occasion among them and in their number, this phrase is not used the first time, whilst in his second appearance" the adversary also came among them to present himself before the Lord."...[[Here is a far speculation: first time presents suffering vs. faith – no new development; second time designed to let Iyov achieve goal – see next chapter – which would be great chesed to Iyov – he would have been greater than Avrohom! – and since this is chesed, this is a direct purpose of G-d...]] [These words] imply that they are beings who are forced by God's command to do what He desires... The relation of the sons of God is more constant and more permanent. The adversary has also some relation to the Universe, but it is inferior to that of the sons of God... he has no power over the soul [[because the soul can be attached to G-d – see next chapter]] ... It designates that element in man that survives him; it is this Portion over which the adversary has no power.... The adversary (satan), evil inclination (yezer ha-ra'), and the angel of death, are one and the same being.... he undoubtedly turns us away from the way of truth, and leads us astray in the way of error [[speculation: free will implies the permanence of temptation; but accusation and death are due to sin and hence not permanent and necessary – that accounts for the duality in the roles of the satan as sometimes being among the servants of G-d and sometimes not]] [[he misleads by representing the goods of this world as the only goods – vs. next chapter – and when they are withheld the problem of job results]] . According to our Sages the evil inclination, the adversary (satan), and the angel [of death], are undoubtedly identical; and the adversary being called "angel," because he is among the sons of God, and the good inclination being in reality an angel [[so satan is only *called* "angel" because he serves a divine purpose [see above] whereas good inclination *really is* an angel; perhaps satan = chomer which is temporary in man since only the soul survives? And this is why satan has no control of the soul?]]

III:23 "job and his friends, agreed that the misfortune of job was known to God, and that it was God that caused job's suffering. They further agree that God does no wrong, and that no injustice can be ascribed to Him. [[This is what sets up the problem – had they known the real cause of the suffering was satan that would have prevented the problem – see previous chapter]]... job then explains that there is no hope after death, so that the cause [of the misfortune of the righteous man] is nothing else but entire neglect on the part of God.... The words of God are justified, as I will show, by the fact that job abandoned his first very erroneous opinion, and himself proved that it was an error. As soon as he had acquired a true knowledge of God, he confessed that there is undoubtedly true felicity in the knowledge of God; it is attained by all who acquire that knowledge, and no earthly trouble can disturb it. [[This may be the key to the whole discussion – knowledge of G-d is the ultimate good, so all his losses should have caused him no reason to complain since he had all good. If he had achieved demonstrating this he would have been greater than Avrohom. See Rav Schwab.]] So long as job's knowledge of God was based on tradition and communication, and not on research, he believed that such imaginary good as is possessed in health, riches, and children, was the utmost that men

can attain: this was the reason why he was in perplexity, [[Summary of the views of the friends as common philosophical positions]] [[The real answer is in Elihu's speech which seems to contain little new...]] ... The new idea, which is peculiar to Elihu and has not been mentioned by the others, is contained in his metaphor of the angel's intercession.... His description of the method of prophecy in preceding verses is likewise new. [[not at all clear what these new ideas are or why they are relevant – speculation: the possibility of the intercession of the angel implies the sickness is a means and not an end; the various prophecies illustrate that even when G-d is the direct cause, and hence the events serves implement G-d's ends, we often cannot see that this is so [because we are ignorant of the context?] also, some words indicate that through natural phenomena G-d gives prophecy – but again not clear what the point is]] ... But the term management, when applied to God, has not the same meaning which it has when applied to us; and when we say that He rules His creatures we do not mean that He does the same as we do when we rule over other beings. This lesson is the principal object of the whole Book of Job; [[because we then know we cannot ask questions – but the what of our description of G-d in moral terms?]]... our fate will increase our love of God; [[??]]” {Maybe: true happiness = knowledge of G-d; this is invulnerable to physical suffering; how physical suffering is overcome can teach this; so suffering is good.]}

III:24 The book of Job III:22-3 [296-303] Introduction is certainly a fiction [296] place of Satan is below, unlike other angels [297][[perhaps: angels represent means; Satan is therefore an even more removed means; Satan is for the sake of FW and strict justice – that is all a distant means since it does not directly express G-d's benevolence – Satan is far from G-d and will be rebuked{but where does benevolence play a role for Rambam?}]] Job and friends thought G-d and not Satan was the source of his suffering, wisdom is not ascribed to Job [297] [[What difference does this make? Perhaps: what G-d does must be just; what an angel does may not be just – it may be a mere means to some other purpose {which leads ultimately to justice} – compare Ramchal. And that is why Job is not credited with wisdom: were he wise he would have realized that this suffering does not come from G-d = does not express the purpose of creation = Justice, but is merely a means. And perhaps the purpose is as Rav Schwab says to teach the ultimate lesson below.]] [[Or: as MM – everything that happens to a person must accord with justice, but the accounts are not settled immediately – reward/punishment may be delayed in such a way that the relationship with actions is not apparent – and the event is attributed to a direct action of G-d if the relationship is immediate]] order of suffering according to estimation of common man and no one can withstand too much bodily suffering [297] Satan = yetzer hara = malach hamves, many verses concerning Satan {perhaps Satan = matter hence vs. intellect = nefesh = form} [298-9] the key lesson: “*As soon as he had acquired a true knowledge of God, he confessed that there is undoubtedly true felicity in the knowledge of God; it is attained by all who acquire that knowledge, and no earthly trouble can disturb it. So long as job's knowledge of God was based on tradition and communication, and not on research, he believed that such imaginary good as is possessed in health, riches, and children, was the utmost that men can attain: this was the reason why he was in perplexity*” [300-1] opinions of the three friends = main positions concerning providence [301-2] the answer in the book is in the speech of Elihu

in the metaphor of the angel's intercession [302] also account of prophecy and learning through nature [302-3] principle lesson is that "management", "knowledge" "intention" etc. has no common meaning between human and Divine [303][*Perhaps because human management requires obvious relationship between action and goal/value whereas divine management does not require this*]

III:24 purpose of trials is to teach man what to do or to believe [304] "to know" = "to make known" [304] *a miracle cannot prove that which is impossible* [304] revelation at Sinai prevents later false prophets since *"If I had come as a messenger as you desired, and had told you that which had been said unto me and which you had not heard, you would perhaps consider as true what another might tell you in opposition to that which you heard from me. But it is different now, as you have heard it in the midst of the great sight."* [[So it seems that everyone heard the message at Sinai – contrast II:33.]] [*Reason that this chapter comes directly after discussion of Job – book of Job to teach the crucial lessons of nature of divine management and the true nature of human good*]

Account of the akeida. "Scripture thus tells us that whatever the Prophet perceives in a prophetic vision, he considers as true and correct and not open to any doubt; it is in his eyes like all other things perceived by the senses or by the intellect. This is proved by the consent of Abraham to slay" his only son whom he loved," as he was commanded, although the commandment was received in a dream or a vision"

III:25 actions are divided as regards their object into four classes; they are either purposeless, unimportant, in vain, or good... no intelligent person can assume that any of the actions of God can be in vain, purposeless, or unimportant. According to our view and the view of all that follow the Law of Moses, all actions of God are" exceedingly good."... it was intended by the Creator to produce in its present form everything whose existence is possible; [because existence is undoubtedly good – later in the chapter]... , most of our wise and learned men believe that the Creation was not the exclusive result of Ilis will; but Ilis wisdom, which we are unable to comprehend, made the actual existence of the Universe necessary [[Does Rambam agree with this?]]... Those who adopt this absurd idea that God's actions are utterly purposeless, and refuse to consider them as the result of Ilis wisdom, are afraid they might otherwise be compelled to admit the theory of the Eternity of the Universe,... it is not unreasonable to assume that the works of God, their existence and preceding non-existence, are the result of His wisdom, but we are unable to understand many of the ways of His wisdom in His works.

III:26 "Theologians are divided on the question whether the actions of God are the result of His wisdom, or only of His will without being intended for any purpose whatever [[note his definition of wisdom = for a purpose]]... All of us, the common people as well as the scholars, believe that there is a reason for every precept, although there are commandments the reason of which is unknown to us, and in which the ways of God's wisdom are incomprehensible [[!!!]] ... each commandment has necessarily a cause, as far as its general character is concerned, and serves a certain object; but as regards its details we hold that it has no ulterior object [[other than]]... these regulations and the like are nothing but tests for man's obedience... For as it has become necessary to eat the flesh of

animals, it was intended by the above regulations to ensure an easy death and to effect it by suitable means; whilst decapitation requires a sword or a similar instrument, the shehitah can be performed with any instrument; and in order to ensure an easy death our Sages insisted that the knife should be well sharpened. [[as against chazal that there is no reason at all for the regulations of shechita]] You must know that Divine Wisdom demanded it -- or, if you prefer, say that circumstances made it necessary-that there should be parts [of His work] which have no certain object: and as regards the Law, it appears to be impossible that it should not include some matter of this kind. [[the deduction of this statement is unclear]]”

III:27 “THE general object of the Law is twofold: the well-being of the soul, and the well-being of the body... the well-being of the soul can only be obtained after that of the body has been secured... The second perfection of man consists in his becoming **an actually intelligent being**; i.e., he knows about the things in existence all that a person perfectly developed is capable of knowing. *This second perfection certainly does not include any action or good conduct, but only knowledge, which is arrived at by speculation, or established by research.*”

III:28 **IT is necessary to bear in mind that Scripture only teaches the chief points of those true principles which lead to the true perfection of man, and only demands in general terms faith in them,, this love is only possible when we comprehend the real nature of things, and understand the divine wisdom displayed therein....** The reason of a commandment, whether positive or negative, is clear, and its usefulness evident, if it directly tends to remove injustice, or to teach good conduct that furthers the well-being of society, or to impart a truth which ought to be believed either on its own merit or as being indispensable for facilitating the removal of injustice or the teaching of good morals.

III:29 Summary of the religion of the Sabeans and others and use of their details to explain mitzvos. Abraham’s opposition to them, and teaching that only love and fear of G-d are the purpose of serving Him. “Consider what opinions people had in these days... they have been invented in imitation of the Pentateuch when it became known among the nations. The account of the Creation was heard, and it was taken entirely in its literal sense. They have done this in order that the ignorant may hear it, and be persuaded to assume the Eternity of the Universe, and to believe that the Scriptural account contained facts which happened in the manner as has been assumed by the Sabeans [[and this is one reason why we cannot take the account of creation literally in all respects]]”

[[Below I only mention some details of Rambam’s explanations of mitzvos that are important for philosophical purposes.]]

III:30 “It is frequently expressed in all parts of Scripture, that the worship of the stars would be followed by absence of rain, devastation of the land, bad times, diseases, and shortness of life. But abandonment of that worship, and the return to the service of God, would be the cause of the presence of rain, fertility of the ground, good times, health and

length of life. Thus Scripture teaches, in order that man should abandon idolatry, the reverse of that which idolatrous priests preached to the people, for, as has been shown by us, the principal object of the Law is to remove this doctrine, and to destroy its traces.

III:31 “THERE are persons who find it difficult to give a reason for any of the commandments, and consider it right to assume that the commandments and prohibitions have no rational basis whatever. They are led to adopt this theory by a certain disease in their soul. ... For they imagine that these precepts, if they were useful in any respect, and were commanded because of their usefulness, would seem to originate in the thought and reason of some intelligent being. But as things which are not objects of reason and serve no purpose, they would undoubtedly be attributed to God, because no thought of man could have produced them. According to the theory of those weak-minded persons, man is more perfect than his Creator. ... the sole object of the Law is to benefit us... All this depends on three things: opinions: morals, and social conduct... these three principles suffice for assigning a reason for every one of the Divine commandments”

III:32 Divine wisdom displayed in gradual, organized development. So the transition from the pre-Torah condition to the Torah condition was gradual – otherwise it is impossible. “Now God sent Moses to make [the Israelites] a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. xix. 6) by means of the knowledge of God.” But an immediate cessation of worship via animal sacrifices is impossible, [“it would in those days have made the same impression as a prophet would make at present if he called us to the service of God and told us in His name, that we should not pray to Him, not fast, not seek His help in time of trouble; that we should serve Him in thought, and not by any action.”] [[It seems that the last description is in fact what G-d ultimately desires – see later in this chapter “As the sacrificial service is not the primary object [of the commandments about sacrifice], whilst supplications, Prayers and similar kinds of worship are nearer to the primary object, and indispensable for obtaining it,” and later the explanation of Jeremiah declared:” For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offering or sacrifices.?!?]] so G-d instituted an extremely limited form of sacrifices [only in one place, only via kohanim, requiring extreme purity, etc.] [And if you ask why then will there be sacrifices in the time of Moshiach, the answer may be to reinforce the lessons that sacrifices taught even though the dangers that motivated sacrifices have passed – compare Rambam’s explanation of the Pesach seder even now.]] Compare requiring the generation of the exodus to die in the wilderness since they were not able to conquer the land – living in the wilderness breeds courage. This shows that G-d does not change the nature of man even by a miracle.

III:33 “IT is also the object of the perfect Law to make man reject, despise, and reduce his desires as much as is in his power..... Politeness is another virtue promoted by the Law... The Law is also intended to give its followers purity and holiness”

III:34 “IT is also important to note that the Law does not take into account exceptional circumstances; it is not based on conditions which rarely occur. Whatever the Law

teaches, whether it be of an intellectual, a moral, or a practical character, is founded on that which is the rule and not on that which is the exception:... We must consequently not be surprised when we find that the object of the Law does not fully appear in every individual;... If the Law depended on the varying conditions of man, it would be imperfect in its totality, each precept being left indefinite.”

III:35 Division of mitzvos into fourteen classes. Division into man-G-d [even though they have long-term consequences for interpersonal relations] and man-man.

III:36 Yesodei haTorah teach true principles that are demonstrable, and exhort to learn and teach which are indispensable for wisdom and right action. Prayer to G-d in time of trouble teaches divine providence. Repentance is likewise necessary since “it is impossible for man to be entirely free from error and sin; he either does not know the opinion which he has to choose, or he adopts a principle, not for its own merits, but in order to gratify his desire or passion.”

III:37 Prohibitions of idol worship are traced to the idolatrous practices of the times. Our use of seemingly magical practices is justified by the fact that they regarded them as established by experiment. The prophets repeatedly declare that the actions that idol worship require for various benefits will in fact bring the opposite result.

III:38-9 Maaser sheni for charity. Giving away trains limitation of desire for property and humility. Many laws teach mercy – except for sinners since mercy to them is cruelty to all creatures [[?]].

III:40 Damages. Generally equity is served. “The killing of an animal that has killed a human being (Exod. xxi. 28, 29) is not a punishment to the animal, as the dissenters insinuate against us, but it is a fine imposed on the owner of that animal. For the same reason the use of its flesh is prohibited... This is also the reason why a beast is killed that has been used by a human being for an immoral purpose... As a rule the investigation, the procession of the elders, the measuring, and the taking of the heifer, make people talk about it, and by making the event public, the murderer may be found out, and he who knows of him, or has heard of him, or has discovered him by any due, will now name the person that is the murderer, and as soon as a man, or even a woman or handmaid, rises up and names a certain person as having committed the murder, the heifer is not killed”

III:41 Punishments. “You must not raise an objection from our practice of imposing a fine in such cases. For we have proposed to ourselves to give here the reason for the precepts mentioned in the Law, and not for that which is stated in the Talmud... the more frequent transgressions and sins are, and the greater the probability of their being committed, the more severe must their punishment be, in order to deter people from committing them; but sins which are of rare occurrence require a less severe punishment... The object of all these laws is to make the punishment equal to the crime... Whether the punishment is great or small, the pain inflicted intense or less intense, depends on the following four conditions: 1. The greatness of the sin. 2. The

frequency of the crime. 3. The amount of temptation. 4. The facility of doing the thing secretly, and unseen and unnoticed. [Difficult discussion of mazid and shogeg and the difference between ordinary citizens, teachers of the Law and members of the Sanhedrin] Any transgression that is performed in order to demonstrate opposition to the torah is a capital crime. [[?]] Ir hanidachas is annihilated. “during the thirty days she openly keeps her religion and even continues her idolatrous practices: no interference with her faith was allowed during that time; and after all that she could not be sold, nor treated as a handmaid, if she could not be induced to accept the statutes of the Law.” [[?]]

III:42 Civil laws. “Those that are engaged in such transactions must mutually promote each other's interests: neither of the parties must strive to increase only his own profit”

III:43 Holidays. “The object of Sabbath is obvious, and requires no explanation. The rest it affords to man is known: This the Sabbath effects in addition to the perpetuation and confirmation of the grand doctrine of the Creation [[note the order!!]] [[seven days for Pesach]] For the Law always follows Nature, and in some respects brings it to perfection: for Nature is not capable of designing and thinking, whilst the Law is the result of the wisdom and guidance of God,..[[Pesach and Succos remind us of the miracles and teach the moral lesson that]] man ought to remember his evil days in his days of prosperity. He win thereby be induced to thank God repeatedly, to lead a modest and humble life.... As regards the four species ... our Sages gave a reason for their use by way of Agadic interpretation, the method of which is well known to those who are acquainted with the style of our Sages. They use the text of the Bible only as a kind of poetical language [for their own ideas], and do not intend thereby to give an interpretation of the text. As to the value of these Midrasbic interpretations, we meet with two different opinions. For some think that the Midrash contains the real explanation of the text, whilst others, finding that it cannot be reconciled with the words quoted, reject and ridicule it. ...Neither of the two classes understood it, that our Sages employ biblical texts merely as poetical expressions, the meaning of which is clear to every reasonable reader. This style was general in ancient days; all adopted it in the same way as poets [adopt a certain style]”

III:44-5 Love, Temple. Many laws are in opposition to the idol worship of the times. “Naturally the fundamental belief in prophecy precedes the belief in the Law, for without the belief in prophecy there can be no belief in the Law. But a prophet only receives divine inspiration through the agency of an angel.... In order to firmly establish this creed, God commanded [the Israelites] to make over the ark the form of two angels.... but I do not know the object of the table with the bread upon it continually, and up to this day I have not been able to assign any reason to this commandment”

III:46 Divine service. Again many laws oppose the idol worship of the times. The laws of the Pesach seder in Egypt taught the need for haste to leave Egypt with the main body of people so as to be secure against attack, and “*These temporary commandments were then made permanent, in order that we may remember what was done in those days*” *[[this seems to be an extremely important principle that can apply to many cases of continuing practices long after their original explanation has lapsed, e.g. animal*

sacrifices.]]... The greater the sin which a person had committed, the lower was the species from which the sin-offering was brought.... The above-mentioned sin-offerings further show us that when we commit a sin, we, our children, and the children of our children, require atonement for that sin by some kind of service analogous to the sin committed. [[because the offerings are in part communal? Because the offerings reduce the sinner's property so that his children will have less?]]... There is no doubt that sins cannot be carried like a burden, and taken off the shoulder of one being to be laid on that of another being. But these ceremonies are of a symbolic character... As regards the offering of wine (Num. xv. 5, seq.), I am at a loss to find a reason why God commanded it, since idolaters brought wine as an offering”

III:47 Purity. Theme of reducing desires. Our requirements are much easier to fulfill than those of the ancient idol worshippers. “The easier the diffusion of uncleanness is, the more difficult and the more retarded is its purification... The purification was effected by cedar-wood, hyssop, scarlet thread, and two birds (Lev. xiv. 4); their reason is stated in various Midrashic sayings, but the explanation does not agree with our theory. I do not know at present the reason of any of these things; nor why cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet were used in the sacrifice of the red heifer (Num. xix. 6): nor why a bundle of hyssop was commanded for the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover-lamb (Exod. Xii. 22). I cannot find any principle upon which to found an explanation why these particular things have been chosen.”

III:48 “I maintain that the food which is forbidden by the Law is unwholesome... The characteristics given in the Law (Lev. xi., and Dent. xiv.) of the permitted animals..., are in themselves neither the cause of the permission when they are present, nor of the prohibition when they are absent; but merely signs by which the recommended species of animals can be discerned from those that are forbidden.” Easy death via shechita to prevent pain to the animal. Also required to prevent psychological pain for animals – so not to kill mother and offspring on the same day, sending away the mother bird etc. “In the law about the Nazarite we notice even the prohibition," he shall eat nothing that is made of the vine tree" (Num. vi. 4), as an additional precaution, implying the lesson that man must take of wine only as much as is absolutely necessary”

III:49 Women. “Professional harlots were therefore not tolerated in Israel (Deut. xxiii. 18), because their existence would disturb the above relationship between man and man. Their children are strangers to everybody; no one knows to what family they belong; nor does any person recognize them as relatives. And this is the greatest misfortune that can befall any child or father. Another important object in prohibiting prostitution is to restrain excessive and continual lust:... . If he had been allowed to divorce her by a mere word, or by turning her out of his house, the wife would wait for some negligence [on the part of the husband], and then come out and say that she was divorced; or having committed adultery, she and the adulterer would contend that she had then been divorced.... The hire which was in those days paid to the harlot in accordance with a previous agreement, corresponds to the ketubah which in our days the husband pays to his wife when he divorces her.... The sum which the husband settles upon his wife

(ketubah) is to be treated in the same way as the wages of a hired servant.... Licence between the root and the branch, between a man and his mother, or his daughter, is outrageous... circumcision weakens the power of sexual excitement, and sometimes lessens the natural enjoyment: the organ necessarily becomes weak when it loses blood and is deprived of its covering from the beginning. [[note that the last phrase refutes the argument that adult converts do not experience reduction in pleasure]] ... It is prohibited for an Israelite" that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off" (Dent. xxiii. 2), to marry an Israelitish woman: because the sexual intercourse is of no use and of no purpose; and that marriage would be a source of ruin to her, and to him who would claim her. ... In order to create a horror of illicit marriages, a bastard was not allowed to marry an Israelitish woman (ibid. xxiii. 3): the adulterer and the adulteress were thus taught that by their act they bring upon their seed irreparable injury. [[and this apparently justifies the suffering of the child??]]... Most of the "statutes" (hukkim), the reason of which is unknown to us serve as a fence against idolatry. That I cannot explain some details of the above laws or show their use is owing to the fact that what we hear from others is not so dear as that which we see with our own eyes. [[and notice that these laws are still in force even though those religions are extinct – again compare sacrifices]]”

III:50 Seemingly useless narratives – every letter has equal infinite holiness. “Every narrative in the Law serves a certain purpose in connexion with religious teaching. It either helps to establish a principle of faith, or to regulate our actions, and to prevent wrong and injustice among men; and I will show this in each case. ... And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord" (ibid. ver. 2). It was indeed most necessary that these should be written. For miracles are only convincing to those who witnessed them; whilst coming generations, who know them only from the account given by others, may consider them as untrue. [[So does writing overcome this?]] But miracles cannot continue and last for all generations; it is even inconceivable [that they should be permanent]. [[But He says that HKBH could do permanent miracles – he just chose not to? And is his reason the same as that of Rav Dessler?]]... For this very reason Joshua cursed him who would ever build up Jericho (josh. vi. 26): the effect of the miracle was to remain for ever, so that any one who would see the wall sunk in the ground would understand that it was not in the condition of a building pulled down by human hands, but sunk through a miracle.”

III”51 Simile of the king’s castle. Order of human status: those without religion [considered non-human]; false religion [worse than the first - !!]; the ignorant who fulfill the mitzvos; scholars of the practical mitzvos; those who investigate the principles [including learning science]; those who have proved everything that can be proved [and?] have as much knowledge of G-d as is possible. “There are some who direct all their mind toward the attainment of perfection in Metaphysics, devote themselves entirely to God, exclude from their thought every other thing, and employ all their intellectual faculties in the study of the Universe, in order to derive therefrom a proof for the existence of God, and to learn in every possible way how God rules all things; they form the class of those who have entered the palace, namely, the class of prophets. [[!?!]] One of these has attained so much knowledge, and has concentrated his thoughts to such an extent in the

idea of God, that it could be said of him," And he was with the Lord forty days,... The true worship of God is only possible when correct notions of Him have previously been conceived. ..., try to approach Him and strengthen the intellect, which is the link that joins you to Him ... You must know that even if you were the wisest man in respect to the true knowledge of God, you break the bond between you and God whenever you turn entirely your thoughts to the necessary food or any necessary business; you are then not with God, and He is not with you: for that relation between you and Him is actually interrupted in those moments. ... When we have acquired a true knowledge of God, and rejoice in that knowledge in such a manner, that whilst speaking with others, or attending to our bodily wants, our mind is all that time with God; when we are with our heart constantly near God, even whilst our body is in the society of men [[the patriarchs and Moses reached this state]]... The object of all their labours was to publish the Unity of God in the world, and to induce people to love Him; and it was on this account that they succeeded in reaching that high degree; for even those [worldly] affairs were for them a perfect worship of God"

New theodicy: ***Providence watches over every rational being according to the amount of intellect which that being possesses. Those who are perfect in their perception of God, whose mind is never separated from Him, enjoy always the influence of Providence. But those who, perfect in their knowledge of God, turn their mind sometimes away from God, enjoy the presence of Divine Providence only when they meditate on God; when their thoughts are engaged in other matters, divine Providence departs from them. The absence of Providence in this case is not like its absence in the case of those who do not reflect on God at all: it is in this case less intense, because when a person perfect in his knowledge [of God] is busy with worldly matters, he has not knowledge in actuality, but only knowledge in potentiality [though ready to become actual]. This person is then like a trained scribe when he is not writing. Those who have no knowledge of God are like those who are in constant darkness and have never seen light. We have explained in this sense the words: "The wicked shall be silent in darkness" (I Sam. ii. g), whilst those who possess the knowledge of God, and have their thoughts entirely directed to that knowledge, are, as it were, always in bright sunshine; and those who have the knowledge, but are at times engaged in other themes, have then as it were a cloudy day: the sun does not shine for them on account of the cloud that intervenes between them and God. Hence it appears to me that it is only in times of such neglect that some of the ordinary evils befall a prophet or a perfect and pious man: and the intensity of the evil is proportional to the duration of those moments, or to the character of the things that thus occupy their mind.... If man frees his thoughts from worldly matters, obtains a knowledge of God in the right way, and rejoices in that knowledge, it is impossible that any kind of evil should befall him while he is with God, and God with him. When he does not meditate on God, when he is separated from God, then God is also separated from him; then he is exposed to any evil that might befall him; for it is only that intellectual link with God that secures the presence of Providence and protection from evil accidents. Hence it may occur that the perfect man is at times not happy, whilst no evil befalls those who are imperfect [wrong translation: should read] and so there are times when the pious is not focused on G-d, so he and the one who***

never achieved any focus at all both experience evils]] : in these cases what happens to them is due to chance. [[“chance” here means “absence of providential protection”]]... such a man is well guarded" Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name [[compare liturgy that stresses knowing G-d's name]]... This man is well guarded, because he hath known me, and then (bi cbashak) loved me... that these three died in the midst of the pleasure derived from the knowledge of God and their great love for Him [[note that this includes Miriam – a woman – with exquisite knowledge of G-d – compare Yesodei HaTorah 4:13.”

III:52 Living in the palace [[constant presence of] the K/king [the active intellect that is the link between us and G-d. that it is the object of all religious acts to produce in man fear of God and obedience to His word-the state of mind which we have demonstrated in this chapter for those who desire to know the truth, as being our duty to seek.... The two objects, love and fear of God, are acquired by two different means. The love is the result of the truths taught in the Law, including the true knowledge of the Existence of God; whilst fear of God is produced by the practices prescribed in the Law.”

III:53 Chesed = doing good to someone who has no claim at all; tzedaka = he has a claim via the good character of the giver; mishpat = he has a claim via zechus/din/mercy [[so mishpat not= din!!]] “He is called hasid," kind," because He created the Universe; zaddik," righteous," on account of His mercy with the weak, in providing for every living being according to its powers; and shofet," judge," on account of the relative good and the great relative evils that are decreed by God's justice as directed by His wisdom.”

III:54 The nature of wisdom. “as the truths contained in the Law are taught by way of tradition, not by a philosophical method, [therefore] the knowledge of the Law, and the acquisition of true wisdom, are treated in the books of the Prophets and in the words of our Sages as two different things; real wisdom demonstrates by proof those truths which Scripture teaches us by way of tradition.... They say of Moses, our Teacher, that he was Father in the knowledge of the Law, in wisdom and in prophecy. When Scripture says of Solomon," And he was wiser than all men" (I Kings v. 11), our Sages add," but not greater than Moses" : and the phrase," than all men," is explained to mean," than all men of his generation"... This is also the right order: we must first learn the truths by tradition, after this we must be taught how to prove them, and then investigate the actions that help to improve man's ways.”

Wisdom is the greatest value – other values are proved to be inferior [by various means]. Moral virtues only govern relationships – a man alone has no benefit from them [that is why moral character is inferior to wisdom !?!]. [[Perhaps: it is not possible that G-d created man for moral perfection since that only means one man helps another, which presupposes some other valuable project....]] the prophets agree with the philosophers in placing wisdom as the highest good.

The verse goes on to say that he who lives with the knowledge of G-d will perform acts of chesed, mishpat and tzedaka, since this is what G-d wants. [[Not clear the relationships

between the knowledge of G-d and the actions to which it leads, and why he ends with the actions.]]

Demonstration strong enough to establish eternity: II:25; III:21 In all questions that cannot be demonstrated, we must adopt the method which we have adopted in this question about God's Omniscience. [[But when demonstration is possible we must follow it.]]; see also III:24 where senses and intellect are regarded as absolutely certain.

Proof by design: II: 19,22 – lack of order in heavenly bodies is consistent with design and not with nature, and that fact is regarded as valid reason to believe in design; III: 13 - It is a recognized fact in Natural Philosophy that everything in Nature has its object, or its final cause, which is the most important of the four causes,... The existence of such a final cause in the various parts of Nature has compelled philosophers to assume the existence of a primal cause apart from Nature; it is called by Aristotle the intellectual or divine cause, and this cause creates one thing for the purpose of another. [[Since purpose only exists with respect to an intelligent agent who acts for that purpose.]] Those who acknowledge the truth will accept as the best proof for the Creation the fact that everything in Nature serves a certain purpose, so that one thing exists for the benefit of another; this fact is supported by numerous instances, and shows that there is design, III:17 - Atheist [including Jews – see Jer. 5:12]: no G-d, hence no divine providence – all is due to chance. Refuted by Aristotle via the order in nature. [[Note argument from design – since chance is not acceptable, and design is the only alternative, so there is good reason to believe in design.]]

