THE TERM "Neo-Maimonism" is coined in the same manner and for the same reason as the well-known designations—Neo-Aristotelianism, Neo-Platonism, Neo-Thomism, Neo-Kantism and Neo-Hegelianism. Strictly speaking, we should speak of Neo-Maimonideanism, but we prefer the shorter form, for the sake of convenience.

There are only so many basic positions that a thinker can assume vis-à-vis the riddle of existence. And all serious scholars are aware of the historical roots of their thoughts. So, the ends of logical clarity and historical perspective are both advanced when a contemporary movement is described as a version of a well-known historical position.

In the case of Neo-Maimonism, this policy is all the more to be commended because the "Guide of the Perplexed" served as a touchstone of philosophic speculation ever since it appeared. To the religious liberals, it was the pillar of light, blazing a bold pathway through the arid wilderness of contending passions and superstitions. To the naive and the literalists, the philosophy of Maimonides was a snare and a delusion, even when they admitted that his Code was a most precious part of the sacred tradition. In a sense, the Maimonidean controversy continued unabated into our own time. While in the thirteenth century, the question for the literalists in regard to the "Guide" was "to burn, or not to burn," the subsequent centuries rephrased the alternatives, but they continued the debate. The rise of Kabbalah and its triumph, after the expulsion from Spain, did not succeed in suppressing completely
the influence of Jewish rationalism. And every new wave of enlightenment was powerfully assisted by the momentum of the Maimonidean philosophy. If Hassidism generally scorned the "Guide," the Maskilim felt that it propelled them directly into the intellectual world of the end of the eighteenth century. Moses Mendessohn found that Maimonides prepared him to understand Spinoza, Descartes and Leibnitz. Solomon Maimon went directly from Maimonides to Kant. Several decades later, Nahman Krochmal and Samuel David Luzzatto defended opposing positions in regard to the place of Maimonides within authentic Judaism. In the past century and a half, when Jewish intellectuals were beguiled by the spirit of the times to move in different directions, drawn now to the nationalist-romanticist pole, now to the humanist-rationalist pole, it was the adequacy of the Maimonidean synthesis that they debated.

Our generation is called upon to undertake a basic reexamination of our convictions and goals. We are no longer driven by desperation to fight for sheer survival. In Israel and in the free world, we are sufficiently secure to face the ultimate questions and to take seriously Maimonides' admonition to let our ideas grow out of the facts rather than to tailor our convictions to suit our peculiar situation.

On the other hand, we cannot gainsay the obsolescence of Maimonides' picture of the cosmos, with its basic categories of Matter and Form, its four earthly elements and the ethereal substance of the heavenly bodies, its many "spheres" and "intelligences," and its deference to Aristotle's authority in regard to all matters "below the moon." Also his knowledge of comparative religion and of history was inevitably minute by our standards, though he pioneered the exploration of these themes for the understanding of the mizvot. Again, we cannot assent to his aristocratic disdain for the common people. Yet, if we transpose the living core of his thought into the structure of nature and history, as they appear to us, we arrive at a philosophy of life that is balanced and harmonious. Neo-Maimonism also harks back to Maimonides in terms of the approaches he rejected—the personalistic voluntarism of Ibn Gabirol, the ethnic romanticism of Judah Halevi, the "reductionism" of those who confined all thought within "the four ells of Halachah," the imaginative exuberance of proto-Kabbalists and even the mild, superficial rationalism of Saadia. Each one of the rejected viewpoints has its counterpart in our time. Neo-Maimonism, therefore, is definable negatively, as well as affirmatively.
TENSION AT THE HEART OF REALITY

We begin with the pathways that Maimonides disdained to follow. He conceived his task to be the resolution of the perplexities troubling the educated Jew. On the one hand, such a person could not conceive of life without the guidance of Torah and the assurance of redemption contained in it. On the other hand, he was made uneasy by the literal meaning of many verses in the Torah, which described the actions of God in crass anthropomorphic terms. M.* prefaces his mighty effort with the confession that the contradictions in Torah cannot be understood with full clarity. The wisest can only get occasional, lightning-like flashes of the truth. ("More Nebuhim," Petiha; Pines' translation, The Guide of the Perplexed [Chicago, 1963], p. 7.) Only Moses can be said to have perceived the mysteries of creation and providence in the full light of day. But, Moses is more a dogmatic than a historical figure, with the beliefs concerning him falling into the category of "necessary truths," to be discussed presently.

At this point, we call attention to the modernity of M.'s position. The modern age in philosophy was opened by Descartes, who proceeded to subject all experiences to the acid-test of total doubt. When we face the ultimate mystery of existence, we sense the tension between the polar opposites of being within ourselves. The rational points beyond the rational; the immanent feelings of holiness intimate His transcendence; the traditional accounts of God speaking to His Chosen People are somehow right, yet also far too narrow, too particularistic; since God addresses Himself to all men. In rare moments of inspiration, God speaks to those who are properly qualified, but excepting Moses, His "speech" is filtered through the thick strands of imagination. We are torn between our awareness of creaturely dependence on Him, without whose "everlasting arms" we should instantly disappear, and our rational conviction that we cannot say of Him aught that is meaningful and affirmative. Nor can we ever outgrow this state of tension. All our attempts at a synthesis are but so many words strung together, waiting to be fused into fleeting lights of meaning by bolts of lightning from above.

Is not this recognition of our human condition essentially compatible

*In this essay, we shall refer to Maimonides as M.
with the vision of reality in our time?—We no longer think of the flux of existence in terms of tiny billiard-balls in motion. Atoms, we know now, consist of many tiny particles, which can be described both as electromagnetic waves and as bits of matter. Modern physics operates in terms of fields of force, which are condensed into relatively stable structures of congealed energy. Every thing is in reality an event, a series of tremors, fixed in space, yet infinite in outreach. Should not, then, the human soul in its confrontation with the Infinite Whole of the cosmos be similarly caught in a ceaseless tension?

On a more popular plane, we recall Pascal’s famous remark—“reason which is small enough for the mind is too small for the heart; if it is big enough for the heart, it is too big for the mind.” Here, then, in simple language, is that cluster of contradictions, which we can resolve only in those moments when heart and mind join to lift us temporarily above ourselves. Yet, it is not knowledge that we glimpse in those moments, but the assurance that our inner quest for wholeness and consistency is right, in direction, if not in content. We must try again and again to understand in love and to love with understanding, for only the whole man can approach the Creator of the Whole. We are launched on an infinite road.

“SOVEREIGNTY OF REASON”

M. maintained that his “Guide” was the first effort to deal with the mysteries of Creation and Providence (maasai bereshit and maasai mer-kava). (Moreh, Petiha; Pines, p. 16.) He scorned the works of Saadia and Halevi, as being either superficial or fallacious. To him, a “philosopher” was an Aristotelian who recognized the sway of the unvarying laws of nature. Saadia associated himself with the Moslem school of Mutazila, and Halevi reflected al Ghazzali’s critique of “the philosophers.” (Moreh, 1, 71; Pines, p. 176.)

In a larger sense, Saadia and Halevi represented the “short but long road” that popular theologians prefer in all generations. Saadia’s way is that of superficial rationalism. He rejected the coarse anthropomorphism of literalists. In M.’s view, Mutazilites thought they removed materialization from their notion of God, but, they did not really, since they ascribed to Him, emotional and psychological factors. (Moreh, I, 53; Pines, p. 119.) All the references in the Torah and the Bible to physical appearances of God apply to His temporary theophanies, not
to His own Being. So, there is a "created light" or divine effulgence, which the Lord employs as a manifestation of His Presence. This luminous body called *Kavod* or *Shechinah* was seen by Isaiah and Ezekiel, by "the elders of Israel," and by some of the Sages. Similarly, the Creator formed a "created voice," which spoke in so many words to the prophets and to Moses. In this way, Saadia managed to retain the literal significance of the anthropomorphic passages in Scripture and Talmud, without ascribing to God Himself any material qualities. But, this method is, after all, an invention of the imagination. If the "lights" and "voices" are not themselves divine, why should we assume that they attest to the truth of prophecy? What is to prevent us from rejecting them as merely visual and auditory hallucinations?—If they are not temporary and detached events but integral manifestations of the Supreme Being, His emanations or His "Garments," then we fall back into the trap of idolatry, where all kinds of images might be said to be His representations and "incarnations." Furthermore, truth can only be self-authenticating, an extrapolation of man's outreach, but not an alien intrusion from another realm—a communication which man can only accept in blind faith. As a matter of fact, the "created light" and the "created voice" of Saadia became the basis of the neo-anthropomorphic school of the Ashkenazi Hassidim. They conceived of the Divine manifestations as permanent "forms" of the Deity, allowing the fevered imagination of mystics to rhapsodize on their visions of the various parts of the Divine anatomy.

M. did not altogether reject the doctrine of "created lights." He granted that it was helpful to those whose minds were too unsophisticated to grasp the concept of an immaterial Deity. At least, this doctrine kept them from ascribing materiality to God Himself. Also, it is extremely difficult to interpret the Pentateuchal description of the gathering at Sinai, without those "lights" and "sounds." Yet, M. aimed to raise his readers to a higher philosophical level, which demands inner coherence and rejects the possibility of self-contained islands of truth, breaking into man's consciousness.

In M.'s view, the sustained quest of man for truth, as seen for example in the works of Aristotle, is itself the product of revelation. When a person's rational faculties attain a pitch of perfection, while his intuitive and imaginative powers are not equally perfected, he becomes a speculative philosopher. The school of Saadia was, according to M., remiss in that they accepted uncritically the premises of the Moslem Mutazilites.
As a child of his age, M. believed that classical Greek philosophy was an integral part of the esoteric tradition of the biblical prophets and sages of the Mishnah. M.’s historical knowledge was faulty, but not his reverence for the sovereignty, indeed the holiness of reason. To him, systematic and objective reasoning is the highway to truth, and God disdains those who forsake the manifest principles of truth for the sake of pleasing Him. The anti-intellectualist mentality of a St. Paul, a Tertullian, a Luther, a Kierkegaard, with their subjective, or “existential” “truths” was to him an abomination.

Neo-Maimonism, too, asserts that rationality is of the essence of humanity. There is more to humanity than reason can comprehend, but the irrational and the subjective cannot serve as clues to the Image of God in man. To love God is to seek to know Him, and the greater our knowledge of Him, the greater our love of Him and of all who are created in His image.

And God’s love of us is manifested in our love of Him and His Kingdom on earth.

REJECTION OF ETHNIC MYSTICISM

M. scorned the Halevian axiom that Jews and Jews alone are endowed with a special capacity for the “divine manifestation.” To Halevi, Jewish people occupy an exalted level in the hierarchy of being, somewhere between the angels and the rest of mankind. All Jews inherit this unique intuition, which was given to them for the sake of humanity as a whole. As God has chosen the biblical prophets for the purpose of bringing His admonitions to the Jewish people, so too He has chosen the Jews from among the nations and endowed them with a unique capacity for things divine, and assigned to them the task of functioning as “the heart” of mankind. This “heart” will regain its vigor in the land of Israel, and then all mankind will be “saved” through Israel. However, even in the messianic future, ethnic Jews alone will serve as the channels of communication between God and mankind, for only ethnic Jews can function as prophets.

The Halevian approach has not lost its popularity even in our own day. Its plausibility derives, not alone from its seductive appeal to the hurt pride of a persecuted people, but also from the uniqueness of Jewish history. Here is a people that has been reduced to “dry bones,” yet all the nations of the western world were brought to the service of God through its prophets. And the western world appeared to Europe-
ans until recently to be synonymous with civilized humanity. If, then, in the past, Israel served as “a prophet unto the nations,” why not in the future?—The fact that this self-image entailed the anguish of martyrdom and the aura of dedication to the service of all men kept this doctrine from turning narrowly chauvinistic and narcissistic. Furthermore, with the rise of romantic nationalism in the modern world, the Halevian approach was rendered the flattery of imitation by such popular “prophets” as Fichte, Mazzini, Mickiewicz, Danilevski and Dostoevski. Ethnic mysticism proved to be fantastically contagious.

Even the builders of classical Reform and cultural Zionism succumbed to the seduction of Halevian racism. Geiger, with all his rationalism, based his Jewish theology, especially his concept of Israel’s “mission,” on the axiom of an innate Jewish “genius” for religion. A’had Ha’am believed that “the national ethnic” and “the national soul” were all but atrophied when the people of Israel was uprooted and driven into exile and that with the return of Jews to their native land Israel’s ancient genius would be revived and revitalized. Echoes of mystical racism abound in the works of Buber and Rosenzweig. As Christian theologians are perpetually tempted to transfer the mystery of the Divine Being to “the secular city,” so Jewish theologians are equally prone to transfer the mystery of Divine oneness and uniqueness from God to the people of Israel, or to the land of Israel, or to both.

“Sanctified egotism” is the demonic underside and shadow of traditional Judaism.

M. refused to indulge in collective self-sanctification. The quest of truth is not a national monopoly. It is man qua man that is the subject of all speculations about God. To limit “the divine manifestation” to Jews living in the land of Israel is as unworthy of Jews as it is destructive of the principle of human equality, which is affirmed in the Mishna. To be sure, in his letter to the Jews of Yemen, M. found it necessary to descend to the level of popular mythology and to argue that those who are descended from the men and women that stood at Sinai cannot possibly disbelieve in the promises of the Torah. However, in his “Guide,” he does not restrict prophecy either to the land of Israel or to the people of Israel. The reason prophecy is not attained in the lands of exile is due to the wretchedness of life in those countries. (II, 36.) And in a famous chapter (III, 51) he ranks the philosophical saints of all nations ahead of “Talmudists” and mizvah-observers. Also, in the well
known letter to R. Hisdai concerning people of other faiths, he avers, “God seeks the heart. . .”\(^5\)

Neo-Maimonism, too, disdains the mystique of racism and ethnic narcissism along with the assorted brands of anti-intellectualism. All who base their faith upon their existential identification with the historical career of the Jewish people, affirminng that such existence is unique and *sui generis,* simply beg the question. The task of reflection is to analyze, to discover relationships, to demonstrate the universal components in all particular events. All individuals, all historic peoples, are unique. And the conviction of being chosen by a supreme deity for high ends is by no means unique, either in ancient or in modern times. To insist on the uniqueness of the Jewish people as an irreducible phenomenon, that can be understood only by reference to the meta-historical, the meta-philosophical and the metaphysical is as irrational in principle as it is vicious in actual, historical consequences. For a people that is lifted out of the common run of humanity and enveloped in the ghostly haze of mythology is far more likely to be demeaned by opponents as subhuman than to be exalted as superhuman. If the holocaust demonstrates anything at all, it is the vulnerability of Jewish people to the mystique of racism. Jews should be in the forefront of the fight against this social disease, not promote it. Haven’t we been decimated by its ravages?—Yet, so strangely seductive is the temptation to mythicize our own being that the Jewish “meta-myth” is still a potent force in our midst and, owing to the mirror-image effect, among Christians.

**THE QUEST OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE**

M. was a rationalist, but not in the flat sense of this term. Speculative reason, directed toward the ultimate mysteries of life, is far more than the sheer process of intellection. In fact, one must guard against the temptation to plunge prematurely into reflection on God and creation, before one has properly prepared himself for this arduous and perilous task. The preparatory disciplines are not only logic and mathematics, but ethics and esthetics. Also, one must be endowed from birth with a balanced disposition, which shuns all tendencies to excess and exaggeration. The prophet must be gifted in all the disciplines that are needed for the perfection and balance of the human personality. His imaginative
Neo-Maimonism

and intuitive talents must be as excellently attuned to the reception of
the Divine Influence as his intellectual faculties. The prophet shares in
the talents of the statesman, whose spiritual antennae relate him to the
needs of the community as a whole, so that he senses "the general will"
of the nation, to use a Rousseauist phrase. The prophet is also a gifted
poet, creating myths and metaphors that reverberate with powerful
resonance all through the ages. So, while the man of intellect can only
gain from the Divine Influence some philosophical reflections, and the
man of intuition and imagination can only be inspired by the same
divine source to devise some ordinances and works of literary art, the
one who is gifted in all faculties of outreach can hope to attain moments
of prophetic inspiration, that lead him to channel divine energy into
the community of Israel and the society of mankind.6

It follows that man's pathway to God consists in the attainment of
balanced perfection, or to put it differently, the quest of God is depend-
ent on the attainment of wholeness and harmony, since God is the
builder of wholes. This emphasis might be termed classical. It resists any
endeavor to fragmentize the human personality and to set the ideals of
the spirit over against the hungers of the flesh. To be sure, M. tended to
downgrade sex as a "shameful" activity. (II, 36.) He described the
Hebrew language as "holy," because it contained no words for the
genital organs and employed "pure" euphemisms for the sexual act. In
this respect, he was probably influenced as much by the feverish over-
indulgence of the Moslem princes as he was by the teaching of Aris-
totle. But, his essential teaching was in keeping with the aims of the
classicist. He regarded the health of the soul as paralleling the health of
the body, rejecting the Augustinian claim that the love of self opposes
and contradicts the love of God.7

Neo-Maimonist ethics is also a blend of the quest for balance of the
classicist and the lyrical temper of the religionist. Along with M., we
affirm the ancient principle of the Golden Mean. All virtues are happy
syntheses of opposing tendencies. But, man's perennial quest for wholen-
ness leads him again and again toward the brink of self-transcendence.
M. supplements the classical ideal by the principle of imitatio dei, though
in his view this principle could be asserted only in a metaphorical sense.
To us, the urge for self-transcendence is a fact of human nature, for we
cannot attain self-fulfillment without surrendering to a high ideal. The
consequences of this hunger to be part of a greater whole are not always
salutary. People are driven on occasion to serve idols and to reject the
The rejection of idolatry is an ethical as well as a theological principle. It means that no ideal is more than a fragment of our total goal, more than a way-station on the road to personal and universal perfection. In every generation, the classical procedure of harmonizing conflicting interests and ideals issues in a consensus of what is reasonable and morally obligatory—a Way, which is then structured into laws and ordinances (halachah). But, along with this legal pattern, there is also the beckoning ideal of greater perfection—a Vision of the sublime, which is only dimly reflected in articulate ideals. Beyond these ideals is the Nameless One, to whom alone our worship is directed. The concrete ideals of the age are all too readily transformed into idols, and the resounding No of prophetic monotheism, impels humanity to go beyond the “idols of the market-place” in quest of the receding horizon of perfection. “Without vision, a people is undone.”

The religious Liberal, by virtue of his dynamic Vision, will be keenly conscious of the failures of the age and the limits of the regnant ideals. To him, the worship of the One God will result in an awareness of our human sinfulness. We ask forgiveness, not alone for the sins we have committed, but even more so for permitting some ideals to preempt our total loyalty, shutting all else from our view. Sin is the failure to heed the call of the whole—the whole of our self; the whole of society, the whole of the spectrum of ideals, that is the light of God.

There is an old pietistic comment on the claim of the Sages that in
time to come, God will slaughter Satan. Why should Satan be punished? it is asked. Was it not his duty to mislead and seduce people?—The answer is—Satan will be punished for the mizvot he urged, not for the sins that he commended. How beautiful!—The perfect world will be attained only when the demonic is totally separated from the divine—a consummation which can hardly be reached in our mundane existence.

THE MEANING OF GOD

M.'s conception of God is the most misunderstood part of his system. It is taken to be "The Unmoved Mover," Who can only be described in negations. He is not this and not that. While we may think of Him as being One, Living, Almighty, All-knowing, we have to bear in mind that His unity is unlike that of all other forms of unity, that His Life, His Power and His Wisdom are totally unique, in no way comparable to the meaning that those adjectives normally convey. We seem to be left with a vacuous Naught. Since M. takes pains to hammer home the principle that "the end of our knowledge of God is to know that we don't know" (I, 59), many scholars in medieval and modern times have concluded that his God-idea was really devoid of religious content. At least one contemporary scholar even went so far as to infer that logically M. was a naturalist.

Actually, when the "Guide" is seen as a whole, the positive aspects of M.'s conception become clear. Existentially, M. confronted the Divine Being in times of meditation as the Ground of all being, the Purpose of all existence, the ultimate object of man's total devotion and affection. Intellectually, M. identifies the Divine with the marvelous wisdom that is apparent in living things, reserving the term, "nature," for the mechanical laws that prevail in the inanimate world. (I, 69; III, 19; III, 23.) In the designs of plants and animals, the reality of purposiveness is apparent. The whole is far more than the sum of its parts—one spirit dominates and controls the functioning of myriad components. Furthermore, certain species depend for their existence on other forms of living beings. A Wise, All-powerful Will is at work, over and above the unvarying mechanism of nature.  

This blend of Wisdom and Will is manifested on a still higher level in the creation of humanity. Even in its most primitive stages, mankind received inflows of Divine Power and Wisdom from God. (II, 40.) These upward thrusts led to the development of skills needed for
survival and of social customs that provided a modicum of order and justice. Among the Greeks and other cultured peoples, there have arisen statesmen, scientists, inventors and poets, who have contributed mightily to the formation of a civilized society. Yet, the laws of the Greeks (nomoi) did not meet the spiritual needs of their people. The only perfect law is the Torah, which addresses itself to the ethical and religious concerns of the individual as well as the economic and political interests of society. “So, the Torah, which is not a natural product is led up to by natural developments.” (Ibid.) The Torah was given to the Israelites, but in the course of time the “Torah of Truth” will govern the lives of all men and women. (Code, “Hilchot Melochim,” end.) “For all of existence is like one living individual.” (I, 72; Pines, p. 117.)

The thrusts of God, manifested in the biblical prophets and less perfectly in statesmen, poets and philosophers will ultimately redeem all mankind.

Here, then, is a holistic and evolutionary conception of God’s work in history. The vistas of the contemporary theory of evolution were of course not open to M. But, he conceived of God as being actively at work, creating the ideal human society of the future. Having postulated the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo, M. insisted that the Divine Flow from the sphere of Active Reason amounted to a series of additional creative acts, which transpired in the domain of history. While the material laws of nature have been fixed at creation, the spiritual horizons of mankind remained open, and the help of God is extended to the diverse builders of the ideal society of the future—to scientists, investors, statesmen, poets, but above all to those who prepare themselves in mind and heart for prophecy. The perfect God must have designed “the best of all possible worlds,” but only as a potentiality, revealed to prophets. And He is working in the dimension of time along with the elite of Israel and the nations in order to achieve this goal.9

The revival of prophecy is an indispensable step on the road to messianic perfection. The Messiah of the House of David will inaugurate the glorious era, but it will continue to grow in perfection for a long time, as the Messiah and his successors proceed to convert all of mankind “to the religion of truth.” The laws of physical nature will remain unchanged, but man’s productivity and prosperity will increase marvelously, so that people will be able to devote most of their time to Torah and religious meditation. (M.’s Code, “Hilchot Melochim.” Ch. XII.) In M.’s view, then, progress is many-sided, economic as well as
spiritual, secular as well as religious. And the ultimate source of this ceaseless advance toward perfection in time is the Supreme Being, Who is also the Purpose of all purposiveness in nature and in history, and the Ground of all that exists.

The important thing to remember is that M. combined a rationalistic version of the biblical philosophy of history with his philosophic system. Thereby, he resolved the contradiction between the Perfect God, Who is the Cause of an imperfect but steadily improving world. To be sure, M. considered that goodness far outweighed all forms of evil in human life. The residual evil is due to the resistance of matter, and in the course of time, this resistance will be gradually overcome.

What is the contemporary religious import of this concept of God?—It does not allow us to think of God either as a loving Father or as a stern King, Who is placated by sacrifices, rituals and prayers. (III, 28.) It does not console us with the assurance that we can win His magical intervention, whereby the laws of nature will be changed in our behalf. Neither repentance, in the popular meaning of the word, nor the recitation of prescribed prayers, nor the distribution of our possessions for charity will change the course of events. We can speak of God as Compassionate only in the sense that He ordered the world in such a way as to provide for the needs of every living species. But the concerns of the majority of mankind are, after all, self-centered. The truly religious personality will love God, without presuming that God must love him in return, as Spinoza later put it. Furthermore, our awareness of the Divine Being generates supreme joy within our souls. The more we learn of His majesty, the more we yearn in love for His Presence, and this love is itself joy unalloyed. Indeed, God’s love and concern is directed toward us, to the extent to which we prepare ourselves to receive His overflowing, creative energy. Providence is proportional to the readiness of our personality to serve as His vessel in behalf of the uplift of mankind.

In M.’s philosophy, the only true miracles are those of the human spirit, when it is touched by the Divine Power. The miracles of Scripture were built into the structure of natural law at creation. (II, 29.) Thereafter, we can look forward to the inflow of fresh freedom-generating creative power into the minds and hearts of creative men and women. All inventions, all the mighty achievements of the human spirit in every field of endeavor are the products of divine inspiration. (II, 45.) Man is not a passive victim of blind fate. On the contrary, God
Neo-Maimonism

permeates the world only through the cooperation of great men and cooperative societies. (II, 40.) He achieves human progress not by suddenly interrupting the chains of causality but by inspiring men to utilize the opportunities available to them. And the goal of this divine-human cooperation is certain to be the ever more perfect society of the future.

This concept of God is thoroughly in harmony with the modern spirit. We know the tremendous potential of the human spirit for the improvement of the living condition of mankind, where M. could only hope and trust. The parallels between M.'s philosophy, stripped of its medieval picture of the cosmos, and the views of such modernists as Bergson, Alexander and Whitehead are obvious. God is the unifying, integrating, perfecting Pole of the di-polar universe, but matter, the source of perpetual resistance and negation, is also His creation. The ultimate triumph of Freedom and Purpose is asserted in the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo.

M.'s philosophy could be described as panentheistic, in that God includes the world, but the world does not include God. While He is eternal, He works within time. God is both personal and non-personal, for personality is a blend of freedom with purposiveness, and God is at once the Purpose of all purposes in the cosmos and the Free Creator, "who renews the world daily by His goodness." He is immanent in the noblest momentary outreaches of the human spirit, but also transcendent, for we can affirm of Him only by negative attributes.

In sum, God is not only static perfection, but also a dynamic force, acting within history. Charles Hartshorne wrote, "Modern philosophy differs from most previous philosophy by the strength of its conviction that becoming in the more inclusive category [than, being]." (Ch. Hartshorne in "Philosophers speak about God," U. of Chicago Press, 1953, p. 9.) Also, reflecting the Kabbalistic tradition, A. J. Kook wrote of the two forms of perfection, attributable to God, though he hesitated to apply any potentiality to God in Himself.

"We say that Absolute Perfection is necessarily existent and there is nothing potential in it. The Absolute is all actual. But there is a kind of perfection which consists in the process of being perfected; this type of perfection cannot be applied to the Deity, since Infinite, Absolute Perfection leaves no room for any additional increments of perfection. In order that Being shall not be devoid of growth in perfection, there
must be a Becoming, a process beginning from the lowest depths, the levels of absolute privation, and rising therefrom steadily toward the Absolute Height. Thus existence was so constituted that it could never cease from progressing upward. This is its infinite dynamics." ("Orot Hakodesh," (Jerusalem, 1938), p. 549; "Banner of Jerusalem," by J. B. Agus, p. 172.)

The Kabbalistic solution is to distinguish the Pure Being of God, as En Sof, from His Becoming in the Pleroma of Sefirot. Modern philosophers feel no such compulsion—"there is no law of logic against attributing contrasting predicates to the same individual, provided they apply to diverse aspects of this individual." (Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 15.)

MEANING OF FAITH

Can we prove the existence of God? M. demonstrates the existence of God by a variant of the cosmological proof—for every existent effect there is a cause; hence, an ultimate Cause, an Unmoved Mover. But when the issue of creation vs. eternity of the cosmos is raised, M. takes refuge in a theory of faith. The issue cannot be decided by the arguments of logic alone. An extra-logical factor must be brought into the equation. If the cosmos is created, "then the Torah is possible." Since the scales of logic are evenly balanced, we are free to put our weight on the scale of creation and Torah.

M.'s resort to the Jamesian "Will to believe" must not be understood in superficial, tactical terms. M. made clear that his choice was not dictated by the literal teaching of the first chapters of Genesis. "The gates of interpretation are not closed to us." (II, 25.) Nor did he opt for creation simply because of the possibility of including the miracles of Scripture in the primary act of creation. His argument moves on a deeper plane, so that it remains convincing in our contemporary universe of discourse. God does act in the world by relating Himself now to one person, now to another and by choosing a whole people as his instrument. (Ibid.)

Torah, in the sense of the harmonious unity of the supreme values of life, is itself a form of cognition. To love is to seek understanding, as M. put it.

Speculative reason is intimately one with the imperatives of ethics and the intuitive perceptions of "the imagination." It is our personality as a whole that confronts the mystery of the universe, and when the
judgment of logic is neutralized, the associated forms of outreach within
us impel us to choose that view of the world which is consonant with
the ultimate reality of spiritual values. In a created world, where the
free spirit of God is sovereign, the human spirit finds its validation.

It follows that faith is not an alien element to the quest of truth, or a
separate faculty detached from or even opposed to reason. On the
contrary, faith is an extension of the adventure of speculative reason.
Faith is the total posture of man, as “in fear and love,” he confronts the
awesome majesty of the Supreme Being. God is “the soul of the soul”
of the universe, the Ultimate Whole, Whose Wisdom proceeds from
the whole to the parts, rather than the other way around. Hence, in our
quest of His “nearness,” we have to integrate the whole of our being—
our imagination and intuition, our balanced ethical virtues and our
quest of God, our hunger for aloneness with God in the ecstasy of
meditation (III, 51), and our eagerness to redeem the world by deeds of
justice and compassion. (III, 52—54.)

M’s teaching in regard to the meaning of faith and its decisive role in
the trans-logical realm is applied in Neo-Maimonism to the issue of
God’s existence, not merely the creation of the world. Defining God as
the Perfect Personality, the ultimate Whole in an evolutionary holis-
mechanical cosmos, we cannot demonstrate with mathematical logic
that God does indeed exist. We point to the marvelous ladders of
evolution, in which wholes of ever greater complexity and range of
freedom have come into being. The appearance of the human mind
marked the emergence of a new phase of holism—conscious, deliber-
ate, multi-dimensional, creative. In the geniuses of art, ethics, science,
statecraft and religion, new phases of spirit are briefly glimpsed. All
great achievements well up into the conscious mind of their own
accord, as it were, like invasions from a sea of Super-Spirit, when the
dikes are lowered, or like bolts of lightning, illuminating the dark night.
The mysteries of life, mind and flashes of genius point toward the
possibility of divine thrusts, impelling us toward perfection. Indeed, we
perceive, however dimly, intimations of the supreme source of all values
in our ethical deeds,esthetic apprehensions and experiences of holiness.
But, we cannot prove that the theistic hypothesis is true.

Still, and here we touch bases with M., our inner aspirations for
growth in the realms of the spirit impel us to choose that view of the
cosmos, in which Spirit, Freedom and creative Growth triumph over
the dead entropy of matter. Our faith in God is an extension of “the
lines of growth” in our personality—our hunger for justice, our thirst for beauty, our longing for truth, our experience of holiness, when we sense the cosmic resonance of eternity. Faith is the fragmentary arc within our being, extrapolated into an invisible, eternal circle. It is the outward reach of our entire being; hence, it cannot be unreasoning, or immoral, or blind. It becomes demonic when it sets itself over against the moral, or the rational, pretending to go “beyond good and evil.” It is the whole of our self orienting itself toward and seeking support from that all-embracing Self, of which our minds are but so many cells. And faith, as M. points out, is not a steady, static condition. It is rather a tremor of the soul, an assurance and an inquiry, at one and the same time.

REVELATION

While prophecy is the central theme of the “Guide,” the novelty of M.’s contribution consists in his tri-partite division of revelation. He discusses first two pre-prophetic stages, along with other proto-prophetic phenomena; second, various stages of prophecy, the highest being that of Abraham; third, the super-prophetic quality of Mosaic revelation. In this way, the Torah of Moses is placed within the generally human context of inspired achievements and noble visions. The act of revelation is a quantum-extension of human perception, not the incursion of a totally foreign element.

Proto-prophetic are the diviners and the inventors, who discover new inventions intuitively, without any understanding of scientific and mathematical principles. (II, 38.) Their imagination and dedication are stimulated by the flow from Active Reason, enabling them to create instruments of human progress. Philosophers and scientists are also proto-prophetic, with their fresh visions of reality arising out of an inflow of Active Reason. However, in their case, the imaginative and intuitive faculties are short of perfection. (II, 37.) And the logic of the mind, however great it be, cannot suffice to reflect faithfully the total import of the divine thrust, which affects ideally man’s entire personality.

The prophet is one whose imaginative, intuitive and rational faculties are all fully developed. Yet, even in his case, moments of genuine revelation occur infrequently. True, the good God is ever ready to grant His impulses of goodness and wisdom. Though He is free to withhold
His gift, He, in His Goodness, is ever ready to uplift men. But, even the noblest prophet can rise to the requisite levels of perfection only on a few occasions. Moses was far superior to all other prophets; indeed, he was unique and incomparable. Still, Moses was incapable of reaching the heights of prophecy during 38 of the 40 years that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. (II, 36.)

M. lists two pre-prophetic stages that great men may reach. Both are characterized by the influx of the Holy Spirit (ruah hakodesh). (II, 45 & II, 41.) In the first case this influx is manifested in great deeds, accomplished by leaders who are fired with the determination to redeem an oppressed people or to advance the cause of mankind. In the second case, the Divine power is employed to compose great works of inspiration and wisdom—such as, the Writings (kethubim) of Holy Scriptures.

Taking the proto-prophetic and the pre-prophetic stages together, we have here a conception of revelation that embraces all that makes for the advancement of mankind, unifying religion with the several branches of culture. Revelation is a thrust toward higher levels of holiness, in the life of the individual and of society. And the culmination of this advance will be attained in the messianic era, when material prosperity will be conjoined with ethical maturity and religious truth.15

In these stages of ruah hakodesh we are given a theory of universal progress, since philosophers, poets and cultural heroes address themselves to all mankind. We recall that, in M.'s view, Aristotelian philosophy was itself an integral part of the esoteric wisdom of the prophets and sages. His interpretation of the Noachide principles as a body of "general revelation" fits into his scheme of an all-embracing philosophy of culture, consisting of artistic achievements and ethical principles intended for all men along with the Torah designed for the Jewish people.

If we now skip across the nine specific stages of prophecy and examine M.'s concept of the prophecy of Moses, we find that he takes pains to stress its radically dogmatic character. Everything said about other prophets and prophecy in general, he tells us, does not apply to Mosaic revelation. (II, 35; II, 39.) Since his original problem was to reconcile the Torah of Moses, not merely prophecy in general, with the dictates of philosophy, it is certainly paradoxical that he exempts Moses from the normal category of prophets. Evidently, another principle is here involved, and we shall discuss it presently.

At this point, we note that the biblical prophets occupied the middle
ground between the “general revelation” of the pre- and proto-prophets and the post- or super-prophetic status of Moses. (II, 45.) While the prophets admonished the people to be loyal to the Torah of Moses, they dared to be extremely selective in their emphasis, as if they were authorized to weigh and measure the various mizvot. In regard to the sacrifices and the choice of Israel, they distinguished between the Primary Intention of God and His Secondary Intention. (III, 32.) Accordingly they chided the people for their ethnic zeal and their preoccupation with sacrifices, pointing out that the ultimate aims of God were the same as in “general revelations”—namely, the ethical virtues of personal life and the perfection of society. So, while the spectrum of revelation ranges from the general principles of faith to the specific ordinances of Torah, it is basically the same phenomenon.

Why, then, does M. put Mosaic prophecy in a category all its own? In the first place, he was compelled to follow the teaching of Bible and Talmud, on this point. In terms of his own philosophy of prophecy, Moses is unique because there was no admixture of imagination in his teaching. (II, 36.) But strangely enough, M. states it as a rule that the prophet is superior to the philosopher, precisely because the latter lacks the qualities of imagination and intuition. (II, 37.) Evidently, in terms of prophetic receptivity, the more the imagination is developed, the better, but in terms of the content of prophetic revelation, the less it is enveloped by the fancies of imagination, the better. The role of the prophet is to serve as the “channel,” whereby the divine uplifting thrust is conveyed to mankind. To this end, imagination or intuition is essential, since the prophet, in distinction from the philosopher, addresses himself to an entire community, which is more likely to be affected by rites and symbols than by ideals and ideas. However, the inner content of revelation can be discovered only by penetrating through the poetic imagery of prophecy and isolating its rational content. The Primary Intention, say, of the sacrificial ritual, described in the Torah, is the purpose of the Divine Will. The Secondary Intention was the “cunning” of Providence in leading Israel and mankind by slow and devious steps from idolatry to true religion. (III, 32.) And the prophets, from Amos and Hosea to Haggai and Malachi, taught the Israelites to distinguish between the Primary Intention of God, reflecting His Purpose for mankind, and His Secondary Intention in providing the social institutions and rituals needed for the ultimate triumph of the Divine Will.
At this point, we note a most important distinction which M. draws between "True Beliefs" and "Necessary Beliefs"—the former are true in themselves, the latter, while strictly untrue, serve the cause of truth. (III, 28 & III, 32.) As an example of the latter, he cites the belief that God listens to the prayers of men, turning from the policy of Wrath to that of Compassion, and changing the course of events in response to the earnest petitions of people. (III, 28.) In the case of rituals, the elaborate ordinances regulating the sacrifices in the Temple were designed to wean the people away from dependence on animal offerings. Similarly, the laws regulating family life continued relics of barbarism which the contemporaries of Moses were not willing to abandon all at once. (III, 32 & III, 47.) So, too, in the case of ideas, the "Necessary Beliefs" were designed to establish a community dedicated to "True Beliefs." Some popular beliefs are essential to the formation of a community that would become the bearer of great, liberating truths. That the Torah of Moses can never be replaced by other prophets is one of those "Necessary Beliefs," that insure the continuity of the Jewish faith as against the claims of Christianity and Islam. In a larger sense, the entire dogmatic structure of Judaism, insofar as it reaches beyond the truths of philosophy, the impetus of prophecy and the messianic vision, belongs in this category of "Necessary Beliefs," particularly the teachings about hell and the resurrection of the dead.

What is the content of revelation, in M.'s scheme?

If we ignore for a moment the Torah of Moses, revelation is an energetic thrust, rather than a rational proposition. It is so protean that it assumes in different minds, forms as diverse as the speculations of the philosopher, the insights of an inventor, the visions of a poet, the arts of the statesman. In every case, the intent of the divine inflow is directed not alone to the prophetic personality but to the society of which he is part. And the nobler the level of prophecy, the more it is oriented toward the entire community and ultimately toward all of humanity. Revelation contains a rational core; indeed, the Divine inflow affects reason primarily and imagination secondarily; but it is more than sheer reason, since the ideal prophet's grasp exceeds the reach of the philosopher. What, then, is the plus of prophetic revelation?

To say, as does Franz Rosenzweig, that God reveals His own Being is beside the point. "The entire world reveals His Glory." And in a more direct sense, God does not reveal Himself. The prophet receives a call, a command together with an intimation of God's reality. To assert that
God reveals His love is true in a general sense, but this answer does not capture the special nuance of the Maimonidean philosophy, or the genius of Hebraic prophecy. The prophet loves his people, but he is also their severest critic. It would be more correct to characterize revelation as a thrust toward messianic perfection of the individual and of society. The two goals are one in essence, for the closer one comes to God the more he is dedicated to the promotion within society of “steadfast love” (*hesed*), “righteousness” (*zedakah*) and “justice” (*mishpat*). (III, 54.) An anticipation of the building of God’s Kingdom on earth is implicit in the “inflow” from Active Reason, whether it occurs on the lowest, precivilization level, or on the highest, prophetic level. In each case, the recipient is impelled to bring some gift for the Kingdom; he is filled with “divine discontent;” he must destroy as well as build, he is charged with a mission. All things are judged by Him in the light of the future kingdom. So, he is hopeful when others are despairing and embittered when others are celebrating. His sole standard is the “nearness of God” and His Word. So, Job, who was not a prophet, came to realize that the highest good, “the knowledge of God,” is available to us, even when we are troubled in body and anguished in soul. (III, 23.)

In a word, revelation brings a dynamic unity of reassurance, discontent and the vision of the long road ahead; hence, it impels the prophets to bless even as they curse, to speak of the glories that are to come, even as they expose the moral failings of their contemporaries. Above all, revelation is a “quest,” a demand for creative action of one kind or another.

In our day, this concept of revelation is completely tenable, though our view of the world does not consist of Spheres and Active Reason. If we accept the world-view of what Hartshorne calls the “convergent philosophy,” we recognize that new creative energy may well enter into us. God is the Pole of whole-creation, but He also includes the Pole of resistance or raw matter, in His Being. He is eternal, but He also lives in time. He enters into human history, when hearts and minds are readied for Him. To paraphrase Matthew Arnold, “He is the Power, not ourselves, that makes for growth in Life, Mind and Spirit.” Is not the course of evolution, as analyzed by Morgan, Bergson, Alexander and Teilhard de Chardin, a demonstration of the continuing creativity of the Divine Being? Can we not discern an advance toward the emergence of creatures with greater measures of freedom?—If God is the Pole of
wholeness building in the cosmos, then a series of pulsations toward ever greater wholes is precisely what we should expect.

Neo-Maimonism, then, accepts the principle of revelation as an incursion of supra-human energy into the souls of creative individuals and into society. Along with M., we recognize the many-sidedness of revelation. It is by no means confined to the sphere of religion. It reinvigorates "the lines of growth" in the spirit of man. It is reflected in the realms of art, science, philosophy and statecraft. It ranges in power from everyday premonitions, that occur to most of us, to the creative ecstasies of geniuses.

Neo-Maimonism differs from the "life-philosophies" of Germany and the philosophy of Bergson, in the recognition that the fresh incursions of spiritual energy center on the expansion of the range of intelligence. The heart of reality is not the sheer impetus of a cosmic will, as in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, nor is it a blind life-force, the _elan vital_, but spirit in the sense of the total outreach of man, including the disciplines of reason, ethics and esthetics. At the same time, Neo-Maimonism rejects the separation of religion from the other domains of culture. There is a goal and purpose to human history, and all efforts "to improve the world by the Kingdom of the Almighty" subserve that goal.

The essential characteristic of revelation is not the transmission of static information, but the confirmation of a direction. The recipient is powerfully oriented toward the achievement of "the nearness of God." The content of revelation is a hunger and a thirst for more and more of the things of God. As a dynamic phenomenon, revelation consists of three elements—an affirmation, a negation, a drive toward action.

As an affirmation, revelation is basically the reorientation of man's spirit toward the infinite goal of building God's Kingdom on earth. One comes to feel part of that wondrous company of great men and women who dared dream of the ideal society of mankind. One is reassured that this infinite quest will come closer and closer to realization. None of us comes to the experience of revelation totally alone and naked. On the contrary, we are sustained in our quest for God's "nearness," by the "sacred tradition" of our community. And in the experience of revelation, we find the values of the past confirmed and reinvigorated, in so far as their intent is separable from the external forms which they assumed in the various contingencies of history. God's
Word at any one time cannot be in contradiction with His Eternal Will, as revealed to all men and women of good-will.

Neo-Maimonism applauds the principle of M. that the main road to true revelation is that of critical, objective rationality. Moses is praised for not daring to engage in metaphysical speculation before he has prepared himself fully for that task by means of mathematical and logical studies. And when the influx of Divine energy comes, it inspires man’s rational faculty primarily. We cannot attain the insights of revelation by means of emotional rhapsodies, or by withdrawing from the world. Kierkegaard’s slogan, “subjectivity is truth,” is only partially true, in the two senses—first, that the final fulcrum of truth is the mind of the individual; second, that all truth is inescapably filtered through the forms and limitations of our minds. Our formulation would be, “in all truth there is subjectivity,” since it is the individual’s hunger for truth and meaning that opens his mind to the influx of revelation. For this very reason, we are called to prepare ourselves for revelation by a critical analysis of the several ways in which we are subjectively structured. We are subjective, as individuals, as Jews, as Americans, as professionals. These varied influences increase our receptivity only when we have subjected them to critical analysis. The would-be prophet, even to the smallest extent, must emulate the prophets in the ardor of self-criticism.

So, we come to the second component of revelation—its negation. The prophet, knowing himself to be in the vanguard of mankind, condemns not merely the vices of his contemporaries but their virtues as well. His lips have been touched by the embers of eternity; he is impelled to surge beyond the landmarks of the past; he rails at the limitations and shortcomings of his contemporaries.

Above all, the divine-human encounter in Judaism must be translated into one action or another. In the first paragraph of the Shema, the love of God is carried out by way of teaching one’s children, building one’s home and spelling out its meaning in the market-places of the city.

In Neo-Maimonism, we have to recognize the role of “Necessary Beliefs”—that is, of ideas which are essential to the maintenance of the community. Without rituals and a common texture of ideas and sentiments, no community can live and serve as a bearer of truth. However, the “Necessary Beliefs” must be constantly subject to review and reexamination. Do they really, in our time, serve to provide a vehicle of truth and kingdom-building energy? Or is the opposite the
case, with the rituals and "Necessary Beliefs" tying our people in knots and preventing them from facing up to the challenges of our time?

In general, the "sacred tradition" in its totality is our starting point. And this tradition is far from being monolithic. It is neither Halachah alone nor "ethical monotheism" alone, but the living texture of ideas and sentiments, ranging from the darkest hues of folk-mythology to the brightest ideals of humanity. We accept it with the greatest reverence as the deposit of revelations in the past, which is essential to the continuity of the Torah-community. But in the spirit of classical prophecy and philosophy, we accept it critically, distinguishing between the essence of faith and its external manifestations, at any one time or place. We recognize that what may have been a "necessary" belief at one time, may no longer be so today. We also affirm that a rite, devised by the "cunning of God" for a particular time, might well become counter-productive in our day. So, we of the Conservative movement no longer pray for the reestablishment of the sacrificial system in the Temple, drawing the consequences of M.'s reasoning, though in his own time he could not do so, without tearing the Jewish community apart.

NOTES

1. In his "Guide," M. makes use of "created lights" and "created voices," but only grudgingly, as a concession to the unsophisticated. See 1, 5, where M. concludes, "If an individual of insufficient capacity should not wish to reach the rank to which we desire him to ascend and should he consider that all the words [figuring in the Bible] [for seeing] concerning this subject are indicative of sensual perception of created lights—be they angels or something else—why, there is no harm in his thinking this." (Pines, The Guide of the Perplexed, Chicago, 1963, p. 31.) Still, in 1, 10, M. writes as if the "created light" was indeed there—that is, on Mount Sinai. Shem Tov on 1, 19, writes that "created lights" were indeed externally visible to the common people, but only the prophets apprehended the inner light. Generally, M. confines the hearing of God's voice to the dreams of prophets, save in the case of Moses, who heard Him in a vision. Afud i on 1, 37. In 1, 25, M. offers both interpretations of Shechinah—in the sense of "created light" and in the sense of Providence. We may assume confidently that the latter sense corresponds to his own belief. See also 11, 44.

3. “For the Lord, blessed be He, loves only truth and hates only falsehood.” (11, 47.)

4. Second paragraph of first chapter of Sefer Hamada.

5. Whether M. believed that he had indeed attained the rank of prophecy is a question of semantics, for he refers more than once to quasi-prophetic insights that came to him. So, in the introduction to third part of the “Guide,” he remarks, “No divine revelation (nevuah clohit) has come to me to teach me ... Now rightly guided reflection and divine aid in this matter have moved me (vehine orartani bo hamashayah hameyusheret vehoezer hoelohi).” (Pines, p. 416.) In “Guide” III, 22, M. exclaims, “See how I succeeded as if by prophecy” (kidemut nevuah). Pines translates—“See how these notions came to me through something similar to prophetic revelation” (p 488.)

In our view, M. assimilates prophetic revelation to the many kinds and variations of inspiration that come to the great benefactors of mankind.

6. The role of courage and intuition (Koah Hameshaer) in prophecy is mentioned in 11, 38. The orientation of prophecy toward the greater society is stressed in 11, 39. See also 11, 37, “the nature of the intellect is such that it always overflows.”

7. This thought is more clearly presented in M’s “Eight Chapters.”


9. M’s conception of the positive functions carried out by Christianity and Islam in preparing the way for the Messiah is stated explicitly in his Code. “Hilchot Melachim,” Chapter XI, uncensored version.

“But it is beyond the human mind to fathom the designs of the Creator, for our ways are not His ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts. All these matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth and the Ishmaelite (Mohammed) who came after him, only served to clear the way for King Messiah, to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord, as it is written, ‘For then I will turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent’ (Zephaniah 3, 9). Thus, the Messianic hope, the Torah and the commandments have become familiar topics—topics of conversation (among the inhabitants) of the far isles and many peoples, uncircumcised of heart and flesh. . . .” (transl. by I. Twersky, Maimonides Reader [New York, 1972], p. 226).

M. makes use here of the conception of “Divine Cunning” (“Guide” III, 32), whereby God achieves His purpose indirectly.

10. M. defines repentance as the actual transformation of the sinner’s disposition, so that “He who knows all secrets can testify that were the sinner to be
presented with similar temptations he would not ever commit that sin.” (“Hilchot Teshuvah,” II, 2).

11. (III, 12) “His compassion in His creation of guiding forces [i.e. instincts] for animals.”

12. (II, 29) “For faith in God and the joy inherent in that faith are two matters which cannot change . . .”

13. (III, 17) “But I believe that providence is consequent upon the intellect and attached to it.” (Pines, p. 474.)

14. In chapters III, 17 & 18, M. expatiates on the principle that divine providence is extended in proportion to a person’s closeness to God. In opposition to the argument that a whole ship, containing hundreds of people, might sink through the action of wind and water, he responds that the decision to enter the ship was in every case, a personal one. Presumably, the saint who is close to God would have been warned by some intimation (hearah) not to enter that ship.

15. “Therefore I say that the Law, although it is not natural, enters into what is natural. It is a part of the wisdom of the Deity with regard to the permanence of this species . . . [i.e. humanity] . . .” (II, 40.)