

Igor H. De Souza  
**Rewriting Maimonides**

# **Jewish Thought, Philosophy and Religion**

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## **Volume 5**

Igor H. De Souza

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Early Commentaries on the *Guide of the Perplexed*

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## Abbreviations

Ibn Tibbon	Moses Maimonides. <i>Doctor Perplexorum (Guide of the Perplexed) by Rabbi Moses ben Maimun (Rambam): Hebrew Version of R. Samuel ibn Tibbon</i> . Edited by Yehudah 'Even-Shemu'el, New Revised Edition. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 2000.
Pines	Moses Maimonides. <i>The Guide of the Perplexed</i> . Translated by Shlomo Pines. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. All English references are from the translation by S. Pines unless indicated otherwise. All Hebrew references are from the edition by Y. 'Even-Shemu'el unless indicated otherwise. References for the <i>Guide</i> are given for part and chapter (e.g., 1:5) followed by edition and page number.
HÜB	Moritz Steinschneider. <i>Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher</i> . Berlin: Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen bureaus, 1893.
MH	Moses Maimonides. <i>Millot ha-higgayon</i> . In <i>Maimonides' Treatise on Logic: the Original Arabic and Three Hebrew Translations</i> , edited and translated by Israel Efos. New York: The American Academy for Jewish Research, 1938.
JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
REJ	<i>Revue des Études Juives</i>
b.	Babylonian Talmud
y.	Jerusalem Talmud

Cross-references to the English-Hebrew chapters (chs. 3-7) are structured as follows: name of commentator or title of commentary, prologue or commentary proper (except Moses of Salerno), and numbered paragraph. References to Zeraḥiah Ḥen's commentary specify Long or Abridged Version. Thus: "Ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶3" refers to numbered paragraph 3, in the prologue to the commentary in Chapter 4.

For manuscript folio numbers,  $r = \aleph / v = \beth$



# 1 Commentaries on the *Guide of the Perplexed*: A Brief History

## 1.1 Preface

Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* was written in Judaeo-Arabic near the end of the 12th century, and soon thereafter translated into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon. It immediately became a source of controversy, reviled by some segments of medieval Jewry, but actively championed by others.<sup>1</sup> Philosophers, kabbalists, and rabbis studied and defended the work within their communities, though not necessarily uncritically. For some philosophical defenders of the *Guide*, the book had a "salvific" character. In their eyes, it charted the path towards the eudaemonia of the soul – the ultimate happiness and true purpose of a human being in general, and of a Jew in particular.<sup>2</sup> For these Maimonidean writers, the *Guide* represented a form of philosophical Scripture, second only to the Torah. Maimonides was second only to the biblical Moses.<sup>3</sup> The *Guide* became the founding text in the formation of a Jewish philosophical-religious culture.<sup>4</sup> A key component of this culture, which has been dubbed the Maimonidean-Tibbonian school, revolved around the interpretation of that text.<sup>5</sup>

In the first centuries following its writing, the *Guide* stimulated the production of a vast collection of exegetical works: works dedicated to its interpretation, transmission, and dissemination. These exegetical works spawned a number of genres, or literary vehicles. Among such works we count: poetry in praise of the *Guide*; sermons that explicated the weekly Scriptural portion in light of the *Guide*; biblical commentaries that interpreted Scripture following the methods laid out in the *Guide*; epistles

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1 There is a vast literature on the so-called Maimonidean controversies. See *inter alia* Bernard Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Gregg Stern, *Philosophy and Rabbinic Culture: Jewish Interpretation and Controversy in Medieval Languedoc* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Steven Harvey, "Falaquera's *Epistle of the Debate* and the Maimonidean Controversy of the 1230s," in Ruth Link-Salinger ed., *Torah and Wisdom: Studies in Jewish Philosophy, Kabbalah, and Halachah: Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman* (New York: Shengold, 1992), 75–86.

2 See Giuseppe Sermoneta, "La dottrina dell'intelletto e la 'fede filosofica' di Jehudah e Immanuel Romano," *Studi Medievali* 6:2 (1965), 1–78.

3 On the "heroic" image of Maimonides, see Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture*.

4 On this phenomenon, see Carlos Fraenkel, *Philosophical Religions from Plato to Spinoza: Reason, Religion, and Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

5 Among Maimonidean philosophers, interpretation of the *Guide* flourished alongside biblical commentaries in the Maimonidean mold, and interpretation of Maimonides' works other than the *Guide*. See Aviezer Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zerahiah b. Isaac b. Shealtiel Hen & the Maimonidean-Tibbonian Philosophy in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century," Ph.D. diss. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977 [Hebrew]. See also James T. Robinson, "We Drink Only from the Master's Water: Maimonides and Maimonideanism in Southern France, 1200–1306," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 40 (2007–2008), 27–60.

in which scholars sent queries about the *Guide* to one another.<sup>6</sup> To facilitate its study, Maimonidean scholars authored summaries, glossaries, indexes, dictionaries, and propaedeutic manuals.<sup>7</sup> In more direct interface with the text, we find marginal glosses as well as a large number of formal running commentaries.<sup>8</sup> In terms of literary diversity, the *Guide* has engendered a library vaster than that of any other text of Jewish philosophy.

The present study focuses on one shelf of the Maimonideanist library: running commentary.<sup>9</sup> The earliest commentaries on the *Guide* date from the mid to late 13th century, just a few decades removed from the composition of the book itself. They continued to be produced until the early modern period, when the last commentary was penned by Solomon Maimon (1753–1800). The vast majority of commentaries were written in Hebrew, with a few extant works in Judaeo-Arabic. Most commentaries were written on European soil, in both Sephardic and Ashkenazi contexts. Nearly every commentary was written not on the original Judaeo-Arabic but on ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation. Few commentators could actually read or had physical access to the original version. Properly speaking, commentators on the *Guide* re-interpreted both Maimonides and Samuel ibn Tibbon, who acquired a measure of authority for several of the earliest interpreters.<sup>10</sup>

The phenomenon of commentary on the *Guide* is multi-faceted, extending over many centuries and cultural contexts. The first facet is historical. This study centers

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**6** Poetry: Moritz Steinschneider, "Moreh Maqom Ha-Moreh: A Collection of Poems Relevant to Maimonides and His Famous Works, Both Printed and Unprinted," *Qovetz 'al yad 1* (1885), 1–32; sermons: Jacob Anatoli, *Malmad ha-talmidim*, Hebrew-Italian edition, *Il pungolo dei discepoli = Malmad ha-talmidim: il sapere di un ebreo e Federico II*, trans. Luciana Pepi (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2004); biblical commentary: Samuel ibn Tibbon, *Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes: the Book of the Soul of Man*, trans. James T. Robinson (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); epistles: Isaac Abarbanel, *Teshuvot le-she'elot le-he-ḥakham Sha'ul ha-Kohen*, in *Ketavim 'al maḥshevet Israel* (Venice, 1574).

**7** Most of this literature has not been properly studied nor catalogued. The most influential glossary was penned by Samuel ibn Tibbon and appended to his translation of the *Guide*: *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot*, "The Interpretation of Strange Terms" (reproduced in most editions of the ibn Tibbon translation).

**8** See Moritz Steinschneider, "Die hebräischen Commentare zum 'Führer' des Maimonides," in *Festschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstag A. Berliner's*, eds A. Freimann and M. Hildesheimer (Frankfurt a.M.: J. Kauffmann, 1903), 345–363, and Jacob Dienstag, "Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*: A Bibliography of Commentaries and Glosses," in Ze'ev Falk, ed., *Gevurot ha-romah*. (Jerusalem: Mesharim, 1987), 207–237 [Hebrew].

**9** By "running commentary," I mean a commentary that follows the order of the text, covers its entirety or the greater part thereof, and is the work of one single author. Almost invariably, medieval Jewish philosophical commentaries feature a formal preface as well.

**10** On the role played by Samuel ibn Tibbon in the formation of Maimonideanism, see James T. Robinson, "Maimonides, Samuel ibn Tibbon, and the Construction of a Jewish Tradition of Philosophy," in Jay M. Harris, ed., *Maimonides After 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and His Influence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 291–306.

on the earliest layer of commentary in Italy, Spain, and the South of France, where study of the *Guide* went hand in hand with the study of philosophy. I begin it from Moses of Salerno's commentary, left unfinished upon his death in Italy in 1279. Moses of Salerno's commentary is the first full commentary on the *Guide*, that is, a commentary meant to cover the entire text. I close the early period with the commentary by Moses of Narbonne, written in 1362. Between these two figures, I turn to the commentaries by Shem Tov ibn Falaquera (d.1295), Zerahiah Hen (d. after 1291) and Joseph ibn Kaspi (c.1270–c.1340). These commentators are significant in that they form a core group of philosophical defenders of Maimonides during the text's rocky reception. Apologetics aside, they were central figures within a wide-ranging effort to buttress the authority of the *Guide* as a theological source as well as the key text of the Jewish philosophical canon. The works of these commentators construct the *Guide* as a book of philosophy as well as a manual of biblical exegesis.

A second facet of commentary on the *Guide* concerns the inherent tension between Maimonides' aims in the *Guide*, and the aims of Maimonidean philosophical culture. The early commentators faced a difficult task. As loyal Maimonideans, they were pulled in opposite directions. From one side, these interpreters saw it as their responsibility to defend and disseminate the text. They saw it as their mission to guide other individuals towards the path of the *Guide*, even if few turn out to be qualified to follow it all the way through. They implicitly accepted ibn Tibbon's periodization of Jewish philosophy as a process of gradual uncovering of theological and philosophical truths. This process begins with the biblical Moses, who revealed a little in the Hebrew Bible while concealing much. It continues with the rabbinical sages, and extends into the second Moses, i.e. Moses Maimonides, who "widened the openings" – that is, he revealed yet a little more – but along with concealment.<sup>11</sup> In ibn Tibbon's characterization, the process assumes that the Jewish community as a whole evolves intellectually such as to reach a point when more truths, or deeper truths, can be exposed to all. After the *Guide*, it has reached such a new point. The early commentators saw themselves as active participants in this process of uncovering.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the *Guide* is not a work meant for mass dissemination. Maimonides placed a number of restrictions upon its circulation. He meant the *Guide* to be read by a specific kind of reader, one who has an intellectual background in both Torah and in philosophy and is perplexed by the dissonance between the two. He believed that such readers were exceedingly few, one among "ten thousand ignoramuses," and those ignoramuses would be "displeased" with the *Guide*. Maimonides employs an elliptical style: "my purpose is that truths be glimpsed and then again be concealed," just as he maintains that Scripture has likewise concealed basic truths

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11 The "openings" are those of a filigree of silver that encases an apple of gold – a parable developed in the *Guide* for the concealment of truths. See Pines, 11–12.

12 See Samuel ibn Tibbon, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, trans. Robinson, 30–31, 160–166.

from casual readers, “the vulgar among the people.” Thus, he promises to offer in the *Guide* only incomplete explanations and “chapter headings,” leaving the reader to work out the unsaid meaning of the text on their own.<sup>13</sup>

Complicating the project of the commentators, Maimonides explicitly forbids his readers from explaining anything about the text to one another, orally or in writing. Whatever one learns from the *Guide*, Maimonides writes, must be kept to oneself. Readers are asked not be quick to refute the text, lest they have misunderstood it. Furthermore, these requests are presented in peculiar language: I “adjure,” that is, I impose an oath. In the preface to his commentary, Hillel of Verona points out that the language of this prohibition is in the form of a religious oath, presumably subject to Jewish legal strictures regarding oaths.

Following the positions taken by Samuel ibn Tibbon and Moses Maimonides, early commentators on the *Guide* were thus torn between two opposing tendencies: dissemination vs. restriction; revelation vs. concealment. For later interpreters, the fence had already been breached, so to speak, and this tension becomes attenuated. But with respect to commentators in the early period, who write without a long pre-existent tradition of commentary, the tension is palpable in ways great and small. It bears directly on the ways in which the commentators reinterpret and rewrite the *Guide*.<sup>14</sup>

This study traces the development of the philosophical commentary tradition through focus on one section of the *Guide*: the General Preface, which includes an introduction specifically to Part I of the book. The Preface to the *Guide* stands on its own as a theoretical expression of Maimonides’ aims, methods, and audience. It touches on a number of subjects that will receive more detailed exploration in the course of the text, such as the relationship between Jewish religious texts and Greek philosophical sources, Maimonides’ methods of biblical interpretation, and the nature of prophetic apprehension. It describes Maimonides’ anxieties regarding the disclosure of certain notions through the written medium, and the shortcomings of writing vis-à-vis oral teaching. Although individual commentators emphasize them to varying degrees, these themes all gain prominence the tradition of *Guide* exegesis as a whole.<sup>15</sup>

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**13** Pines, 6–7.

**14** While both ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne drew from earlier commentaries, they are explicit regarding the dilemma of revelation vs. concealment. See the prologue to their commentaries, Chs. 6 and 7.

**15** There are in fact several documents included within the Preface to the *Guide*. They are, in order: a brief poem (“my knowledge goes forth”); the inscription “in the name of the Lord, God of the World,” cited by Maimonides at the beginning of several of his other works; the “Epistle Dedicatory,” where Maimonides explains what led him to compose the *Guide*. This is followed by another brief poem (“Cause me to know the way”), and the Preface proper. Within the Preface, there are three or four sections: the first section begins with the explanation of equivocality (Pines 5). In a number of manuscripts of the commentaries – but not all – another section is formally marked with the

Much of Jewish philosophy produced between Maimonides and Spinoza draws upon concepts brought forward in the Preface to the *Guide*. It is a central text in the history of Jewish textual interpretation. This study is therefore situated in part within the history of Jewish philosophy, and in part within the history of Jewish exegesis. It concerns the contents of transmission: the philosophical notions, themes, or terms that each commentator emphasizes. Likewise, this study is concerned with the modes of transmission: genres, literary structures, and exegetical methods.<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2 Categorizing the Tradition

One dominant stream of early commentaries reads the *Guide* through the lenses of philosophical sources. I shall call this stream the philosophical tradition. My study focuses on five key thinkers in the philosophical tradition: Moses of Salerno, Joseph ibn Falaquera, Zerahiah Hen, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne. Although there are significant differences among them, they all accept the authority of Jewish and non-Jewish philosophical sources in the investigation of the *Guide*. These commentaries inform the reader how Jewish philosophy, Latin Scholastic philosophy, or Greco-Arabic philosophy might clarify, confirm, or dispute Maimonides' words.

By way of context, I shall offer a few remarks on the philosophical stream of commentary and give a brief periodization of the tradition. I will then turn to the significance of the individual early commentators.

Philosophical commentaries on the *Guide* employ a number of exegetical methodologies that also appear in non-philosophical commentaries. What sets this stream apart is the method of clarifying the *Guide* by reference to specific philosophical sources, philosophical readings of Scripture, or a pre-existent philosophical system such as Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism. In the view of many philosophical commentators, the animating questions are: how can this source shed light on the obscurities of the text? Can it reveal anything we had not noticed or learned before? Where Maimonides and a given philosophical authority disagree, whom should we follow? Yet another philosophical approach to the *Guide* is to search for clarification among the

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subheading "Introduction" at the passage that begins "As I have mentioned parables, we shall make the following introductory remarks" (Pines, 10). A third section is "Instruction with Respect to this Treatise," often but not always marked as such in the manuscripts (Pines 15). The fourth section describes the causes of textual contradictions, also not always marked as such (Pines 17). For a global view of Maimonidean introductions, see Steven Harvey, "Maimonides and the Art of Writing Introductions," *Maimonidean Studies* 5 (2008), 85–105.

**16** On the larger history of the reception of Maimonides, see James A. Diamond, *Maimonides and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Carlos Fraenkel, ed., *Traditions of Maimonideanism* (Boston: Brill, 2009); James T. Robinson, ed., *The Cultures of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought* (Boston: Brill, 2009).

sources that Maimonides himself may have consulted, or among sources contemporaneous with him. This method has become current in modern scholarship, and it is foreshadowed by ibn Falaquera's commentary *Moreh ha-moreh*.

There are a number of commentaries that are not philosophical, but interpret the *Guide* through other lenses. Those commentaries may include some discussion of the philosophical background of the text, but their methodology and purpose is not related to philosophical canons, either Jewish or non-Jewish. The commentaries by Abraham Abulafia, for example, aim to give a kabbalistic reading of the *Guide*, while the commentary by Mordechai Jaffe reads the *Guide* in light of the rabbinical tradition. Since the *Guide* contains a strong philosophical layer, some discussion of philosophical issues may be unavoidable in any commentary. But there remains a distinction between the methodologies and sources employed in philosophical tradition against those in other streams.

I begin with a brief history of the tradition, with attention to the ideological goals and the discourse of the commentaries.

### 1.3 Historical Overview

The vast majority of commentaries on the *Guide* are in Hebrew and rely on the Hebrew translation of the *Guide* by Samuel ibn Tibbon (1204, revised 1213). Ibn Tibbon's text, though generally faithful to the Arabic original, is far more difficult to read than Judah al-Ḥarizi's translation (produced shortly after Ibn Tibbon's first translation). Shem Tov ibn Falaquera (13th century) is the only commentator who makes extensive use of the Judaeo-Arabic text. His commentary retranslates lemmata into Hebrew, and appends a critique of Ibn Tibbon's translation to the commentary as a whole. Finally, there are a small number of commentaries in Arabic; the most notable example is that by Abu Abd-Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Tabrizi. However, even in Arabic-speaking communities scholars tended to read and interpret the *Guide* in the translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon.<sup>17</sup>

The legacy of Ibn Tibbon is prominent among commentaries on the *Guide*, and particularly so for the earliest period (13th–14th century). What is known as Maimonideanism is in many respects a Maimonideanism-Tibbonism, which owes much to the impact of Ibn Tibbon, and is not a “pure” Maimonideanism. I spoke earlier of how Maimonides and Ibn Tibbon diverge. Let me briefly note here two aspects of Ibn

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<sup>17</sup> Tzvi Langermann, “Study and Commentary on ‘The Guide of the Perplexed’ in Arabic-Speaking Jewish Communities,” in Sara Klein-Braslavy et al, eds., *Tribute to Michael: Studies in Jewish and Muslim Thought Presented to Professor Michael Schwarz* (Tel-Aviv: The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities; Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, 2009), 67–90.

Tibbon's legacy that have a direct impact on commentaries on the *Guide*: the exegetical technique of "re-writing," and Ibn Tibbon's view of esotericism.

The difficulty of Ibn Tibbon's translation provides an initial impetus for the technique of rewriting. While he is not responsible for its appearance, it builds upon his contribution as translator of the text. This technique appears in several of the commentaries in this study. It consists of the commentator's interpolation of his own words with those of the *Guide*, resulting in a re-written passage that is a hybrid of both commentary and text. This is an attempt to render clarity to Ibn Tibbon's words while maintaining a close connection with the text (rather than simply rewriting the entire passage with only the commentator's own words). However, commentators most often do not signal to readers that the passage has been rewritten, and sometimes conclude rewritten passages with the marker "etc.," leading incautious readers to conclude that what the commentator has just offered is a verbatim lemma from the *Guide*. The technique amounts to an implicit means of controlling the reader's interpretation of the text.

The commentators also inherit from him the idea of Maimonides as an esoteric writer, one who addresses distinct audiences through a multi-layered text.<sup>18</sup> But Maimonides' esotericism is not identical to Tibbonian esotericism. Ibn Tibbon contributes the notion of "widening" the holes in the filigree of the "apple of gold," a reference to the well-known *mashal* (parable) in the Preface to the *Guide* describing an apple of gold encased by a filigree of silver.<sup>19</sup> By "widening the holes" Ibn Tibbon means that truths that disclosure of truths can become broader with each passing generation. Ibn Tibbon sees himself as one who can communicate theological truths in a more open fashion than Maimonides. Later Maimonideanists, such as the commentators in this study, authorize themselves to reveal truths in an even more expansive fashion than Ibn Tibbon, widening the holes further. They begin to compose works, such as commentaries, that popularize philosophy and the *Guide* to wider audiences. However, the form of commentary – direct contact with the text – brings the interpreters into direct contact with the sharper-drawn esotericism of the *Guide*, which emphasizes limits on disclosure: transmission to a single individual at a time, through "chapter headings," and strict controls on dissemination of the text. The tension between Maimonidean and Tibbonian esotericism can be felt throughout the early commentaries, and each commentator resolves it in his own way.

For my periodization below, I rely on extant primary sources and on scholarly listings of commentaries, along with secondary sources.<sup>20</sup> Our present knowledge of

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**18** Aviezer Ravitzky, "Samuel ibn Tibbon and the Esoteric Character of the *Guide of the Perplexed*," in *History and Faith: Studies in Jewish Philosophy* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1996), 205–245, and Aviezer Ravitzky, "The Secrets of Maimonides: Between the Thirteenth and the Twentieth Centuries," in *History and Faith*, 246–303.

**19** Pines, 11–12;

**20** Steinschneider, "Die hebräischen Commentare;" Dienstag, "A Bibliography of Commentaries;" *HÜB* 423–426, 433–434.

the commentaries still contains many lacunae. My account of the tradition is tentative, based on commentaries whose authorship has been identified; there still remain a large number of anonymous commentaries, many of which survive in manuscript fragments.

### 1.3.1 Chronological Distribution: Five Stages of Commentary

I classify the tradition of commentaries on the *Guide* into five major periods or stages. For the purposes of study, each stage can be identified with a distinct geographic/cultural zone.

First Stage: Spain, South of France, and Italy, 13th–14th centuries. The earliest reception of the *Guide of the Perplexed* was accompanied by much dispute. Some of the earliest commentaries emerge against this background. Certain authorities tended to hold the study of philosophy in high esteem, which was in turn opposed by others. Both the *Guide* and the study of philosophy were bitterly divisive in Spain and France.<sup>21</sup> In this case, the paradigm of commentary as a text that is written on a foundational or canonical text does not seem to apply.<sup>22</sup>

We can point to the commentaries by Moses ben Solomon of Salerno (d.1279), Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She’alti’el Ḥen (d. after 1291, originally from Spain), and Hillel ben Samuel of Verona (c.1220–c.1295) as among the earliest to be written in Italy. Outside of Italy, the major philosophical commentary of the 13th century is by Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera (probably Spain, c.1225–c.1295), alongside the Kabbalistic commentaries by Abraham Abulafia (Spain and the Mediterranean, 1240–after 1291) and the glosses by Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla (Spain, 1248–c.1305).<sup>23</sup> In the South of France, the most representative commentaries of this period are those of Joseph ibn Kaspi (c.1279–1340) and Moses of Narbonne (1300–1362). There are also two commentaries (or sets of glosses) that are not extant but which are mentioned in other sources: one is by Jacob ben Eliyahu of Lattes (13th century) and the other by

<sup>21</sup> See Moshe Halbertal, *Between Torah and Wisdom: Rabbi Menaḥem ha-Meiri and the Maimonidean Halakhists of Provence* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000) [Hebrew], and Septimius, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*.

<sup>22</sup> Jan Assmann, “Introduction,” in *Text und Kommentar: Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation IV*, eds Jan Assmann and Burkhard Gladigow (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1995), 1–33.

<sup>23</sup> On Hillel of Verona, see the introduction to the German translation of his main work (*Tagmulei ha-nefesh*), *Über die Vollendung der Seele*, trans. Yossef Schwartz (Freiburg: Herder, 2009), 9–45; on Ibn Falaquera, see Yair Shiffman, “Shem Tob Ibn Falqerah as Interpreter of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* – Outlines of His Thought,” *Maimonidean Studies* 3 (1992–1993), 1–29 [Hebrew section]; on Abulafia and Gikatilla, see Moshe Idel, “Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* and the Kabbalah,” *Jewish History* 18 (2004), 197–226.

Yedayah Bedersi (c.1270–1340), both from the South of France.<sup>24</sup> Moses of Narbonne's commentary (1362) provides a convenient *terminus ad quem* for this stage; his commentary left an outsize mark on later commentaries on the *Guide*.

In my view, this period is the most fluid and creative in the history of commentary on the *Guide*. In some ways, it charted the future course of the tradition. Interpreters in the second and third stages freely absorbed and critiqued the commentators of this period. In the commentaries of the first stage we see a number of motifs that would recur in later interpretation of the *Guide*, such as the notion that the text contains “secrets” (Ibn Kaspi), and the view that the *Guide* should be explained against the background of philosophical sources from the Greco-Arabic canon (Zerahiah Hen, Ibn Falaquera, Ibn Kaspi, Moses of Narbonne). With the exception of Ibn Falaquera, commentators in this stage tend to emphasize the close connection between the *Guide* and Scripture, sometimes viewing Maimonides' *Guide* as a key to unlock the deeper meaning of the Bible. These first commentaries on the *Guide* are therefore also indispensable for the study of Jewish biblical commentary after Maimonides.

Second Stage: Spain, late 14th–15th centuries. The most representative commentaries of this stage are those by Efodi (Profiat Duran; c.1350–c.1415), Asher Crescas (possibly from Provence, 1st half of 15th c.), and Shem Tov ben Joseph ben Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov (fl.1461–1489). These commentaries do not presuppose extensive philosophical knowledge on the part of the reader, and tend to explain the letter of the text rather than the implications of problematic passages. These commentators borrow from Ibn Falaquera, Ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne, often without attribution. Also worthy of note at this stage is the earliest known commentary written in Ashkenaz, by Solomon ben Judah ha-Nasi, who hailed from Provence and wrote the commentary for an Ashkenazi patron. It is the only identified commentary on the *Guide* produced in an Ashkenazi milieu written before the 16th century.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> According to his descendant Isaac ben Jacob Lattes (2nd half of 14th c.), Jacob of Lattes interpreted the *Guide* either as a running commentary or in the form of glosses. Moshe Halbertal interprets Isaac's remarks to mean that Jacob of Lattes did write a formal commentary, which would constitute the earliest commentary on the *Guide*. See Halbertal, *Rabbi Menachem ha-Meir*, 145, and Yechiel Tseitkin, “R. Isaac de Lattes – A Maimonidean Provençal Author and His Commentary on the Torah (In Manuscript),” *Shenaton: an Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 22 (2013), 223–224 n7 [Hebrew]. Yedayah Bedersi mentions a commentary in his *Treatise Upon Personal or Individual Forms* under the title *Midbar qedemot* (Deut 2:26). See Salomon Munk, *Manuscripts orientaux: catalogues des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1866), 175. The *Treatise* is in ms Paris 984, ff. 66r-93r.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Z. Nehorai, “Rabbi Solomon ben Judah Hanasi and His Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” Ph.D. diss. The Hebrew University, 1978 [Hebrew]. Nehorai describes Hanasi as one who tends to accept the tenets of Aristotelianism as developed by Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina in an original and independent manner, which prevents identifying his thought entirely within any one Jewish philosophical school, be it the Sephardic-Provençal or Italian. Nonetheless, Nehorai also notes the incisive influence of Samuel ibn Tibbon and Jacob Anatoli on the commentary, which quotes both by name. Nehorai, “Rabbi Solomon,” 10–11.

Third Stage: Spain, Italy, and Levant, 15th–16th centuries. The most representative commentary of this period is that of Isaac Abarbanel (Spain/Italy, 1437–1508). The commentary is erudite, often citing Ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne, but also disputational. Unlike previous commentators on the *Guide*, Abarbanel was a sharp critic of Maimonides and frequently disagreed with him.<sup>26</sup> However, another noted commentator, David ben Judah Messer Leon (c.1470–c.1535), often defends Maimonides against critics. Despite these differences, both commentators seek to defend religion as a repository of certain revealed truths not accessible through philosophical study. The two hold that philosophical study has some value, although it is inferior to the truths of Torah.<sup>27</sup> They were open to alternatives to Maimonidean Aristotelianism such as Platonism and Kabbalah at a time when the authority of Aristotle was challenged both in Christian and Jewish philosophy. Thus it emerges that in this period commentary on the *Guide* was often put in the service of theological goals. The partial commentary by Moses ben Avraham Provençal (Italy, 1503–1575) further illustrates this trend. It focuses entirely on a portion of the *Guide* dealing with Aristotelian physics (the Preface to Part II). However, Provençal defends Aristotelianism as a *sine qua non* for the elaborate theological edifice built during the preceding centuries.<sup>28</sup>

Fourth Stage: Ashkenaz, 16th–17th centuries. Study of science and philosophy in Ashkenaz never developed to the same extent as it did in Sepharad, but two key figures of the 16th century provided an opening for a modest flourishing of philosophical study in general and the *Guide* in particular. Maharal of Prague (R. Judah Loew ben Bezalel, 1512?–1609) was not open to the disinterested pursuit of philosophy, but acknowledged the authority of Maimonides and cited the *Guide* when it suited his larger purposes. Rama (R. Moses Isserles, Poland, 1520–1572) permitted the study of philosophy. He justified it by claiming to study only what was contained in the *Guide*, and that any rate philosophy is preferable to Kabbalah.<sup>29</sup>

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**26** There are differing views of Abarbanel's attitude towards the *Guide* and the commentaries. Cf. Leo Strauss, "On Abravanel's Philosophical Tendency and Political Teaching," in Kenneth Hart Green, ed., *Leo Strauss on Maimonides: The Complete Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 579–613, who argues that Abarbanel rejected earlier philosophical interpretation of the text, and Eric Lawee, "'The Good We Accept and the Bad We Do Not': Aspects of Isaac Abarbanel's Stance Towards Maimonides," in Jay M. Harris, ed., *Be'erot Yitzhak: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 119–160, who argues that Abarbanel selectively accepted such interpretations.

**27** Hava Tirosh-Rotschild, *Between Worlds: The Life and Thought of Rabbi David ben Judah Messer Leon* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 90–98; Eric Lawee, *Isaac Abarbanel's Stance Toward Tradition: Defense, Dissent, and Dialogue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 33–34, 55–57, 207–210.

**28** Reuven Bonfil, "The Commentary of R. Moses Provençal on Rambam's Twenty-Five Premises," *Qiryat sefer* 50 (1974/1975), 157 [Hebrew].

**29** Leonard Levin, *Seeing With Both Eyes: Ephraim Luntshitz and the Polish-Jewish Renaissance* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 28–29.

These attitudes coalesce in the thought of R. Mordekhai Jaffe (Prague, c.1535–1612) who studied under Rama, and later replaced Maharal as rabbi of Prague. Jaffe authored a monumental ten-volume code of Jewish law for rabbinical students; one of the volumes was a commentary on the *Guide* (*Levush pinnat yiqrat*). By doing so, he effectively placed study of the *Guide* in his rabbinical curriculum. The commentary represented an important stage in the controlled absorption of rationalist philosophy into Eastern European rabbinical culture.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, the commentary tends to harmonize Maimonides' positions with rabbinical Judaism, in an approach reminiscent of Isaac Abarbanel. Two other commentators of distinction are Joseph ben Isaac Ha-Levi (c.1580–?) and Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller (1579–1654). Ha-Levi penned a topical commentary on three particular issues (divine existence, incorporeality, and unity), entitled *Giv'at ha-Moreh*. He taught philosophy in Prague, with the *Guide* as a textbook, and also wrote a commentary on al-Ghazali's *Intentions of the Philosophers*. Heller, a student of Ha-Levi, wrote a collection of glosses on his teacher's *Giv'at ha-Moreh*, which may be thus considered a supercommentary on the *Guide*.

Central to our purposes is the fact that both Jaffe and Ha-Levi cite several earlier commentators on the *Guide*. Jaffe relied heavily on Moses of Narbonne, and he cites as well Efodi, Shem Tov and Asher Crescas, which by his time were available in a printed edition of the *Guide* (1553). Ha-Levi was proficient in post-Maimonidean Jewish philosophy, and he too cites the commentaries of Moses of Narbonne, Efodi, Asher Crescas, Shem Tov, and Moses Provençal.

Although the commentary by Moses of Narbonne was not available in print at this time, it circulated indirectly through the critical glosses of R. Menaḥem Shalem (early 1400s).<sup>31</sup> Moses of Narbonne's commentary had also been cited by another Ashkenazi authority of early 1400s Prague, Yom Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen, who writes in his *Ha-'eshkol* that he relied on Maimonides and on two commentators on the *Guide*, Moses of Narbonne and "Solomon the Foreigner"<sup>32</sup> (likely Solomon ha-Nasi). Commentaries on the *Guide*, in particular that by Moses of Narbonne, constituted an important bridge between Sepharad and Ashkenaz with respect to the acceptance and dissemination of philosophical study.

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**30** Lawrence J. Kaplan, "Rationalism and Rabbinic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Eastern Europe: Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's 'Levush Pinat Yikrat,'" Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 1975, 348.

**31** Kaplan, "Rationalism," 143. R. Menaḥem Shalem may have penned a commentary on the *Guide* (only a fragment of uncertain authorship survives). Cf. Daniel Lasker, "Jewish Philosophical Polemics in Ashkenaz," in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics Between Christians and Jews*, eds Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 202, 205–206. See also Frank Talmage in "An Anti-Christian Polemic in Eastern Europe in the Style of Sephardi Polemics – a Unique Manuscript," *Qiryat Sefer* 56 (1980–1981), 369–372 [Hebrew].

**32** Judah Kaufman, "Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Mühlhausen, the Apologete, Cabbalist and Philosophical Writer and His books *Haeshkol* and *Kawwanath hatefilah*," Ph.D. diss. Dropsie College, 1919, 127, 145 [Hebrew].

Fifth Stage: Ashkenaz, 18th–19th centuries. The last stage in the tradition of commentary on the *Guide* stands on the threshold between the pre-modern and modern worlds. Within Jewish letters the genre of commentary, characteristic of medieval scholarship, gives way to other scholarly genres such as *inter alia* journal articles, monographs, and encyclopedia entries, in the context of the academization of Jewish Studies in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement.<sup>33</sup>

This is not to say that modern Jewish scholarship put aside either Maimonides or the *Guide* – quite the contrary. Rather, it means that contents and functions fulfilled by medieval commentaries are transferred towards new formats and ways of organizing scholarly discourse.<sup>34</sup> After Solomon Maimon, commentary on the *Guide* ceases to become the expected instrument with which to study and write about the text. The process was virtually inevitable – it had occurred centuries earlier in relation to Aristotelian and other such canonical texts.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, the migration of knowledge from one genre into disparate others brought with it a certain loss, a “sort of forgetfulness.” In the case of the *Guide*, this sense of “loss” set the stage for Leo Strauss’ later re-reading of Maimonides, although Straus did not write a commentary.<sup>36</sup> The practice of commentary on the *Guide* has been revived in much more recent times, although it is uncertain which directions it will take in the future.

The last formal commentary on the *Guide* stands on its own in originality and significance. Entitled *Giv’at ha-Moreh*, it was composed by the neo-Kantian philosopher Solomon Maimon (1753–1800). It relies heavily on Moses of Narbonne’s commentary, and both commentaries were printed together. This edition marked the first printing of Moses of Narbonne’s commentary more than four centuries after it was written.<sup>37</sup>

Maimon’s commentary decisively brings together the medieval and the nascent modern in Jewish philosophy through a radically rational understanding of religion, and exalts the *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) in identifying it with the Maimonidean notion of *shlemut* (perfection). It provides a medieval, “traditional” basis to legitimize pursuit of science and philosophy under markedly different social conditions.

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**33** On the reception of the *Guide* in modernity, see George Y. Kohler, *Reading Maimonides’ Philosophy in 19th Century Germany: the Guide to Religious Reform* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012). On the death of commentary, see John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 200–224.

**34** “It should be apparent that the central fact was not the epuishment and, eventually, the extinction of the commentary genre, but a sort of migration: contents, methods and open questions, bred within the commentary tradition, moved to other ways of organizing scientific discourse.” Stefano Perfetti, “How and When the Medieval Commentary Died Out: the Case of Aristotle’s Zoological Writings,” in *Il commento filosofico nell’Occidente Latino (secoli XIII–XV)*, eds Gianfranco Fioravanti et al (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 440. Perfetti’s observation seems to apply to the history of the *Guide* as well.

**35** *Ibid.*

**36** Green, *Leo Strauss on Maimonides*, 44.

**37** Shmuel Hugo Bergman and Nathan Rotenstreich, eds., *Giv’at ha-moreh* (Jerusalem: National Academy of Sciences, 1965, reprint 2000).

Moreover, the commentary develops a notion of the *Haskalah* that is ideologically continuous with medieval precedent rather than as a Jewish form of German *Bildung*.<sup>38</sup>

It is significant that Maimon's *Giv'at ha-Moreh* was openly modeled after Moses of Narbonne's commentary. As early as Isaac Abarbanel the radical nature of Moses of Narbonne's interpretation had been singled out for condemnation, since Moses of Narbonne identifies Maimonides with a naturalistic view of religion. According to this view, religion is a necessary though not a sufficient instrument for human perfection, and perfection is ultimately achieved through the intellect.<sup>39</sup> Through the mediation of Maimon's commentary, this view found expression in the *Haskalah* ideal of the "sovereignty of universal reason over religion" and "mirrored the social promise of the Enlightenment [that Jews] might meet with their Christian counterparts as equals within the public sphere of discourse."<sup>40</sup> Moses of Narbonne's commentary was viewed as radical in terms of its method as well. The early modern scholar Joseph Delmedigo (Crete, born 1591) states having seen eighteen commentaries on the *Guide*, "both large and small."<sup>41</sup> He compares four commentaries to the four sons depicted in the Passover *Haggadah*: Shem Tov is the wise son, who ably clarifies difficulties; Asher Crescas is the simple son, whose commentary is "like rabbinical commentaries;" Efodi is the one who does not know how to ask; and Moses of Narbonne is the *rasha'*, the evil son.<sup>42</sup> In Delmedigo's view Moses of Narbonne grasped the full extent of the *Guide* more than any other commentator, but revealed the secrets of the text indiscriminately, exposing them to the eyes of all readers. Under this perspective, the sin of Moses of Narbonne is not to hold radical Averroistic positions, but to communicate them openly and exoterically. Although it is at odds with Maimonidean esotericism, such an ideal of open, exoteric communication correlates with the Enlightenment ideal of elevating the intellectual level of the masses through universal

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**38** Abraham Socher, *The Radical Enlightenment of Solomon Maimon: Judaism, Heresy, and Philosophy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 83.

**39** For Moses of Narbonne the value of the Torah is predominantly ethical and political: "its true intended aim" is for "us to be perfected and the state of our societies to be improved by our Torah regarding actions." Jakob Goldenthal, ed., *Be'ur le-sefer Moreh Nevukhim* (Vienna: K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1852), 2. For an account of Abarbanel's treatment of Moses of Narbonne, see Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986), 98–108.

**40** Socher, *Radical Enlightenment*, 82. Cf. the remarks by Maimon's editor, Isaac Euchel, in *ibid* 81.

**41** Delmedigo names the commentaries by Shem Tov Provençal (perhaps Moses Provençal), Ibn Kaspi, Ibn Falaquera, al-Tabrizi, David Yahya, and Isaac Abarbanel, which he encountered in the library of a Karaite scholar in Constantinople. "Mikhtav 'aḥuz," in Abraham Geiger, ed., *Melo Chofnajim* (Berlin: L. Fernbach, 1840), 18 [Hebrew], 23–24 [German].

**42** *Melo Chofnajim*, *ibid*. Delmedigo qualifies his assessment of Efodi as one who provides not questions but answers, comparing him favorably to Rashi; knowledgeable in geometry and astronomy; and the "chief among the commentators" (*rosh ha-parshanim*).

education. This view may help explain why early Maskilim found much to appreciate in Moses of Narbonne and Solomon Maimon's commentaries.<sup>43</sup>

## 1.4 Early Philosophical Commentators of the *Guide*

Moses of Salerno, Ibn Falaquera, Zerahiah Hen, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne (or Moshe Narboni) belong to what I date as the early stage of philosophical commentary, roughly from the mid-13th through the late 14th centuries.

There are a few reasons to establish Moses of Salerno's commentary as the *terminus a quem*, and the commentary by Moses of Narbonne as the *terminus ad quem*. In terms of formal criteria, Moses of Salerno's commentary is the first to write a commentary covering the *Guide* from beginning to end, even though he was prevented from finishing it by his death. While not the earliest commentary on the text – that distinction might belong to Al-Tabrizi's commentary on the Preface to Part II – Moses of Salerno's commentary is indirectly connected to Samuel ibn Tibbon himself, the founding figure in what would become the "Maimonidean-Tibbonian" school of thought. Moses of Salerno's commentary constitutes the earliest sustained reception not only of Maimonides, but also of Ibn Tibbon, into the Italian cultural space. As for Moses of Narbonne, his commentary left an outsize mark on much of the later tradition even as other early commentaries become forgotten. It acquired wide dissemination from the Levant to Ashkenaz, and earned a canonical status of sorts among the commentaries (as evidenced circumstantially by its circulation in manuscript form long after the advent of the printing press). To refine the period under question, then, our early stage of commentary begins in the 1250s or 1260s (Moses of Salerno) and lasts through 1362 (Moses of Narbonne).

The commentaries by these authors constitute sustained attempts to understand the *Guide* philosophically during a period of competing agendas in the reception (or rejection) of the text. As a whole, the significance of their project lies in rewriting the *Guide* as the foundation of Judaism writ large, encompassing both philosophy and theology. Taken as a whole, the commentaries reflect some of the enduring themes of early exegesis of Maimonides. Individually, each commentator represents a strand of the Maimonidean exegetical tradition, showing the multiple philosophical receptions of the *Guide* into three varied contexts: Spain, Italy, and Southern France. It is to these multiple receptions that I now turn.

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<sup>43</sup> Socher, *Radical Enlightenment*, 81, poses that Delmedigo's assessment of Moses of Narbonne as *rasha'* was "probably meant as a compliment." While Delmedigo praises Moses of Narbonne's knowledge of the *Guide*, he blames him as the "talebearer who revealeth secrets" (Prov 11:13) without regard for who might read him. It is this supposed disregard for the esoteric method that makes Moses of Narbonne the evil son.

Two of our earliest commentators, Moses of Salerno and Zeraḥiah Ḥen, were active in Italy. Unlike Spain or France, the reception of the *Guide* was not controversial there. However, a number of readings of the text flourished alongside each other. Abraham Abulafia, who can be considered the most significant kabbalist exegete of the *Guide*, travelled around the peninsula teaching the text to groups of students. Zeraḥiah vehemently rejected magical interpretations of the *Guide* such as those proposed by Abulafia, and he also publically disagreed with Hillel of Verona on the interpretation of the text.<sup>44</sup> Zeraḥiah lived in Rome, having moved there from Spain at the invitation of the local Jewish community, and expressly in order to teach the *Guide*.<sup>45</sup>

Along with Ibn Falaquera, Zeraḥiah represents a Spanish tradition of *Guide* exegesis that reads the *Guide* nearly exclusively through Arabic philosophy, particularly through Ibn Rushd. In this, his commentary resembles that of Ibn Falaquera, who invokes Ibn Rushd frequently as “the aforementioned scholar” (*he-ḥakham ha-nizkar*). Zeraḥiah’s reading of the *Guide* is independent of his immediate surroundings in Italy, and he mentions no Jewish philosopher apart from Samuel ibn Tibbon. Like Ibn Falaquera, Zeraḥiah’s commentary inscribes the *Guide* into the canon of Greco-Arabic philosophy. Zeraḥiah was a prolific translator of Arabic philosophical works into Hebrew. His entire intellectual background, like that of Ibn Falaquera, was formed by the same Greco-Arabic philosophical culture in which the *Guide* takes shape.

Moses of Salerno’s commentary, on the other hand, embodies the interplay between the *Guide* and the native Italian context. Unlike Zeraḥiah, Moses of Salerno was intellectually open to his immediate environment. The commentary is born of his joint study of the *Guide* with a certain Niccolò da Giovinazzo, a Christian prelate often called simply “the Christian scholar” (*he-ḥakham ha-nozri*) in the commentary. Moses of Salerno reproduces the comments offered by the Christian scholar throughout the commentary, and he cites a number of other Christians. Moses of Salerno also includes a number of translations of difficult terms into Italian, using the Hebrew alphabet.

Moses of Salerno was intellectually removed from the Greco-Arabic background of the *Guide*. He evinces no knowledge of Arabic or Arabic philosophers. Instead, he reads the *Guide* through the lenses of Jewish philosophers, in particular Samuel ibn Tibbon and Jacob Anatoli. The commentary also reflects some knowledge of Scholastic thought, gained indirectly, it seems, through the Christian scholar. Moses of Salerno’s commentary failed to gain many readers, and became virtually forgotten in the later commentary tradition. Nonetheless, his commentary foreshadows a trend of Jewish-Christian collaboration in Italy. The Italian translations within the commentary were gathered into a separate glossary by his son, who also edited the

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<sup>44</sup> On Zeraḥiah’s dismissal of magical approaches to the *Guide*, see Moshe Idel, “Abulafia’s Secrets of the *Guide*: A Linguistic Turn,” in *Perspectives on Jewish Thought and Mysticism*, eds. Alfred L. Ivry et al (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1998), 313–315.

<sup>45</sup> On Abulafia’s activity in Italy, see Idel, “*Guide of the Perplexed* and the Kabbalah.”

commentary. As a stand-alone glossary, the translations found much wider circulation than the commentary as a whole.

The commentaries by Joseph ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne represent the Southern French tradition of philosophical *Guide* exegesis. They are characterized by relative intellectual isolation from their immediate surroundings, and greater reliance on Greco-Arabic sources, especially on Ibn Rushd. To a modest degree, these commentaries occasionally reflect the influence of Kabbalah in the reading of the *Guide*.

The two commentaries by Ibn Kaspi and that by Moses of Narbonne reflect a preoccupation with the philosophical reading of Scripture that is unmatched in earlier commentaries. Both commentators regard the *Guide* not only as a philosophical text in its own right, but also as a manual of biblical exegesis. As a result, these two commentators are wont to point out the theological implications of Maimonides' philosophical reading of Scripture. This attitude represents a new phase in the early reception of the *Guide*. Maimonides is no longer one who merely introduces new ideas, which by now have been elucidated by the commentators of the 13th century. In the 14th century, the interest shifts to the larger implications of those new ideas.

Among the early commentators, Ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne had the most determinant influence upon the development of the tradition of commentary on the *Guide*. Commentators of the 15th and 16th centuries often cite Ibn Kaspi or Moses of Narbonne, sometimes in agreement but oftentimes not. For example, the commentary by Isaac Abarbanel abounds with fulminations against both Ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne. Moses of Narbonne is also mentioned by a number of readers in Ashkenaz, while Efodi and Shem Tov, in the 15th century, draw liberally from both French commentators without citing their names. In his turn, Ibn Kaspi's commentaries occasionally draw from an earlier commentator, Ibn Falaquera. Moses of Narbonne's commentary, too, occasionally uses Ibn Kaspi's commentaries as a source. Together, the two commentators reflect earlier readings while meaningfully building upon them.

The five commentators in this study each take on a different shade of significance within the history of commentary on the *Guide*, from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. As a whole, what they signify is greater than each isolated commentary. In comparison to later periods of commentary on the *Guide*, the early stage is characterized by a fluidity of thought and expression about the text. Since the *Guide* did not yet belong to any one canon, commentators felt unbound to any particular reading of the text. At the same time, they crystallize the notion that the *Guide* is a philosophical text writ large: they all betray the idea that only a philosophical understanding of the Jewish religion can lead one to salvation (in the sense of immortality of the soul), and that philosophical understanding has been put forth in the *Guide*. The task of the commentators is now to act as intermediaries between the closed, elitist Maimonides, and readers of the *Guide* in their own times. They not only rewrite the text but reshape an elitist ideology, acting as interpreters and ambassadors of (in their eyes) the correct version of Maimonideanism.

## 1.5 Structure and Chapters

This study is divided into an analytical section, an edition of the primary texts, and a synthetic conclusion. Chapter 2 lays out the intellectual background to each commentary. It singles out one dominant theme from each commentary for further discussion. For Moses of Salerno, the theme is his adaptation of *meshalim* (parables), as a heuristic method of teaching and of concealment/disclosure. For Ibn Falaquera, it is the apprehension of metaphysical truths by those who are not prophets, and the difficulties of transmitting such truths. For Zerahiah Hen, it is his use of the discipline of Logic in the interpretation of the *Guide*. In Ibn Kaspi's commentary *'Ammudei kesef*, I focus on the description of perplexity and the perplexed individual. In his other commentary, *Maskiyot kesef*, I turn to Ibn Kaspi's exemplification of Maimonides' seventh cause and Ibn Kaspi's political interpretation to the problem. Finally, for Moses of Narbonne, the theme on which I focus is elitism, and the relationship of the scholar to the multitude.

Chapter 3 describes the manuscript sources and reception of Moses of Salerno's commentary, followed by the section of his commentary that interprets the Preface to the *Guide*. The edition has an English translation, the original Hebrew text with manuscript variants, and explanatory notes. This structure is used in Chapters 3–7, with the exception of Chapter 4 (ibn Falaquera). For Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*, I give only the English translation and annotation, based on the critical Hebrew text established by Yair Shiffman. Chapter 5 has Zerahiah Hen's commentary. Chapter 6 has both of Ibn Kaspi's commentaries, *'Ammudei kesef* (*Pillars of Silver*) and *Maskiyot kesef* (*Settings of Silver*), and in Chapter 7 I turn to Moses of Narbonne. In Chapter 8, "Commentaries on the *Guide*: A Synthetic Conclusion," I take up some issues that concern the tradition as a whole: its "anomalous" character, the ways in which pre-modern readers made use of the commentaries, and a set of questions for further research.

A final note on style and terminology: All punctuation in the Hebrew texts is my own, as well as any material within brackets. Hebrew names and terms that are current in academic discourse are reproduced as popularly known (e.g. "Joseph," and not "Yosef"). I leave a few terms untranslated throughout the text: *mashal*, *ma'aseh bereshit*, and *ma'aseh merkavah*. In the Maimonidean tradition these terms acquired technical meanings distinct from their native rabbinical backgrounds. *Mashal* (pl. *meshalim*) is generally translated as "parable," but in commentaries on the *Guide* it has a number of meanings. Oftentimes it is used in the sense of pedagogical "example," that is, some piece of evidence with which a teacher can illustrate the matter at hand. Biblical prooftexts are frequently denominated as *meshalim*. The pedagogical dimension of *mashal* can be traced to the commentary on Ecclesiastes by Samuel ibn Tibbon, where he described *meshalim* as shortcuts for a teacher to avoid long-winded explanations and difficult language. In Moses of Salerno's commentary *mashal* acquires a sense of indispensability: he claims he cannot interpret

Maimonides' seventh cause of contradictions because he does not have a *mashal* for it. *Mashal* can also indicate an expression or narrative structure with different layers of meaning. A biblical verse can be categorized as *mashal*, whose internal meaning is termed *nimshal*. A biblical narrative, likewise, can be identified as *mashal*. When discussion of *mashal* arises, the commentators tend to find *meshalim* in Scripture or in philosophical works. Only more rarely do they construct original *meshalim* that follow a narrative parabolic structure.

*Ma'aseh bereshit* is usually translated as the "Account of Creation" and *ma'aseh merkavah* as the "Account of the Chariot." The latter refers to a body of rabbinical speculation concerning the vision of the divine chariot as described in the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah, and which were accompanied by strict restrictions on dissemination. In the *Guide*, Maimonides identified *ma'aseh bereshit* with Aristotelian physics and *ma'aseh merkavah* with Aristotelian metaphysics. All of the commentators in this study accept that identification. Furthermore, commentators often employ *ma'aseh bereshit* as a shorthand for a philosophical discussion on Creation, and *ma'aseh merkavah* to indicate what we would understand by "theology," or in Hebrew "divine science."

The commentators often indicate Maimonides by the titles *Moreh* or *Rav* rather than by name. I have rendered these terms as "Teacher" and "Rabbi," respectively. The term *moreh* is occasionally ambiguous as it can also indicate the book of the *Guide* itself (*Moreh ha-nevukhim*). Thus some phrases, for example, could read either as "according to the *Guide*" or "according to the Teacher."

## 2 Philosophical Commentators of the *Guide*, 13th–14th Centuries

In the last chapter I divided the tradition of commentaries on the *Guide* into five stages. This chapter emphasizes the individual character of five philosophical commentators of the earliest stage: Moses of Salerno, ibn Falaquera, Zerahiah Ḥen, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne (or Moshe Narboni). For each commentator, I first give a few brief remarks on his intellectual biography, and I then turn to a general description of his commentary on the *Guide*. I follow this description with a detailed investigation of his exegetical methods. I close with an analysis of a theme that is prominent in his commentary on the Preface to the *Guide*.

### 2.1 Moses ben Solomon of Salerno

Little is known regarding Moses ben Solomon of Salerno's life.<sup>1</sup> His date of birth is unknown, but the fortuitous discovery of his tombstone has revealed that he died in 1279.<sup>2</sup> He lived in Southern Italy, in Naples or Sicily. He was connected to the court of Frederick II, although it is not clear in what capacity.<sup>3</sup> He was not the first Jewish scholar to join the court. Jacob Anatoli, author of the *Malmaḥ ha-Talmidim* (*A Goad for Students*) had moved from Marseille to Naples in 1230 at the invitation of Frederick II and joined the court there.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Moritz Steinschneider, review of *Verhältniss Albert des Grossen zu Maimonides: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Philosophie*, by M. Joel, *Hebräische Bibliographie* 6:32 (1863), 31; Moritz Steinschneider, "Kaiser Friedrich II über Maimonides," *Hebräische Bibliographie* 7:39 (1864), 62–66; Moritz Steinschneider, *Letteratura Italiana dei Giudei: Cenni* (Rome: Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche, 1884), 26–30; Moritz Güdemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden*, volume 2, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der Juden in Italien während des Mittelalters* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1884), 168–170, 228; and Joseph Perles, *Die in einer Münchener Handschrift aufgefundenene erste lateinische Übersetzung der Maimonidischen "Führers"* (Breslau: H. Skutsch, 1875).

2 Nello Pavoncello, "Epigrafe ebraica nel Museo del Duomo di Salerno," *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* n.s. 18 (1968), 198–203; Giuseppe Sermoneta, *Un glossario filosofico ebraico-italiano del XIII secolo* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1963), 42–43 (henceforth *Glossario*).

3 Cf. Giuseppe Sermoneta, "Federico II e il pensiero ebraico nell'Italia del suo tempo," in *Federico II e l'arte del Duecento italiano*, ed. Angiola Romanini (Galatina: Congedo, 1980), 2:183–197; Colette Sirat, "La filosofia ebraica alla corte di Federico II," in *Federico II e le scienze*, eds. Pierre Toubert and Agostino Bagliani (Palermo: Sellerio, 1994), 185–197; Mauro Zonta, "Traduzioni filosofico-scientifiche et enciclopedie ebraiche alla corte di Federico II e dei suoi successori (secolo XIII)," *Materia Giudaica* 13:1–2 (2008), 63–70.

4 Sermoneta, *Glossario* 33–34.

Moses of Salerno often quotes approvingly from the *Mamad ha-Talmidim* in the commentary on the *Guide*, and identifies Anatoli's son Anatolio as his own teacher.<sup>5</sup> There is, then, a closely linked chain stretching from Samuel ibn Tibbon through Anatoli, his son-in-law, to Moses of Salerno. Other details of Moses of Salerno's career parallel that of Anatoli. Like Anatoli and the Christian Michael Scotus, who collaborated intellectually, Moses of Salerno worked alongside a "Christian scholar," named in the *Commentary* as Nicolà da Giovinazzo.<sup>6</sup> Moses of Salerno and Nicolà da Giovinazzo studied the *Guide* together, comparing Samuel ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation to a little-known Latin translation (likely to be the earliest Latin translation of the *Guide*).<sup>7</sup>

Jacob Anatoli's role at Frederick's court as a translator of Arabic into Hebrew was well-defined, even if some questions persist on *why* Frederick sought out a Hebrew translator.<sup>8</sup> Moses of Salerno was not a translator of Arabic into Hebrew. There is no evidence that he knew Arabic at all. Rather than translation of scientific works, Moses of Salerno engaged in Jewish-Christian polemics and centered his attention on Jewish religious and philosophical sources.

Apart from the *Commentary* Moses of Salerno composed a work entitled *Ta'anot* (*Objections*), an early example of Italian-Jewish anti-Christian polemics. The *Ta'anot* is divided into two parts: the first is a philosophical refutation of Christian dogma, employing arguments culled from the *Guide*; the second is a refutation of Christian readings of the Bible and Talmud.<sup>9</sup> Another work, *Ma'amar ha-'Emunah*, is cited in the commentary on the *Guide* but is not extant.<sup>10</sup> He also cites a *teshuvah* regarding Adam's knowledge of good and evil, which apparently has not survived.<sup>11</sup>

5 Sermoneta, *Glossario* 36–37, 43–44.

6 Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 50–51. For further details on the identity of the Christian scholar, see Caterina Rigo, "Per un'identificazione del 'sapiente cristiano' Nicola da Giovinazzo, collaboratore di Rabbi Mošeh ben Šelomoh da Salerno," *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* 69 (1999), 64–146.

7 Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 39; Giuseppe Sermoneta, "The Glosses of Moses ben Solomon of Salerno and Nicola da Giovinazzo on the *Guide of the Perplexed*," *Iyun* 20 (1970), 212–240 [Hebrew].

8 Those questions are discussed in Sermoneta, "Federico II."

9 Stanislaus Simon, "Mose ben Salomo von Salerno und seine philosophischen Auseinandersetzungen mit den Lehren des Christentums," Ph.D. diss. Schlesischen Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität zu Breslau, 1931. For a general description, see Hermann Vogelstein and Paul Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom* (Berlin: Mayer und Müller, 1896), 1:269–270. On the *Ta'anot* see also Daniel Lasker, "Jewish Polemics Against Christianity in Thirteenth-Century Italy," in *Hazon Nahum: Studies in Jewish Law, Thought, and History Presented to Dr. Norman Lamm*, eds. Yaakov Elman and Jeffrey S. Gurock (Hoboken: Ktav, 1997), 253–254. Contra Caterina Rigo, Lasker argues that the second part of the *Ta'anot* was not penned by Moses of Salerno, and therefore at least the second part of the work cannot be dated to the 1270s; see Daniel Lasker, "Jewish Knowledge of Christianity in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History: Festschrift in Honor of Robert Chazan*, eds. David Engel et al (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 104n22.

10 Gudemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens*, 230.

11 ms. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod heb. 370, f. 13r; Rigo, "Per un'identificazione," 62–63.

### 2.1.1 Commentary on the *Guide*

The commentary by Moses ben Solomon of Salerno was one of the earliest written on the *Guide* and only survives in manuscript.<sup>12</sup> The precise date of composition is a matter of scholarly contention. Some have dated it to the 1240s, on the basis of a mention of the year 1240 in the commentary on II:18,<sup>13</sup> while others have argued it was written after 1250.<sup>14</sup> A more recent claim is that Moses of Salerno began to write the commentary not before the 1260s and was occupied with it up to his death in 1279.<sup>15</sup>

The commentary was only written, or only survived, for parts I and II of the *Guide*. It is more likely that the commentary for part III was never written. The text found in the manuscript used for this study, ms Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 370, ends abruptly at II:44, and all other manuscripts do so as well. There are numerous lacunae within chapters. One example can be found in the commentary on the Preface between paragraphs 27 and 28, which also occurs in all other manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> There are also many lacunae in the commentary on II:29–31.<sup>17</sup> The manuscript, which is the oldest version of the text, was produced in Italy in the late 13th or early 14th centuries and therefore also very close to Moses of Salerno's death. An opening page in the manuscript (added by a different hand) states that Moses of Salerno's death prevented him from finishing the commentary.<sup>18</sup> There is no preface or prologue. A brief opening statement in the commentary, added by the copyist, describes it thus: "An expanded interpretation by the sage R. Moses ben Solomon of Salerno on two parts of the *Guide*, written by the great sage R. Moses [Maimonides]."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For a list of manuscripts, see Chapter Three.

<sup>13</sup> "We cannot know [the manner] of His bringing forth everything from nothing a short time ago, five thousand years." In the Hebrew calendar, 5,000=1240. See Perles, *Münchener Handschrift*, 7; *HÜB* §250 (433).

<sup>14</sup> Giuseppe Sermoneta argues that Moses of Salerno may have mentioned the year 5,000 merely as a round number. There are several reasons to date his active period as posterior to 1250: he mentions Jacob Anatoli's son Anatolio as his teacher, who was still too young in 1240; the *Objections* mentions the date 1270, and it is improbable that such a length of time passed between the composition of the *Commentary* and the *Objections*; the incomplete state of the commentary suggests Moses of Salerno was still writing it at the time of his death in 1279, and the date 1240 would imply the commentary was written over the course of nearly forty years; the mention of Peter of Ibernica (one of Thomas Aquinas' teachers between 1240 and 1244) in the Commentary implies, according to Sermoneta, that Moses of Salerno worked as a court Jew during the reign of Manfred (1259–1266) where he met Peter of Ibernica. Cf. Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 50n50. Sara Heller-Vilensky, in "The Question of Authorship of the Book *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* Attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra," *Tarbiš* 32:3 (1963), 280 n18, n27 [Hebrew], dates it to after the death of Jacob Anatoli (1256) because he is mentioned with the honorific *z"l*.

<sup>15</sup> Rigo, "Per un'identificazione," 72–73.

<sup>16</sup> See Moses of Salerno, Chapter Three, ¶127–¶128.

<sup>17</sup> ms. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod heb. 370, ff. 262r-274v.

<sup>18</sup> Cod heb 370, f. 1r.

<sup>19</sup> Cf text in Moses of Salerno, ¶1.

The lack of a formal prologue or preface is significant. It is very rare for medieval Jewish commentaries of any stripe to lack a prologue, and even many translations contain one.<sup>20</sup> The lack of a prologue is all the more remarkable given the short span of time between the Hebrew translation of the *Guide* and the composition of the commentary, and the attendant need to introduce a relatively unknown text to the public. A preface becomes all the more necessary given the fact that there were no other commentaries on the *Guide*. As an exegete, Moses of Salerno not only introduces the *Guide* to readers of the commentary, but he also ushers in a new genre of its own, and in the absence of any explanation. It can be concluded that Moses of Salerno was likely prevented from writing a prologue as well as from completing the commentary by his death, although we cannot exclude the possibility that he simply abandoned the project *in media res*.

The commentary is unlike any other on the *Guide*. Moses of Salerno paraphrases much of the text, and he also reproduces lengthy passages of the text verbatim. It is unclear precisely what purpose such quotations served, but the comprehensive character of the commentary might imply that it was meant to be copied in place of the *Guide* itself.

A feature of Moses of Salerno's commentary is the numerous translations of Hebrew terms into Italian. They are scattered primarily throughout part I but some are also found in the Introduction to part II. The translations often refer to technical terms and occasionally to general terms or expressions. In the commentary on the Preface, for example, the terms for equivocal terms are rendered as "equivochi" (equivocal or *meshuttafim*), "trasonti" (metaphorical or *mush'alim*), and "dubeti"/"enalaghi" (amphibolous, *mesuppaqim*).<sup>21</sup> The technical translations bring Moses of Salerno close to the contemporaneous context of Scholastic philosophy. Yet other translations are merely explanatory: the term *maskiyot*, referring to the filigree of silver that encases the apple of gold, is translated as "reti" (nets, mesh).<sup>22</sup> A likely model for Moses of Salerno's use of vernacular translations is the *Perush ha-Millot ha-Zarot* (henceforth *PMZ*) by Samuel ibn Tibbon, which is in Hebrew but includes a few vernacular examples.<sup>23</sup> Another precedent is the commentary on the Torah by Rashi, which includes vernacular translations of Hebrew terms into (Old) French. Moses

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**20** Jean-Christophe Attias points out the universality of prologues in Jewish commentaries, which is especially manifest for commentaries on Maimonides' works written between the 12th and 15th centuries. See "L'âme et la clef: de l'introduction comme genre littéraire dans la production exégétique dans le judaïsme médiéval," in *Entrer en matière: les prologues*, eds Jean-Daniel Dubois and Bernard Roussel (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 338.

**21** See Moses of Salerno, ¶2–¶4.

**22** Pines, 11–12, Ibn Tibbon 10.

**23** A quotation from *PMZ* that includes a vernacular translation can be found in the commentary on the Preface. See Moses of Salerno, ¶41. On Moses of Salerno's indebtedness to *PMZ*, see Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 55.

of Salerno was acquainted with it as he quotes Rashi by name in the commentary.<sup>24</sup> As in Rashi's commentary, the translations by Moses of Salerno are marked with the term "bela'az," i.e. a foreign language (in this case, Italian). They are often but not always vocalized.<sup>25</sup> Many (but not all) the Italian translations were gathered into a glossary that circulated independently of the commentary, containing primarily technical philosophical terms. It is not known whether Moses of Salerno, his son Isaiah, or someone else first culled the glosses from the *Commentary* and copied them independently.<sup>26</sup> A modern critical edition of the glossary was produced by Giuseppe Sermoneta in 1963.<sup>27</sup>

Moses of Salerno's son Isaiah is a likely candidate for editor of his father's commentary.<sup>28</sup> We know that he had some role in its edition or dissemination since he inserted glosses in his own name into the text. Sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish whether a gloss is by Moses of Salerno or his son.<sup>29</sup> For example in the commentary on the Preface to the *Guide*, a marginal gloss examines the meaning of the term *hazayah* ("fantasy").<sup>30</sup> The note begins "after I wrote all this, I came into contact with the preface written by the sage and scholar Samuel ibn Tibbon" (i.e. the *PMZ*).<sup>31</sup> Yet in other places Isaiah ben Moses of Salerno adds a gloss in his own name, as in the explanation of the seventh cause of contradictions.<sup>32</sup>

A second important aspect of Moses of Salerno's commentary refers to the oral exchange of ideas. The commentary is at times structured as a give-and-take between Moses of Salerno and a "Christian scholar" whose comments appear throughout the work.<sup>33</sup> Moses of Salerno describes him as the "Christian scholar with whom I have associated" in a formulation that mimics Jacob Anatoli's description of his own working relationship with Michael Scotus.<sup>34</sup> The *Commentary* preserves many of the

<sup>24</sup> See Moses of Salerno, ¶26.

<sup>25</sup> For an example of an unvocalized translation cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶7, ¶12.

<sup>26</sup> Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 58.

<sup>27</sup> Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 58. See also Jean-Pierre Rothschild, "Remarques sur la tradition manuscrite du glossaire hébreu italien du commentaire de Moïse de Salerne au *Guide des Egarés*," in *Lexiques bilingues dans les domaines philosophiques et scientifiques (Moyen-Age-Renaissance)*, eds. Jacqueline Hamesse and Danielle Jacquart (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 49–88.

<sup>28</sup> Sermoneta, *Glossario*, 48n46, 49.

<sup>29</sup> See Moses of Salerno, ¶41.

<sup>30</sup> Pines has "extravagant fantasies," 14; Ibn Tibbon 13. On this term, see also Jerome I. Gellman, "Maimonides' 'Ravings'," *Review of Metaphysics* 45:2 (1991), 309–328, and Sarah Stroumsa, "'Ravings': Maimonides' Concept of a Pseudo-Science," in *Maimonides in His World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 138–152.

<sup>31</sup> See Moses of Salerno, ¶41.

<sup>32</sup> Pines 18, Ibn Tibbon 16. See Moses of Salerno, ¶60, ¶68.

<sup>33</sup> Relevant passages are in Sermoneta, "The Glosses of Moses ben Solomon," and Rigo, "Per un'identificazione."

<sup>34</sup> See Jacob Anatoli, *Malmed ha-Talmidim* (Lyck: Meqiṣei Nirdamim, 1866), Preface, 1v.

Christian scholar's glosses on several points of the *Guide*, and is among the earliest examples of Jewish-Christian collaboration in the study of Maimonides.<sup>35</sup>

The comments by the "Christian scholar" sometimes add a further Scholastic perspective, and sometimes contradict Moses of Salerno's interpretation. In an example found in the commentary on the Preface to the *Guide*, Moses of Salerno quotes the Christian scholar only to put forward a passage from the *Guide* that contradicts him.<sup>36</sup> Further on in the commentary, however, Moses of Salerno approvingly transmits a philosophical proof from the Christian scholar that is meant to illustrate textual contradictions due to the sixth cause. It is that we might think at first that matter and the material intellect are identical: just as matter can receive all the forms appropriate to that organism overall, the material intellect can receive all the forms that are appropriate to it. But the Christian scholar clarifies that matter cannot receive two forms simultaneously, and proves that the intellect can receive two forms simultaneously, "in the same instance of reception." The implicit contradiction between the two initial propositions (matter and material intellect) is rendered evident by the explicit contradiction between the two conclusions: matter can receive forms, but not at the same time, while the intellect can do so.<sup>37</sup> The commentary as a whole is a triangular exchange among Maimonides, Moses of Salerno, and the Christian scholar.

### 2.1.2 Moses of Salerno's Exegetical Methods on the Preface to the *Guide*

Moses of Salerno's commentary reproduces parts of the text verbatim. The last two paragraphs of the commentary on the Preface contain an extended example, containing only one authorial interpolation.<sup>38</sup> Several passages in the Preface for which Moses of Salerno had little to no comment or interpretation are quoted verbatim or nearly verbatim.

The more common method, however, is what I would term as paraphrastic interpolation: Moses of Salerno interpolates his own words into the text, sometimes marking them off with expressions such as "that is to say" (*klomar*) or "in other words" (*rošeh lomar*).<sup>39</sup> When he does not use such markers, Moses of Salerno effectively rewrites the text changing only a few words, adding or subtracting terms, creating a new text.

<sup>35</sup> The glosses by the Christian scholar cited in the *Commentary on the Guide* are reproduced in Sermoneta, "The Glosses," and Rigo, "Per un'identificazione."

<sup>36</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶7–¶8.

<sup>37</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶58–¶59.

<sup>38</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶69–¶70.

<sup>39</sup> The terms seem to be used interchangeably, but some Hebrew commentaries assign specific functions to different formulas. In one such in one biblical commentary dating to the 13th century, *klomar* has the specific function to introduce "equivalence of words, of expressions, or of phrases," and expresses the "semantic aspect" of the element it purports to interpret. Judith Kogel, "Provençal Exegesis and Le'azim in an Anonymous Commentary of the 13th Century on Joshua, Samuel and Kings," *Materia Giudaica* 13:1–2 (2008), 331–337.

Further, two quotations or paraphrases from the text may be separated from each other with the marker “etc” (*ve-khuleh*). It bears noting that Moses of Salerno is not consistent, and this characterizes his paraphrastic interpolation: in instances where he does not mark off his words, the inexperienced reader of the *Guide* (or a reader who does not have the Hebrew text available) may come to read the commentary as continuous with the text of the *Guide*. In such instances the possibility of disagreement with the commentator is significantly diminished, since one is not aware where Maimonides’ words end and Moses of Salerno’s words begin, and the latter carefully matches his syntax with the text. In other words, there is a blurring of the lines between text and commentary, leading to the creation of a unique, hybrid text that reflects an individual reading (rather than, say, a scholarly investigative reading in the manner of ibn Falaquera), but does not provide an opportunity or space for alternative interpretations of the text.<sup>40</sup> I will return to Moses of Salerno’s method of paraphrase shortly.

Moses of Salerno’s use of sources is a related phenomenon. Quotations from Jacob Anatoli and Samuel ibn Tibbon are given as the final word on subjects on which Maimonides was unclear, and those authorities are not challenged.<sup>41</sup> However, where Maimonides and Samuel ibn Tibbon seem to disagree, Maimonides is unquestioningly held as the authority.<sup>42</sup> A more critical attitude is exhibited towards the Christian scholar quoted in the commentary: his opinion and examples are sometimes accepted and at times challenged. The latter is especially visible when they conflict with another chapter of the *Guide*, as in the case of an example regarding amphibolous terms in connection with divine attributes.<sup>43</sup>

Those two aspects of exegetical authority – denying or obliterating alternate explanations, and rarely challenging the text and paratextual sources – reveal a clear hierarchical orientation towards textual interpretation. In the commentary on the Preface Moses of Salerno institutes a hierarchical relationship among author, commentator, and reader, and displays a clear ranking of sources with regards to what can be challenged and under what circumstances. In other words, the commentator is always in control of the interpretation that he wishes to transmit, and does not invite participation on the part of the reader. Though this may seem obvious, in other commentaries on the *Guide* interpreters may subtly or openly criticize Maimonides,<sup>44</sup> or they may address the reader directly in the second person,

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<sup>40</sup> For an example, see Moses of Salerno, ¶48.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶17.

<sup>42</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶37.

<sup>43</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶7–¶8, compared to ¶58–¶59.

<sup>44</sup> As Alfred Ivry observes, Moses of Narbonne pits Ibn Rushd against Maimonides, and the latter is not always the winner, as in the commentary on I:72. See Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 16r-17r. Ivry, “Moses of Narbonne’s Treatise,” iv n23. See also Harry Wolfson’s summary of the disagreements between the two, in *Crescas’ Critique of Aristotle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 605 n5-611.

such as “deduce from this,” thus inviting participation in the act of exegesis (a technique found in the *Guide* itself).

In other instances, Moses of Salerno fills in the details where Maimonides only hints. One example of this approach is the narrative of Jacob’s ladder. In the Preface to the *Guide*, Jacob’s ladder is given as one example of two paradigms of *mashal*: in one kind, each element of the narrative has a discrete meaning; in another kind, the details of the *mashal* are not meaningful in themselves, but participate in the construction of one meaning for the *mashal* as a whole. The *mashal* of Jacob’s ladder (Gen 28) is an example of the former. Maimonides writes that the word “‘ladder’ indicates one subject; the words ‘set up on the earth’ indicate a second subject; the words ‘and the top of it reached to heaven’ indicate a third subject,” and so on. After listing seven subjects in all, he adds, “every word occurring in this *mashal* refers to an additional subject in the complex of subjects represented by the *mashal* as a whole.”<sup>45</sup>

Moses of Salerno provides the reader with the meaning of each element mentioned by Maimonides. The sources of his interpretations are in the *Guide*, in the *Mishneh Torah*, and in the *Ma’amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* by Samuel ibn Tibbon. He does not, however, comment on the larger subject itself – the notion that there are two kinds of *mashal* in Scripture that ought to be read differently. Rather, he is concerned with the proper interpretation of the example given by Maimonides; he does the same with an example of the second kind of *mashal*. Moses of Narbonne has the same approach to this passage: he fills in the details of each element enumerated by Maimonides, sidestepping the larger claim that Scriptural *meshalim* are of two kinds.

Moses of Salerno’s commentary covers nearly the entire text of the Preface; he is far more comprehensive than other commentators in this study, who tend to be more selective, choosing only certain passages that reflect their own interests. The selection of passages or lemmata to be interpreted is itself part of the exegetical method, a process that Glenn Most has called “atomization,” or the “lemmatization” of the text.<sup>46</sup> That certain passages and certain themes found in the Preface reoccur in several commentaries carries at least two implications. The first is that such “problematic” passages and themes taken as a whole become markers of a larger exegetical school of thought. One instructive example here is the theme of widening the apertures of the filigree of the apple of gold, a recurrent theme that is not even found in Maimonides’ text, but becomes a marker of a school of thought deeply associated with Samuel ibn Tibbon and runs throughout commentaries on the *Guide*.<sup>47</sup> Second, themes that are consistently ignored may come to be regarded

<sup>45</sup> Pines, 13, Ibn Tibbon 11.

<sup>46</sup> Glenn Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar’s Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 36–37.

<sup>47</sup> On Ibn Tibbon’s coinage of the term “widen the apertures,” see James T. Robinson, *Samuel ibn Tibbon’s Commentary on Ecclesiastes: the Book of the Soul of Man* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 48.

as less important than the rest of the text.<sup>48</sup> The criteria for selection of passages are an active response to problems inherent in the text, especially a unique text such as the *Guide*, where Maimonides openly acknowledges that the text is purposefully problematic.<sup>49</sup> Later on, after Moses of Salerno, the criteria may also include a process where “lemmata themselves are passed down from scholar to scholar;” in this sense, readers may come to ignore parts of the text “as less important because lacking an exegetical tradition.”<sup>50</sup> This is clearly seen in commentaries dating to the late 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, whose authors had an entire tradition at their disposal, but is less characteristic of the earliest stage of interpretation of the *Guide*, where commentators are more creative in the absence of such an exegetical tradition.

Moses of Salerno’s method is one in which selection of lemmata, nonetheless, is relatively downplayed in favor of comprehensive paraphrasis, in which case the commentator aims to include as much of the text as possible. As an exegetical technique, paraphrasis can be found in commentaries belonging to a range of periods and backgrounds.<sup>51</sup> It was already in use in Antiquity before being absorbed into Muslim philosophical exegetical writing.<sup>52</sup> But Moses of Salerno’s background did not include direct familiarity with Greco-Arabic and Islamic sources. Unlike ibn Falaquera and Zerahiah Hen, his access to Arabic commentaries was rather limited if at all, excluding the possibility of a direct borrowing.<sup>53</sup> Another possibility for a formal model is that he could have found models in Jewish biblical exegesis, but the most likely candidate – the *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* by Samuel ibn Tibbon – displays an approach to the text unlike that of Moses of Salerno’s commentary.

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**48** Roy Gibson and Christina Shuttleworth Kraus, *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 11.

**49** For example, in the interpretation of biblical *meshalim* in the *Guide*, Maimonides warns the reader not to expect that “we shall set forth exhaustively all that is expressed in that *mashal*” (Pines 6, Ibn Tibbon 5). See Moses of Salerno’s restatement of this idea below.

**50** Gibson and Kraus, *Classical Commentary*, 11.

**51** cf. for example Norman Cutler, “Interpreting Tirukkural: The Role of Commentary in the Creation of a Text,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112:4 (1992), 551.

**52** Jacqueline Hamesse, “A propos de quelques techniques d’interprétation et de compilation de textes: paraphrase, florilèges et compendia,” in *Itinéraires de la raison: études de philosophie médiévales offertes à Maria Cândida Pacheco*, ed. J.F. Meirinhos (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales, 2005), 20.

**53** Though Jacob Anatoli had translated the *Organon* with Ibn Rushd’s commentaries a generation earlier, Moses of Salerno’s quotations of Aristotle in the Preface all come from the Christian scholar. On paraphrase in Ibn Rushd, see Josep Puig Montada, “Averroes’ Commentaries on Aristotle: to Explain and to Interpret,” in *Il commentario filosofico nell’Occidente Latino (secoli XIII-XV)-The Philosophical Commentary in the Latin West (13–15th centuries)*, eds. Gianfranco Fioravanti, Claudio Leonardi, and Stefano Perfetti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 327–358.

A more likely source for Moses of Salerno's method is the Christian scholar. Regardless of his historical identity,<sup>54</sup> it is clear from the commentary that he has ample knowledge of Scholastic sources and could well have debated and translated them orally through paraphrase. This remains an intriguing possibility, since Jacqueline Hamesse has pointed to the fact that paraphrase was a technique widely used in Scholastic teaching. She writes that “teachers abundantly glossed the texts they read and gave explanations during class sessions so that all students would be able to understand not only the terms utilized, but also the ideas exposed [in the text].” This method was preferable to that of formal commentary, as it served as a prolegomena to a deep understanding of the text.<sup>55</sup> This form of paraphrase, built upon oral delivery, accords well with the Maimonidean notion that orality is superior to the written medium in the transmission of metaphysical knowledge, while accommodating with Moses of Salerno's project of a written commentary.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Hamesse writes that the practice of paraphrasis was characteristic of yet another domain, translation.<sup>57</sup> This idea sheds additional light on Giuseppe Sermoneta's speculation the commentary may have served as a preliminary step to a full translation of the *Guide* into Italian.<sup>58</sup> Thus the commentary reproduces similar techniques for similar purposes as those practiced in Latin Scholastic writing.<sup>59</sup>

As indicated in the example of the ladder of Jacob, one consistent pattern for Moses of Salerno is that he tends to overlook larger claims in place of smaller details. Moses of Salerno also overlooks certain key topics in the Preface to the *Guide*. He is not interested in the meaning of “chapter headings,” though he paraphrases the text to say that the commentator will transmit them.<sup>60</sup> He paraphrases Maimonides' *mashal* of flashes of light, but his interpretation is somewhat vague – the light means merely “the apprehension of God” (Pines 7) and of angels. He is far more interested in exploring in detail the apprehension by Moses, borrowing a passage from the *Sefer ha-Madda'* to enumerate its details.<sup>61</sup> He likewise “outsources” the interpretation

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54 Caterina Rigo has examined the issue of the historical identity of the Christian scholar (named Nicola da Giovinazzo in the Commentary) in “Per un'identificazione.”

55 Hamesse, “Techniques d'Interprétation,” 17–18.

56 The triangular relationship involving orality, written commentary and philosophy has been described in the following terms: “indeed the roots of the commentary tradition reach far back into the time of oral culture, when philosophy (science) is perforce not a body of fixed doctrine which can be treated as it were impersonally [...] the new-fangled chicanery of ‘writing’ must initially appear from this perspective to be of secondary importance, if not positively dangerous.” Barry Smith, “Textual Deference,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 28:1 (1991), 6.

57 Hamesse, “Techniques d'Interprétation,” 13.

58 *Glossario*, 56.

59 The connection between paraphrasis and translation was also pointed out by E.D. Hirsch, who writes that they try to “render the meaning in new terms,” in contrast to explanation, which “tries to point to the meaning in new terms.” See *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 136.

60 Moses of Salerno, ¶14.

61 The *mashal* of the lightning flashes is in Pines 7, Ibn Tibbon 6–7. See also Moses of Salerno, ¶16.

of the “flaming sword” to Samuel ibn Tibbon in the *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*.<sup>62</sup> He is silent on Maimonides’ reliance on “two premises” for setting down the *Guide* into writing – the emphasis is rather on how its subjects have never been “set down in any book” during the exile, and hence “Israel has forgotten all science.”<sup>63</sup>

At the beginning of the commentary Moses of Salerno explains at length the meaning of “equivocal” or “amphibolous” terms, but he does not consider Maimonides’ main claim that the “first purpose of this Treatise” is to explain the meaning of certain terms that appear in prophetic writings.<sup>64</sup> This tendency reveals a certain pragmatic attitude, one that sees commentary as an aid for understanding textual details but not as a context suitable for theoretical discussion. In this sense, Moses of Salerno is following upon a strain of the method set by Maimonides himself. When he explains the second purpose of the *Guide* – the explanation of or indication to biblical *meshalim* – he is far more concerned with Maimonides’ statement that the *Guide* will not “make a complete exposition of [*meshalim*] or that when we engage in the explanation of the meaning of one of the *meshalim*, we shall set forth exhaustively all that is expressed in that *mashal*”.<sup>65</sup> As an interpretation Moses of Salerno quotes the *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* by Samuel ibn Tibbon to emphasize that oral communication is far superior to writing, and concludes: “therefore it is not appropriate to expound on everything that is said in a *mashal*.”<sup>66</sup> The implications of the larger point, namely that the *Guide* has two purposes and both of them are directly connected to Scriptural interpretation, are not explored at all, presumably out of esoteric caution. The tendency to focus on textual details and smaller claims is not universal. Moses of Salerno does stress several larger points, notably, the unsuitability of writing as a medium of transmission, and the use of *meshalim* in teaching, which I will discuss in greater detail in the next section. But his greater attention to detail is certainly endemic, and appears in all other commentaries as well. This tendency is partly inherent to the genre. Aside from extended digressions, prologues, or epilogues, the constraints of the form inhibit discussion of larger textual claims that involve multiple or extended passages.<sup>67</sup> Moses of Salerno’s emphasis on concealment means that he may not have

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62 Moses of Salerno, ¶17.

63 Moses of Salerno, ¶47; cf. Pines 16.

64 Pines 5, Ibn Tibbon 4.

65 Pines 6, Ibn Tibbon 5.

66 Moses of Salerno, ¶13.

67 Thus James Robinson identifies another purpose in digressions within commentaries. Writing on Samuel ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, he points out that it “includes some twenty excurses, amounting to more than one-third of the work as a whole [...] the excurses often illuminate difficult points or sensitive issues that remain obscure in the commentary proper. In general, it seems that Ibn Tibbon preferred to introduce his controversial ideas under the cover of his digressions, where he could protect them from the watchful eye of his audience.” See Robinson, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, 41. Ibn Tibbon sees an esoteric purpose in digressions within the framework of oral teaching, in the passage of the *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* quoted by Moses of Salerno (¶13).

wished to discuss such larger claims in writing, perhaps reserving them for oral discussions with the Christian scholar mentioned in the commentary.

### 2.1.3 A Theme in the Preface to the *Guide*: *Mashal*

The commentary on the Preface by Moses of Salerno touches on the theme of parables (*mashal*; pl. *meshalim*) several times. This might be expected since *meshalim* are a dominant subject in the Preface to the *Guide* as well. However, commentators emphasized different subjects or passages from the Preface, and the prominence of any given theme in the *Guide* does not by itself constitute a reason for its inclusion in any given commentary. For example, Maimonides' system of equivocal terms, described in the opening paragraphs of the Preface, is a fundamental piece of his biblical exegesis. Yet ibn Falaquera overlooks it entirely in the *Moreh ha-moreh*. Zeraḥiah Ḥen is silent on the notion of perplexity," while ibn Kaspi gives it extended treatment. Moses of Salerno's emphasis on *meshalim* reflects thus a larger trend in commentaries on the *Guide*. Interpreters tend to focus on themes that embody their own concerns. They pick and choose from the text of the *Guide* those subjects they wish to highlight, regardless of whether Maimonides gives those subjects the same level of attention or significance. This can be considered a form of esoteric writing that is congenial to commentaries on the *Guide*: by focusing on the trees, commentators are able to only hint that there is a forest.

Moses of Salerno gives different purposes and contexts in which *meshalim* can be found and how they should be deployed. The first of those is the use of *mashal* as a device to conceal certain ideas – so long as the *mashal* is not interpreted. He writes that “it is not appropriate to expound on everything that is said in a *mashal*” because explaining matters in detail carries some dangers. In this passage, the danger is that individuals who learn details would misinterpret the subject and give the impression that they are wise in front of uneducated audiences.<sup>68</sup> The presumption, then, is that communicating *meshalim* orally without interpretation can be a method for simultaneous transmission and concealment. In another passage, Moses of Salerno writes that the Rabbis employed *meshalim* “in order to conceal the secrets of the Torah” from the multitude.<sup>69</sup> In another passage, he writes that concealment within a *mashal* is only preserved when it is not interpreted.<sup>70</sup> Following Maimonides, Moses of Salerno reiterates that not all details of a *mashal* ought to be interpreted.<sup>71</sup>

A second purpose for *meshalim* is that they are virtually indispensable to the pedagogical process. Here the lines between *mashal* as a device to conceal and *mashal* as

<sup>68</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶13.

<sup>69</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶20.

<sup>70</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶24.

<sup>71</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶41.

example or illustration are somewhat blurry. The *mashal* is that which facilitates learning; without it, “it will be difficult for the student to understand the [teacher’s] words.”<sup>72</sup> The alternative to the *mashal* is employing an “obscure” method “which hinders the student from understanding it at all.”<sup>73</sup> Quoting Samuel ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Moses of Salerno adds that “the wise instructor has available many stratagems, digressions, and circumlocutions with which he can make the understanding student understand his aim when teaching in person, even when his aim is not made clear or explained. But he cannot do this when writing a book.”<sup>74</sup> Further on in the commentary, Moses of Salerno is unable to (according to himself) or refuses (according to his son) to provide the reader with a *mashal* for the seventh cause of contradictions, because doing so would practically reveal the meaning of the cause.<sup>75</sup>

Those two uses of *mashal* parallel – but are not entirely identical to – the differences in the treatment of *mashal* that occur in the Preface to the *Guide* itself. Maimonides presents two contradictory *meshalim* about *meshalim*. In the first, the *mashal* is compared to a man who loses a coin or a pearl in a dark house, and by means of a cheap candle he can find the lost object.<sup>76</sup> In this view, “the internal meaning of the words of Torah is a pearl whereas external meaning of all *meshalim* is worth nothing.”<sup>77</sup> In the second *mashal*, the method of *meshalim* is compared to an “apple of gold in settings of silver” (Prov 25:11). “When looked at from a distance or with imperfect attention, it is deemed to be an apple of silver; but when a keen-sighted observer looks at it with full attention, its interior becomes clear to him and he knows that it is of gold.” In this *mashal* “the external meaning ought to be as beautiful as

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<sup>72</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶21.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* For Neoplatonic students of Aristotle, his writings were seen as purposefully obscure. See Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions To Be Settled Before the Study of an Author, or a Text* (New York: Brill, 1994), 8, 23–24, 26. Josef Stern writes that “the primary motive for the use of parables is the cognitive fact that their inner meaning is not sufficiently well understood to be expressed in straightforward discursive form of a science because their contents cannot be articulated in explicit propositions out of which one can construct demonstrative syllogisms.” Here Moses of Salerno envisages to possibility of an exposition that is neither parabolic nor syllogistic, but rather so obscure as to be impenetrable. Effectively, then, they share the position that a *mashal* is used to express a truth that cannot be expressed otherwise, although for different reasons: for Stern, it comes from a skeptical point of view that denies that we can know certain truths perfectly or fully; in Moses of Salerno’s view, it seems that the teacher might know a certain notion, but without the *mashal* it cannot be expressed intelligibly. See Josef Stern, *The Matter and Form of Maimonides’ “Guide”* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 19.

<sup>74</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶13.

<sup>75</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶60, ¶68.

<sup>76</sup> In the rabbinical source of this *mashal* the lost object is either worth little (the coin) or much (the pearl), but in Maimonides’ restatement and interpretation he is careful to mention only the pearl; cf. Pines 11, Ibn Tibbon 10. In other words, the content that is brought to light by the *mashal* is always valuable, though the *mashal* itself is presumed to have no value (in this context).

<sup>77</sup> Pines 11, Ibn Tibbon 10.

silver, while its internal meaning ought to be more beautiful than the external one.”<sup>78</sup> There is, then, a first contradiction between the two views with respect to the value of the external meaning – is it as cheap as a candle, to be done away once the pearl has been found, or is it as valuable as silver, which has a value of its own?<sup>79</sup> There is more. As Josef Stern points out, a second contradiction involves the relationship between *mashal* and concealment: whereas in the first view “the function of the external meaning is exclusively to conceal its internal meaning,” in the second view “the external meaning ‘indicates’ the internal meaning, revealing as much as it conceals.”<sup>80</sup>

Now while Stern proposes a theory to explain this second contradiction within the *Guide*, in Moses of Salerno’s commentary the picture becomes somewhat more complex as *mashal* becomes translated into a pedagogical technique that reveals, in addition to being a method of concealment when it occurs in writing.<sup>81</sup> The contradiction between the two views of *meshalim* in the *Guide* is thus readapted according to context. Orally, in a pedagogical relationship, the *mashal* itself is not worth anything, but only by means of it the student is able to learn. Therefore, Moses of Salerno also writes that the *mashal* itself has no value; it is like the husk, and the secret within is the fruit.<sup>82</sup> In a written context the *mashal* can be a poor method of concealment, according to Isaiah ben Moses of Salerno, for that would practically “give away” the meaning of the passage. Nonetheless, Isaiah fills in where and provides a written *mashal* for the seventh cause, though in purposefully allusive language and employing esoteric markers.<sup>83</sup> While Isaiah believes the written *mashal* is not always a suitable method for concealment, he argues it must still be formulated in veiled language, make use of symbolic indicators, stand in need of further oral explanation, and *a priori* must not be put into writing at all.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps for this reason, Moses of Salerno (and all the other commentators along with him) rarely construct original *meshalim* in writing

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78 Pines 12, Ibn Tibbon 11.

79 In another passage, the value of *mashal* is political, “so that all can live at peace with one another and can have the opportunity to immerse in Torah and commandments;” cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶33; *Guide* III:27 (Pines 510–512, Ibn Tibbon 468–471). In the Preface Maimonides gives the example of the “external meaning” of the book of Proverbs, to which Moses of Salerno adds the book of Ecclesiastes, exemplified by the proof-text “keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God” (4:17; 5:1 in the King James translation). “The external meaning is the Temple in Jerusalem, or the synagogue and the house of study; the internal meaning is divine science or *ma’aseh merkavah*” (¶33).

80 Stern, *Matter and Form*, 27.

81 Stern does allow for a pedagogical use of *mashal*, but instrumental rather than expressive, and like concealment, he considers it secondary (personal communication).

82 See notes to Moses of Salerno, ¶31.

83 He calls it a “secret;” he claims it is forbidden to explain it “face to face” and “all the more so in writing; the scholar who gives him the *mashal* for the cause asks that he not share it with others. Cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶61–¶62.

84 *ibid.*

to explain the meaning of passages in the *Guide*, though they all point to *meshalim* in Scripture and preach to its indispensability as a technique of oral teaching.<sup>85</sup>

The interpretation of *meshalim* that are identified in biblical, rabbinical and philosophical sources depends sometimes upon elementary knowledge of logic, in particular the notions of species and genus. Thus the procedure for building a *mashal*, according to Moses of Salerno, is to “take an individual of a species in place of an individual of another species,”<sup>86</sup> a statement that has a parallel in the *Poetics* regarding metaphor: “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy.”<sup>87</sup> This accords, too, with Maimonides’ statement in the Preface regarding the Talmudic method of *mashal*, which consists of making *meshalim* vary in “species” and “genus.”<sup>88</sup> Moses of Salerno illustrates this Talmudic method with *meshalim* that substitute “wild animals” for “domesticated animals” and “man.” He then adds, “not that they are under the same genus.” The purpose of such an indication is to provide the reader with a method for interpreting *mashal* through logic, but also to prevent learning logic from the structure of *meshalim*.<sup>89</sup>

In the Preface to the *Guide* Maimonides points to an error in the interpretation of *mashal*, one that is not dependent on logic. He speaks of certain chapters in the *Guide* containing “strange matters regarding which the contrary of the truth is sometimes believed [...] because a *mashal* is taken for the thing being represented or vice versa.”<sup>90</sup> The “thing being represented” corresponds to the technical concept of *nimshal*; every *mashal* has a *nimshal*, which is the object (or meaning) contained in the figurative language of *mashal*. Moses of Salerno interprets that passage of the *Guide* to mean that sometimes the prophets write a *mashal* in place of a *nimshal*. He gives the prooftext “and he cried, a lion, to the watchtower of God” (Isa 21:8)<sup>91</sup>; he writes that “lion” is the *mashal* and “watchman” is the unwritten *nimshal* (he also cites Rashi’s opinion that the *nimshal* is the prophet Ḥabakkuk). Another example given is “who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?” (Isa 33:14), in which “devouring fire” stands for “God.”<sup>92</sup> Thus in some cases Moses of Salerno sees *mashal* as the rough equivalent of a metaphor, and

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**85** There are a few exceptions to the absence of original *meshalim* in the commentaries on the Preface to the *Guide*: one is Isaiah ben Moses of Salerno *mashal* of the seventh cause, and the other Joseph ibn Kaspi’s *mashal* of a man with two wives, which illustrates the condition of the perplexed individual (see the section on *‘Ammudei kesef* below).

**86** Moses of Salerno, ¶25.

**87** Cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶20, notes.

**88** Pines 8, Ibn Tibbon 7.

**89** Moses of Salerno, ¶20.

**90** Pines 10, Ibn Tibbon 9.

**91** King James translation is slightly modified.

**92** In addition to Rashi, Moses of Salerno may have in mind here Abraham ibn Ezra’s interpretation of Isaiah 21:8, where he writes that these two prooftexts lack the preposition *as* (*ke-*). See Moses of Salerno, ¶27.

the interpretation of these *meshalim* shows that in such instances the use of *mashal* for Moses of Salerno is not necessarily to indicate an inner meaning “not sufficiently well understood” (as is the case for Maimonides<sup>93</sup>), but rather a meaning understood from the context of the entire passage. Moses of Salerno’s interpretation of “vice-versa” (the “thing represented being taken for the *mashal*”) is that sometimes the prophets write a *nimshal* in place of a *mashal*; examples of this procedure would perhaps shed light on the matter, but at this point there is a lacuna in all manuscripts of the text.<sup>94</sup>

In the case of prophetic *meshalim* concerning God, the different and at times contradictory depictions occurring in Scripture are due to the different visions that each prophet receives. Moses of Salerno gives examples of the characterization of God as a “warrior in battle” (Exod 15:3) and as a “merciful elder.”<sup>95</sup> Parables about God are contingent on the apprehension of each prophet “all according to the need and the time,” but one must not infer from them that God undergoes change.<sup>96</sup> Again, as in the case of Talmudic *meshalim* involving wild beasts and humans, one ought not to presume to infer something about reality on the basis of the explicit or external meaning of a *mashal*. Prophetic visions are especially relevant when it comes to the third cause of contradictions, according to which certain statements should be read literally, while others are meant to be *meshalim*.<sup>97</sup> According to Moses of Salerno the prophets are not consciously writing in the form of a *mashal*; they write what they actually see in their visions, which are created forms.<sup>98</sup>

Where the concept of *mashal* is concerned, Moses of Salerno reflects some of the tensions inherent in Maimonides. The commentary brings into sharper relief the different purposes for *meshalim*, whether to conceal or to reveal, in oral settings or written contexts. Pedagogically, they become enmeshed with the idea of teaching through example and illustration: Moses of Salerno alternates between *mashal* as exemplification and *mashal* as allegoresis of the biblical text.

It is clear that in some instances he uses *mashal* in the sense of a narrative or even an allegory, but in many others he uses it to indicate an illustration or application. The distinction between the two uses of the concept is clear in the interpretation of equivocal terms, which concludes with “there are many such examples,” referring to biblical prooftexts containing such terms.<sup>99</sup> Yet in the interpretation of the seventh contradiction, for example, the distinction is less clear, and the lines between illustration and a parabolic example are much more nebulous. The example that his son Isaiah gives (in his own voice) identifies an extended and concealed *mashal*, which the commentator

93 Stern, *Matter and Form*, 19.

94 Moses of Salerno, ¶27–¶28.

95 Moses of Salerno, ¶29. The source is *Sefer ha-Madda*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah* I:9.

96 Moses of Salerno, ¶29.

97 Pines 17, Ibn Tibbon 15.

98 Moses of Salerno, ¶50.

99 Moses of Salerno, ¶2.

brings to light amid an abundance of esoteric caveats. Moreover, Moses of Salerno writes “examples of this cause are concealed from me; I mean an adequate example so that you will be able to learn from it, that is, from the power of the example (*koaḥ ha-mashal*).”<sup>100</sup>

The passage is significant in relation to Maimonides’ arguments regarding *mashal* in the Preface to the *Guide*, where he writes that those who possess knowledge of the truth can only transmit it through *meshalim*. “The situation is such that the exposition of one who wishes to teach without recourse to *meshalim* and riddles is so obscure and brief as to make obscurity and brevity serve in the place of *meshalim* and riddles”.<sup>101</sup> Moses of Salerno seems to have internalized this notion to a high degree, as he cannot offer even brevity or obscurity, but only a *mashal* can teach the seventh cause. In this way are the lines between pedagogical example and the concept of *mashal* considerably blurred, and *mashal* becomes a catchall term for distinct phenomena. As for the sources of *meshalim*, in addition to Maimonides and Samuel ibn Tibbon’s writings, Moses of Salerno finds them in Scripture and in Jewish biblical exegetes such as Abraham ibn Ezra and Rashi; in rabbinical literature; and in Aristotle (via the Christian scholar).

Despite the danger inherent in giving the reader *meshalim*, Moses of Salerno is not reticent to give Scriptural *meshalim* as examples, and in one passage, he gives a philosophical *mashal* illustrating the sixth cause of contradiction.<sup>102</sup> Thus from a general perspective, Moses of Salerno was inclined to give *meshalim* where he thought they could be instrumental in the explanation of a given concept, notwithstanding his statements to the contrary. His son Isaiah adds: “I, too, believe that the third Moses<sup>103</sup> had this in mind for himself: he knew the secret but did not wish to write a *mashal* regarding it so that he would not reveal it” (¶68). Thus, between Moses of Salerno and his son Isaiah, there occurs a change of emphasis on *mashal* as a device of concealment. Moses of Salerno had no qualms about giving *meshalim* from Scripture or philosophy to illustrate his points, and in a few instances even explicitly provides their interpretation to the reader, despite the possible danger in misunderstanding the *nimshal*. In Isaiah’s view, however, to offer a *mashal* means to effectively reveal a secret, and it can only be done out of an abundance of esoteric caution.

## 2.2 Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera

Ibn Falaquera was born between 1224 and 1228 and died after 1290.<sup>104</sup> Although he was a prolific author not much is known about his life. There is conjecture that he

<sup>100</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶60.

<sup>101</sup> Pines 8, Ibn Tibbon 7.

<sup>102</sup> Moses of Salerno, ¶58–¶59.

<sup>103</sup> That is, Moses of Salerno himself as third after the biblical Moses and Moses Maimonides.

<sup>104</sup> *HÜB* 5 (§2).

lived in the border area of Spain and France but his place of origin is unknown.<sup>105</sup> His writings evince awareness of the anti-Maimonidean controversies that took place in the mid 13th-century.<sup>106</sup> Ibn Falaquera was well read in philosophical sources in Arabic and Hebrew; he quoted and preserved sources in Hebrew translation that are no longer extant in the original Arabic (such as ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*).<sup>107</sup> He produced both paraphrased translations and original works (treatises and commentaries). He did not, however, produce any direct continuous translation of single works. He has been described, therefore, as a compiler – an “epigone” – and critic, rather than professional translator.<sup>108</sup> He sought to transmit knowledge of Islamic philosophy in works directed to a general, non-specialist audience, freely borrowing from and collating different sources.

### 2.2.1 *Moreh ha-moreh* (Commentary on the *Guide*)

The *Moreh ha-moreh* was the second full-length philosophical commentary written on the *Guide* following that by Moses of Salerno. Ibn Falaquera writes at the end of the third appendix to the commentary that he finished it in 1280.<sup>109</sup> He would write only one other work after the commentary, a short letter in defense of the *Guide* entitled *Ketav 'al devar ha-moreh*.<sup>110</sup>

The title *Moreh ha-moreh* was meant to be understood as *A Guide to the Rebellious* rather than the more literal translation *Guide to the “Guide.”* Ibn Falaquera explains the title as based on two biblical verses; he writes that “the meaning of the first *moreh* derives from [the verse] ‘and the Lord shewed him (*va-yorehu*) a tree’ [Exod 15:25], and the meaning of the second *moreh* derives from [the verse] ‘for I have rebelled against (*maryti*) His commandment’ [Lam 1:18].”<sup>111</sup> The purpose of the title, ibn Falaquera writes, is to warn against those who transgress what he deems three necessary preconditions for reading the *Guide*: knowledge of Torah, knowledge of science, and having attained the age of forty.<sup>112</sup> It has been

**105** *ibid.*

**106** See his *Letter Regarding the Guide*, David Lemler, “Shem Tov ibn Falaquera’s *Letter Regarding the Guide* – Critical Edition,” *Zutot* 9 (2012), 27–50, and ibn Falaquera, *Commentary*, ¶8.

**107** See texts in Salomon Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Paris: A. Franck, 1859).

**108** The method of compilation characterizes ibn Falaquera’s intellectual approach as a whole; he makes no claim to writing anything original. See Steven Harvey, “Shem Tov Falaquera, A Paragon of an Epigone, and the Epigone’s Importance for the Study of Jewish Intellectual History,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 40 (2007–2008), 61–74.

**109** See Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 365. He writes that he finished it in 5,040 in the Jewish calendar (=1280).

**110** Lemler, “Shem Tov ibn Falaquera.”

**111** See ibn Falaquera, *Prologue*, ¶11.

**112** *Ibid.*

suggested that the title contains an internal contradiction: it provides guidance for the rebellious, but gives legitimacy to what Maimonides had forbidden in his injunction in the Preface (not to comment on any word of the *Guide* or explain it to another).<sup>113</sup>

The program of the *Moreh ha-moreh* concerns the philosophical sources and parallels of the *Guide*. The method of the commentator consists in providing a passage of the text, translated directly from the Judeo-Arabic original, followed by one or more parallels found in Islamic philosophy (such as ibn Rushd, ibn Bajja, al-Farabi, and ibn Sina) or Greek sources in Arabic translation (Plato, Themistius).<sup>114</sup> Occasionally, ibn Falaquera inserts his own interpretations.<sup>115</sup> Ibn Falaquera's identification of sources is far from a disinterested enterprise. At times, he gives a source that contradicts an argument from the *Guide*, or he gives two sources that contradict each other.<sup>116</sup> Rather than merely uncovering Maimonides' potential sources, ibn Falaquera sought to determine Maimonides' views on philosophical disagreements, that is, whether he favored one position or another.<sup>117</sup> Hence in many instances it may be more accurate to describe Ibn Falaquera's method as providing parallels rather than historical sources. Moreover, the most quoted philosopher in the *Moreh ha-moreh* is ibn Rushd, but Ibn Falaquera may have known that Maimonides did not employ him as a source in the *Guide*. Ibn Falaquera also quotes Jewish philosophical and non-philosophical sources (such as ibn Ezra's commentary on the Torah and the *Sefer yeširah*).<sup>118</sup> Among Jewish thinkers, aside from Maimonides and Samuel ibn Tibbon, he quotes by name only Abraham ibn Ezra and Solomon ibn Gabirol.<sup>119</sup>

As I mentioned, the passages from the *Guide* quoted in the *Moreh ha-moreh* are translated directly from the Judeo-Arabic text (some chapters are translated in full). Among the commentators in this study, ibn Falaquera and Zeraḥiah Ḥen were the only ones who had knowledge of philosophical Arabic and who worked as translators. In the prologue to the commentary he explains that one of the purposes of the commentary is to help readers of Arabic understand the text, and he included two appendices for their benefit (see below). He frequently departs from the Hebrew translation by Samuel ibn Tibbon, which he also consulted and critiqued; ibn Falaquera's linguistic

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**113** Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, 15.

**114** See the description of sources in Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 18–87.

**115** Cf. Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 89.

**116** In the commentary on I:32, for example, Ibn Falaquera mentions conflicting opinions on whether intellectual apprehension declines with age and use, as is the case with sensual apprehension. He cites chapters in the *Guide* where Maimonides speaks on the subject (I:68 and I:72) and declares that the contradiction belongs to the “fifth cause,” that is, a didactic contradiction. Cf. Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 87–88, 132–134.

**117** Cf. Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 17, 90.

**118** See Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶3.

**119** Cf. Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 14.

quibbles are at times merely stylistic but in certain cases they are substantial. The apologetic strain of the *Moreh ha-moreh* is therefore linguistic as well as ideological. It proposes an alternate translation that presumably conveys the correct understanding of Maimonides' ideas.

The *Moreh ha-moreh* covers a limited number of chapters in the *Guide*. Ibn Falaquera begins with a poem in praise of the *Guide*, followed by a prologue where he explains the circumstances that led him to compose the commentary, his purposes and intended audience, and some remarks on the nature of the text. He then comments on the following chapters: part I:1, 2, 9, 31–32, 34–36, 42, 47, 52, 55, 57–59, 60, 68–73 (I:72 is the longest; in I:73, he comments on I:74, “fifth method”); part II: *haqdamot*, 1, 4, 6 (which includes comments on II:5), 9–15, 19, 22–24, 26, 40, 48. In part III, he comments on the preface and on chapters 13–19, 51, 54.<sup>120</sup> There are also three appendices to the *Moreh ha-moreh*: the first surveys different opinions (by al-Farabi, ibn Sina, ibn Bajja, ibn Rushd, and ibn Gabirol) concerning the acquired intellect and the felicity of the soul. The appendix closes with remarks concerning the “metaphysical possibility” (*’efsharut ’elohit*) of conjunction, which is opposed to the “natural possibility” (*’efsharut tivi’it*). The former does not require knowledge of the sciences but rather occurs through prophecy; it has been attained only by the prophets and the “pious (*ḥasidim*), who are His angels.” Ibn Falaquera believes both the philosophers and the Sages of the Talmud are in agreement with respect to the existence of the “metaphysical possibility.”<sup>121</sup> The second appendix discusses the problem of divine providence through a critique of Samuel ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew translation of III:51.<sup>122</sup> The third appendix lists terms and expressions that ibn Falaquera deemed as mistranslations by Samuel ibn Tibbon, including two passages from the Preface to the *Guide*. This third appendix is divided into three parts corresponding to errors identified in each part of the *Guide*.<sup>123</sup>

### 2.2.2 Ibn Falaquera’s Exegetical Methods on the Preface to the *Guide*

The methods employed in the commentary on the Preface are entirely distinct from those used in the rest of the commentary. In the commentary as a whole, two main techniques of interpretation are used. The first is (re)translation. Ibn Falaquera compares the Judeo-Arabic text to Samuel ibn Tibbon’s translation, and offers his own translation of selected passages. Though this sort of critique aims primarily at the

<sup>120</sup> Shiffman *Moreh ha-Moreh*, 14 n4; Munk argues the *Moreh ha-Moreh* only comments on philosophical chapters, but there are many philosophical chapters not included in it (Munk, *Mélanges*, 495), detailed in Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh*.

<sup>121</sup> Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, 329–336.

<sup>122</sup> Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, 337–341.

<sup>123</sup> Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh* 341–365.

translation and not the text, the translation choices offered by ibn Falaquera carry certain philosophical implications.<sup>124</sup> The second technique consists of extensive quotations from the main sources of Islamic philosophy (principally ibn Rushd, but includes al-Farabi, ibn Sina, and ibn Bajja as well), immediately following the newly translated passage from the *Guide*. Yair Shiffman suggests that through this method ibn Falaquera hints to the reader that the passage ought to be understood in light of accompanying sources.<sup>125</sup> The first of the techniques described above can also be found in the commentary on the Preface, which begins with a re-translation of the *mashal* regarding flashes of light.<sup>126</sup> As a whole, though, the commentary on the Preface does not follow the second technique of quotations, and in this sense it differs from the rest of the *Moreh ha-moreh*. Instead, in the explanation of the Preface ibn Falaquera displays some of the same techniques that can be found in Moses of Salerno and Zeraḥiah Ḥen.

The first is the “interpolated paraphrase,” described earlier in connection with Moses of Salerno. Unlike the Italian scholar, however, ibn Falaquera does not use any markers to distinguish his own words from those of the *Guide*, such as “etc” or “the commentator says.” It is possible that Ibn Falaquera saw the method of paraphrase as not distinct from that of a direct translation, where such markers are of course not employed.<sup>127</sup> A second technique parallels part of Zeraḥiah’s commentary. The method consists of *ad hoc* interpretation given by the commentator following the lemma. In the *Moreh ha-moreh* they lemma may be either a retranslation or paraphrase. The interpretation may then be based upon another source(s) or it may be original to ibn Falaquera; the example in the next paragraph combines the two.

Following a retranslation of the first half of the *mashal* of the flashes of light, ibn Falaquera offers his own interpretation of the passage as a description of prophetic apprehension against that experienced by “perfect individuals who are not prophets.”<sup>128</sup> He explains the *mashal* by employing the same symbols found in the text, such as “light” and “pearl.”<sup>129</sup> He delves into their meaning only briefly and in passing, emphasizing rather the distinction between the two kinds of apprehension

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**124** See Yair Shiffman, “The Differences Between the Translations of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* by Falaquera, Ibn Tibbon and al-Harizi, and their Textual and Philosophical Implications,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 44:1 (1999), 47–61.

**125** Shiffman, “Falaquera as a Commentator,” 193.

**126** Pines 7, Ibn Tibbon 6–7.

**127** See samples of his paraphrase in ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶5, ¶7.

**128** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶2. The *mashal* of lightning flashes is in Pines 7, Ibn Tibbon 6–7.

**129** In the Preface to the *Guide*, Maimonides describes the last degree in the hierarchy of prophetic illumination as constituted by those to whom truth does not “flash,” but who are illuminated by something else, a “polished body” (ibn Tibbon: *geshem tavor zakh*, “pure clear object,” Ar. *ḡism saqul*). It is significant that Falaquera identifies the *polished body* as a pearl (*margalit*) by doing so he connects this allegory of knowledge to another allegory in the Introduction that associates the deeper meaning of the Torah to a pearl (Pines 11).

and concludes that such distinction is all but “evident. He then retranslates the second half of the *mashal*, which mentions a flickering “small light” comparable to the “flaming sword” (Gen 3:24). Here he does not offer an original explanation; instead, he refers the reader to his commentary on III:51 for the meaning of “light,” where he esoterically implies that “light” corresponds to the Active Intellect.<sup>130</sup> He adds that according to ibn Sina such apprehension (i.e. from the Active Intellect) is “not given to conceptualization, but is rather [like] a blink of an eye.”<sup>131</sup> Ibn Falaquera concludes by drawing a connection to yet another source, stating that those interpretations he had just quoted from III:51 and ibn Sina hint at a passage from another source (the passage in question is found in the *Sefer yeširah*).<sup>132</sup> He acknowledges that the entire interpretation was a digression by finishing with the expression “let me now return to the text” of the *Guide*.<sup>133</sup>

Certain aspects of this entire interpretation recall concepts found in Maimonidean-Tibbonian esotericism, such as the use of “hint” (*remez*) and the open acknowledgement of digressions as well as the symbolism of the “secret.” His selection of lemmata also betrays his interest in the esoteric interpretation of the text; the only subjects he treats are the *mashal* of the flashes of light, the inability to transmit secrets, and the fifth and seventh causes of contradiction. But ibn Falaquera breaks company with Maimonidean esotericism in significant ways, the first of which is gathered from his selective “lemmatization” of the text: he completely ignores the concepts of *mashal*, chapter headings, *ma’aseh bereshit*, and *ma’aseh merkavah*, topics that otherwise gave much fodder for esoteric discussion among Maimonidean philosophers. Unlike Moses of Salerno, who breaks up the text into lemmata but whose commentary is rather comprehensive, lemmatization for ibn Falaquera is a means to prioritize certain notions while ignoring others.

The second departure from Maimonidean esotericism is related to *mashal*. In the *Guide* (and for all other commentators), *mashal* is a legitimate pedagogical method with which to transmit secrets of metaphysics or of natural science. Ibn Falaquera has a different process of transmission. He emphatically states it is impossible to transmit insights that one apprehends in the course of scientific investigation, unless it is to an individual with the “same degree [of knowledge] of science,”<sup>134</sup> one with “perfect judgment and of as collected and clear intellect.”<sup>135</sup> Even in such an event, the first individual is not able to transmit the contents of what he has apprehended, but only

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**130** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶3.

**131** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶3–¶4, notes. The notion of apprehension as the “blink of an eye” has some parallels to Ibn Sina’s view of intuitive prophecy.

**132** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶4.

**133** *ibid.*

**134** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶5.

**135** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶6.

“the method that he himself undertook.”<sup>136</sup> Therefore the possibility of oral transmission of the contents of secrets, which would ordinarily occur through *mashal*, is rejected, and a *a fortiori* transmission in writing is rejected as well. The only transmission that can occur is that of method.

This may well constitute the “secret” to ibn Falaquera’s method for the rest of the *Moreh ha-moreh*. Rather than attempt to communicate the content of the insights that Ibn Falaquera has gathered from his reading of the text, the sage only offers the reader the method that he himself undertook. First, he retranslates the text, reproducing a process where he likely read the Judeo-Arabic *Guide* alongside ibn Tibbon’s version. He then provides the reader with the background sources that informed his reading. Ibn Falaquera does not elaborate on all of these background sources, leaving the reader to parse the lemma and the parallels on their own. In other words, he gives the materials for a commentary rather than a commentary. Ibn Falaquera’s activities of retranslation and parallelism constitute indispensable prolegomena for the project of commentary: the first step is procuring a faithful text or a faithful translation, while another step involves seeking parallels in outside sources. But as stated, they are only prolegomena to the actual work of commentary, and in this sense, the *Moreh ha-moreh* is a proto-commentary of sorts. It is one where the commentator largely abdicates the role of explaining the text.<sup>137</sup> In its place, ibn Falaquera is a catalyst for the reader to experience the thought processes that precede actual commentary and forces readers to then form their own interpretations.<sup>138</sup>

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136 *ibid.*

137 The *Moreh ha-Moreh* is therefore dramatically distinct, from a methodological perspective, from Moses of Salerno’s commentary, whose paraphrastic method gives the reader no space for disagreement. But unlike Moses of Salerno, the commentarial role taken by Ibn Falaquera is not to come between the reader and the text, but to stand at the margins, merely giving the reader the tools to reach the same insights as the commentator without passively receiving them. The idea that the commentator takes a position between the text and the reader was expressed by Jan Assmann, who writes that the commentator indicates the “path” or “method”: “[der Text] erschließt sich dem Verständnis nur noch durch den Interpreten, der zwischen ihn u. den Leser tritt u. dem Leser den Weg weist.” See Jan Assmann, “Introduction,” in *Text und Kommentar: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation 4*, ed. Jan Assmann and Burkhard Gladigow (Munich: Fink, 1995), 11.

138 To adapt an insight from Hans Gumbrecht, Ibn Falaquera may be closer to an “interpreter” than a “commentator.” Gumbrecht describes the problem that the interpreter confronts as “an asymmetry between the range of (general and specialized) knowledge which the text in question presupposes—as a condition for the identification of its (“intended,” “original,” “historical,” “adequate,” “authentic”) meaning—and the knowledge of which the interpreter actually disposes.” The “task of the commentator and the function of the commentary” is “to overcome this asymmetry, and thus to mediate between different cultural contexts [...] seen from this angle, the commentary always provides supplementary knowledge and always fulfills an ancillary function in relation to interpretation.” Ibn Falaquera, I would submit, does not aim to overcome this asymmetry; mediation between different cultural contexts is restricted to the decision to write the *Moreh ha-Moreh* in Hebrew rather than Arabic. See Hans Gumbrecht, “Fill Up Your Margins! About Commentaries and Copia,” in *Commentaries=Kommentare*, ed. Glenn Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 443.

### 2.2.3 A Theme in the Preface to the *Guide*: Transmission of Knowledge

The theme of prophetic and non-prophetic apprehension of deep truths, and the difficulties involved in their transmission, is a subject that dominates the *Moreh ha-moreh* on the Preface to the *Guide*. Commenting on the *marshal* of flashes of light, which he sees as a *marshal* regarding prophetic apprehension, ibn Falaquera writes that Maimonides adds a further category, namely, the apprehension of those who are not prophets.<sup>139</sup> Ibn Falaquera characterizes the nature of their apprehension as “limited,” compared to a light that is reflected by a “polished and glowing object, stones or something similar that give light in the darkness of the night,”<sup>140</sup> unlike the “clear light that emanates to the prophets.”<sup>141</sup> He interprets the “object” as matter and custom, due to which “all those who apprehend while still living in this world are in the dark.”<sup>142</sup> The prophets, on the other hand, receive a “divine overflow” similarly to “lightning that illuminates the darkness of night, and the distinction between the light of lightning and the light [reflected] from a pearl is evident.”<sup>143</sup> Later on in the commentary ibn Falaquera repeats the notion that lightning corresponds to prophetic apprehension, describing how it can appear and reappear intermittently, in a passage replete with parallels to ibn Tufayl and ibn Sina, ending with a quotation from *Sefer yeşirah*.<sup>144</sup>

It bears noting that like ibn Falaquera, Moses of Narbonne also interprets lightning or lightning flashes as prophetic apprehension. However, ibn Falaquera interprets the “polished body” as matter and custom, which hinder the full apprehension of the light given to prophets; Moses of Narbonne, on the other hand, describes the “polished body” as demonstration and speculation in general, through which one can achieve conjunction with the Active Intellect.<sup>145</sup> Thus while for Moses of Narbonne the “polished object” is that which facilitates apprehension (or makes it possible at all), for ibn Falaquera the “polished body” hinders complete and direct apprehension.<sup>146</sup>

Turning to the transmission of prophetic apprehension, ibn Falaquera paraphrases a passage from the Preface to the effect that “whenever one of the perfect” wishes to transmit “something he understands of these secrets,” he is unable to do

**139** The *marshal* of flashes of light is in Pines 7, Ibn Tibbon 6–7.

**140** This is an English approximation of his retranslation of the sentence “a polished body, stones or something else that that give light in the darkness of the night” (Pines 7, Ibn Tibbon 6). See ibn Falaquera’s interpretation in Commentary, ¶2.

**141** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶2.

**142** Ibid.

**143** Ibid.

**144** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶4.

**145** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶9.

**146** Moses of Salerno’s interpretation of the “polished object” as “corporeal body” may hint at an interpretation parallel to that by Ibn Falaquera. Cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶16.

so “with complete clarity.”<sup>147</sup> Rather than disclosure through *mashal*, Ibn Falaquera emphasizes the difficulties of disclosure in the first place. As we saw earlier, Moses of Salerno emphasizes how secrets can be transmitted through *mashal* despite possible dangers. But Moses of Salerno’s interpretation of this passage in the Preface parallels that of the *Moreh ha-moreh*. Moses of Salerno writes: “a scholar is not able to explain [even the portion that he has apprehended], and even if he had the ability it would not be permissible to do so.”<sup>148</sup> The issue of whether truths can be communicated at all, in what way, and to what extent, preoccupied many of the early Maimonidean interpreters. Moses of Salerno’s seemingly contradictory emphases – on the one hand, disclosure through *mashal*, and on the other hand, the non-ability to disclose – reflects the competing concerns of the Tibbonian tendency towards greater disclosure vs. Maimonides’ more restricted modes of disclosure. As a reader of the *Guide* in the original Arabic, and as a critic of Ibn Tibbon, it is not then surprising to see that Ibn Falaquera emphasizes Maimonides’ version of esotericism rather than Ibn Tibbon’s ideology.

Within a description of the pedagogical relationship, ibn Falaquera emphasizes how deeper truths are difficult, if not impossible to transmit. A scholar who has studied the sciences, Ibn Falaquera writes, apprehends many concepts that he is not able to transmit at all, through demonstration or through teaching in some other way. The only viable manner of transmission is to point to the method “that he [the scholar] himself undertook.”<sup>149</sup> Only certain colleagues or students will be able to replicate the method and eventually reach knowledge of the same secrets on their own (as I pointed out earlier about the *Moreh ha-moreh* as a whole, Ibn Falaquera transmits a method rather than interpretations themselves). In a successful pedagogical transmission, individuals must have the “same degree [of knowledge] of science” as that scholar<sup>150</sup> and must be “perfect in judgment and of as collected and clear an intellect as [the scholar].”<sup>151</sup> Only then the student “might possibly” have access to the same knowledge apprehended by the scholar. Those who do not fulfill these conditions will deny the validity of the scholar’s apprehension and reject it. Regarding the latter, ibn Falaquera writes that this would be like teaching “someone who was born blind [how] to distinguish among colors,” suggesting that the impediment is at least partially rooted in biology.<sup>152</sup> Recalling Moses of Salerno’s formula, ibn Falaquera states

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147 Pines 8, Ibn Tibbon 7.

148 Moses of Salerno, ¶19

149 Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶5. On pre-modern conceptions of “guidance” in connection with textual interpretation, see Aleida Assmann, “Im Dickicht der Zeichen: Hodegetik–Hermeneutik–Dekonstruktion,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 70:4 (1996), 535–551.

150 Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶6.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶5, notes. The quotation is a borrowing from the Preface to *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡẓān* by Ibn Tufay. See also Gad Freudenthal, “Biological Foundations of Intellectual Elitism: Maimonides vs. Al-Farabi,” *Maimonidean Studies* 5 (2008), 293–324.

that it is not permissible to disclose to such individuals any of the “secrets,” and the scholar must distance himself from them.

Unlike Moses of Salerno and all other commentators in this study, ibn Falaquera sees no role for *mashal* in transmission of knowledge. The absence of any mention of a concept so central to the Preface raises important questions. From the perspective of the development of commentaries within schools of thought, it points to ibn Falaquera’s ambiguity vis-à-vis some of the premises of the Maimonidean-Tibbonian school. To a certain extent he shares, for example, in the idea of dissemination of philosophical knowledge among Jews; evidence for this notion is his decision to write the commentary in Hebrew “so that its benefit may be broader.”<sup>153</sup> This idea has an echo in ibn Tibbon’s notion of “widening the apertures” of the silver filigree that encases the apple of gold, as well as the notion of “progressive revelation.” He stresses, too, that the words of some philosophers (Plato and ibn Rushd) agree with Maimonides as well as the Rabbis, and he is an early exponent of the myth of Jewish origins of Greek philosophy.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the very act of writing a commentary on the *Guide*, which presupposes that the aforementioned idea of “widening the apertures” supersedes Maimonides’ own request to the reader not to write on the book, also brings ibn Falaquera closer to the practices of the Maimonidean-Tibbonian school. Finally, the *Moreh ha-moreh* parallels other commentaries of that school in its deployment of esotericism, however restrained.<sup>155</sup>

Nonetheless, ibn Falaquera’s position vis-à-vis the Maimonidean-Tibbonian school is more ambiguous with respect to textual criticism. All of the commentators implicitly or explicitly criticize the translation through rewriting, interpolation, and paraphrase, among other techniques. Ibn Falaquera’s method, however, critiques the translation itself. But by doing so, he cannot dispense with it; it is clear that he holds ibn Tibbon in some admiration, even as he disagrees with ibn Tibbon’s translation choices.<sup>156</sup> More crucially, the *Moreh ha-moreh* on the Preface makes no mention of

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153 Ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶16.

154 Cf. Ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶13–¶14. On the myth of Jewish origin of philosophy and related myths, see notes to ¶13.

155 Cf. Yair Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, 15–16.

156 See the beginning of the third appendix to Shiffman, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, 341, whose purpose is ostensibly to correct “errors” in Ibn Tibbon’s version. It is worth noting that Ibn Falaquera conspicuously avoids direct or personal criticism of Ibn Tibbon. He prefers to couch his corrections as a reflection of Maimonides’ remarks that the *Guide* was composed with “great exactness and exceeding precision,” and therefore stands in need of an exact translation. He also characterizes the corrections of concepts as a service to readers untrained in sciences where the corresponding explanations can be found. Thus Ibn Falaquera casts his corrections as a service to both Maimonides and the reader, rather than a direct correction of Ibn Tibbon. This attitude can be usefully compared to Samuel ibn Tibbon’s characterization of Judah al-Ḥarizi. Al-Ḥarizi prefaced his translation with a short glossary of difficult terms; ibn Tibbon criticizes it as full of errors and imprecisions, which his *Perush ha-Millot ha-Zarot* is meant to correct. See al-Ḥarizi’s translation, Simon Scheyer, ed., *Sefer moreh nevukhim*

key concepts that are not only central but also constitute some common premises of the Tibbonian school as they appear in other commentaries on the *Guide*, such as the philosophical interpretation of Scripture or of rabbinical literature, a search for a synthesis between philosophy and religion, in other words, the construction of a so-called “philosophical religion”<sup>157</sup>; and as stated, the use of *mashal* as a method of teaching and exegesis.

Instead, ibn Falaquera explores certain elements of the Preface that emphasize the solitariness of the path to metaphysical knowledge and the difficulties of transmitting the contents of that knowledge to another individual, preferring to overlook passages that could be interpreted as mitigating such difficulties (such as *meshalim* or “chapter headings”). Furthermore, religious knowledge or conduct play no role in ibn Falaquera’s pedagogical scenario. In this scenario, he has a clear antecedent in the Neoplatonic thought in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* by ibn Tufayl.<sup>158</sup> A refugee in a deserted island, Ḥayy learns physics and metaphysics by himself. He seems to have no need for human contact, his apprehension being derived from his empirical observations and self-teaching, parallel to ibn Falaquera’s scholar who has learned the “secrets” entirely on his own. Ḥayy eventually encounters Absāl, who comes from a nearby settled island. Absāl is different from most of those surrounding him in his eschewing of human contact and in his nature as a “thoughtful man, fond of contemplation and of probing for the deeper meanings of things.”<sup>159</sup> Thus ibn Tufayl sets up a scenario similar to ibn Falaquera, where the scholar can transmit some of what he knows if the other individual is like-minded in character and judgment. Ḥayy discloses to Absāl his discovery of metaphysical truths and his emotional reaction to them (“the joys of those who reach [God]”) “as best as he could.”<sup>160</sup>

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(Tel-Aviv: Maḥbarot le-Sifrut, 1953), 11–20; Ibn Tibbon’s preface to *Perush ha-Millot ha-Zarot*, appendix to ibn Tibbon, 11–12. For further details on Ibn Falaquera’s attitude towards Ibn Tibbon, see Franz Delitsch, “Shem-Thob Palkeira’s Berichtungen der Übersetzung des Delalet el-Hairin von Samuel ibn Tibbon,” *Literaturblatt des Orients* I:12 (1840), 188–180; *ibid* I:15 (1840), 225–227; *ibid* I:17 (1840), 257–259; Yair Shiffman, “The Differences Between the Translations of Maimonides *Guide of the Perplexed* by Falaquera, Ibn Tibbon, and Al-Harizī, and Their Textual and Philosophical Implications,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 44:1 (1999), 47–61.

**157** Cf. Carlos Fraenkel, “From Maimonides to Samuel ibn Tibbon: Interpreting Judaism as a Philosophical Religion,” in *Traditions of Maimonideanism*, ed. Carlos Fraenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 177–211. See also Giuseppe Sermoneta, “La dottrina dell’intelletto e la ‘fede filosofica’ di Jehudah e Immanuel Romano,” *Studi Medievali* 6:2, 3rd series (1965), 1–78.

**158** I do not wish to make a case here that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* was the source for Ibn Falaquera’s view of acquisition of metaphysical knowledge, but merely to note the phenomenological similarities between the two texts. See also Averroës: *discours décisif*, trans. Marc Geoffroy (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), 127, a possible source for Ibn Falaquera’s restrictions on the dissemination of metaphysical knowledge.

**159** *Ibn Tufayl’s Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, trans. Lenn Evan Goodman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 157.

**160** Goodman, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 160.

However, when Ḥayy made contact with people other than Absāl and attempted to communicate his metaphysical insights, the listeners “recoiled in horror from his ideas and closed their minds: “[...] the more he taught, the more repugnance they felt, despite the fact that these were men who loved the good and sincerely yearned for the Truth.”<sup>161</sup> As we saw, ibn Falaquera described the individual who does not have the same character as the scholar as one that rejects the scholar’s words and declare them to be false. For the benefit of this unsuitable individual, ibn Falaquera explains, it is not permissible to disclose the meaning of secrets.<sup>162</sup> Ibn Falaquera does not spell out what he means by “secrets,” but in ibn Tufayl, the message that drives listeners to reject Ḥayy relates to allegorical interpretations of Scripture.<sup>163</sup> It is perhaps not a coincidence that Ibn Falaquera also wrote a seemingly rationalist allegorical commentary on the *Torah*, which does not survive, and may actually have been intentionally suppressed.<sup>164</sup> Ḥayy learns from his experience that a scholar ought to keep his knowledge to himself, and ibn Falaquera closes his interpretation of the passage in the same vein: “the hearts of sages are the graves of secrets.”<sup>165</sup>

The allegorical interpretation of Scripture in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* introduces two elements that are absent from ibn Falaquera’s account: the role of revealed religion in achieving (or preventing) knowledge of metaphysical truths, and the potential conflict between the two. In the commentary on the Preface, ibn Falaquera sees no place for religious practice or texts, and in like fashion, Ḥayy’s lack of scripture or religious tradition is no impediment to his discovery of metaphysics. Nonetheless, when he learned about religious doctrines and practices, “he found none of it in contradiction with what he had seen for himself from his supernal vantage point,” and eagerly accepted to observe religious obligations.<sup>166</sup> Absāl, too, had earlier in his life accepted religion “enthusiastically,”<sup>167</sup> which shows that for ibn Tufayl at least, religion *per se* does not pose an impediment to metaphysical learning; the reaction by Ḥayy’s listeners shows that it can. Since from Ḥayy’s perspective ibn Tufayl paints a harmonious picture of the relationship between religion (properly understood) and philosophy as free from contradiction, it is easy to see why ibn Falaquera does not quote him on

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**161** Goodman, *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, 163.

**162** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶6.

**163** Ibn Tufayl describes Absāl as “ready to attempt a more or less allegorical interpretation” (Goodman, *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, 156); others reject Ḥayy the moment he “rose the slightest bit above the literal” (Goodman, *Hayy ibn Yaqzān* 163).

**164** Rafael Jospe and Dov Schwartz, “Shem Tov ibn Falaquera’s Lost Bible Commentary,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 64 (1993), 177, 180–181. Ibn Falaquera’s lost *Sefer ha-derash* explicitly engaged in esoteric interpretation, and while the commentary on the *Torah* does not seem to have been written esoterically, surviving fragments indicate it contains a number of rationalist allegorical explanations.

**165** Ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶6.

**166** Goodman, *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, 161.

**167** Goodman, *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, 156.

this point, since ibn Falaquera is writing a commentary on a work that focuses on the apparent gap between the two. Similar to Ḥayy, in the Prologue to the commentary ibn Falaquera does stress how philosophers have accepted and learned from religious traditions, and how the Rabbis of the Talmud received the findings of scientific speculation and vice-versa.<sup>168</sup> Nonetheless, the fact remains that for ibn Falaquera, the perplexity of the *Guide* relates to the different philosophical opinions quoted therein, not to a fundamental difference between philosophy and religion. The perplexity between revealed texts and philosophical truths is only secondary.

### 2.3 Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen

Zeraḥiah Ḥen originated from an old established Jewish family in Barcelona.<sup>169</sup> He was active in Rome, where he had moved to teach the *Guide* at the invitation of the Jewish community. His date of birth is unknown but by 1290 he regarded himself as an old man who wished to return to Barcelona to be buried with his ancestors.<sup>170</sup> All of his writings were produced between 1277 and 1291.<sup>171</sup> In Rome Zeraḥiah was seen as an authority on Maimonides and on philosophical interpretation of Scripture,<sup>172</sup> and entered into a public exchange of letters with Hillel ben Samuel of Verona concerning the proper interpretation of some metaphysical and textual issues raised in the *Guide*.<sup>173</sup> He worked as a teacher of the *Guide* to young people over the course of many years, and his commentary likely originated in those sessions.<sup>174</sup> He was knowledgeable in Arabic and Greco-Arabic philosophy, a prolific Arabic-Hebrew translator, and Hebrew exegete.<sup>175</sup> However, he was dismissive of other Jewish exegetes or philosophers, with the exception of Maimonides and Samuel ibn Tibbon.<sup>176</sup> Zeraḥiah produced both translations and original works, all of which are commentaries.

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**168** Ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶3–¶4

**169** *HÜB* §48 (111–112).

**170** See letter to Hillel ben Shemu'el of Verona in Ignaz Blumenfeld, ed., “She'elot,” in *Oṣar neḥmad* 2 (1857), 124–143. Cf. also Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 68–69.

**171** Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 71.

**172** Giuseppe Sermoneta, “La dottrina dell'intelletto e la ‘fede filosofica’ di Jehudah e Immanuel Romano,” *Studi Medievali* 6:2 (1965), 8.

**173** Blumenfeld, “She'elot.”

**174** Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 71.

**175** As Steinschneider notes, the center of translation activity was in Provence, where Spanish immigrants had brought Arabic culture (*HÜB* §48, 113). In the 13th century, translations from Arabic into Hebrew in Italy were likewise the product of immigrants from Spain or Provence, such as Jacob Anatoli (belonging to the previous generation) and Zeraḥiah.

**176** See Gudemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens*, 158; Ravitzky “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 27–31.

### 2.3.1 Commentary on the *Guide*

Zeraḥiah's commentary still remains in manuscript.<sup>177</sup> It was apparently written before Zeraḥiah's other original writings (his commentaries on Proverbs and Job as well as his correspondence with Hillel ben Samuel)<sup>178</sup> and appended to a letter to Judah ben Solomon, with whom he maintained a correspondence between 1284 and 1290. In the letter, he writes that he had written in the commentary "several years ago."<sup>179</sup>

The nature of Zeraḥiah's commentary relates to its origins in a pedagogical environment. As he indicates in his letters to Judah ben Solomon, he taught the *Guide* to students in Rome and the commentary was derived from those sessions. There were two classes, an introductory and an advanced one.<sup>180</sup> He writes in the Prologue that one of his purposes is precisely to help beginners, in particular those who have not had the benefit of a teacher but have read the *Guide* on their own.<sup>181</sup>

The surviving text exists in two versions, one more comprehensive (Long Version) and an abridgement (Short Version).<sup>182</sup> Similarly to the *Moreh ha-moreh*, Zeraḥiah begins with a poem in praise of the *Guide*. After a prologue where he explains the circumstances that led him to compose the commentary and his intended audience, he comments on the Preface and on nearly every chapter up to I:72. He omits I:60 in the Long Version; I:61–63 are commented together, as are I:64–67 and I:71–72. At the end of I:72 he writes that I:73–76 refer to the proofs of the Mutakallimūn and they belong properly with the *haqdamot* at the beginning of part II. Following I:72 he writes on II:10 and 30, and III:2, and concludes with a brief exhortation. Immediately following in the manuscript of the Long Version are the letters he exchanged with Hillel ben Samuel of Verona and his cousin Judah ben Solomon in Barcelona, which include a commentary on III:53 (f.96r). The Short Version follows I:72 with notes on part II, where Zeraḥiah quotes by name the *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* by Samuel ibn Tibbon (f. 156r). It is not known whether Zeraḥiah first composed the Short Version that was then later expanded, or vice-versa. Manuscripts of the short version also include a long disquisition on the faculties of the soul (following I:72) that is lacking from the Long Version. Furthermore, the Long Version contains an excursus in I:52 regarding the necessary existent. It is clear from Zeraḥiah's correspondence with Judah ben Solomon that he commented on other chapters as well, but they do not survive.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>177</sup> The two primary manuscripts consulted for this study are ms. Cambr. Add. 1235 (Long Version) and Cambr. Add 1527 (Short Version). See descriptions in the introduction to Zeraḥia Ḥen's texts, Chapter 5.

<sup>178</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 76, 78.

<sup>179</sup> ms. Cambr. Add. 1235, f. 91v; Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 76n1.

<sup>180</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 75–76.

<sup>181</sup> See Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Prologue, ¶3.

<sup>182</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 76–77.

<sup>183</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 77 n5.

Zeraḥiah's commentary as a whole has been described as mainly a paraphrase or abbreviation of the Hebrew text as found in Samuel ibn Tibbon's version. The following chapters are primarily paraphrastic: 3–5, 8, 10, 12, 17–18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33–34, 40–45, 47, 50, 53, 56, 63, and 68.<sup>184</sup> Although he follows the order of chapters, glosses on each chapter are of varying length, with the longest being on I:51–52. He occasionally gives the Arabic translation of terms (as in I:51), but far more often the explanation of difficult terms is in Hebrew (I:1)<sup>185</sup>. In fact, Zeraḥiah's commentary is far from being wholly paraphrastic. He speaks in his own voice when explaining technical notions with examples (cf. I:52)<sup>186</sup>. He follows the paraphrases of the text with his own interpretation with formulas such as *u-ferush* (“the interpretation is...”) and *'aval le-fi ha-nire' elai* (“but according to how it appears to me...”)<sup>187</sup>. In I:1, furthermore, he has a lengthy response to those who interpret the verse “in our image” (Genesis 1:26) as a plural (*leshon rabim*).<sup>188</sup>

The commentary on I:6 (which explains “man” and “woman”) contains an interesting discussion that is directly relevant to the commentary on the Preface. Zeraḥiah states that in his opinion, the word “man” signifies the substance of a thing, and “woman” is any object that is fit for reception [of substance].<sup>189</sup> He adds, however, that according to Samuel ibn Tibbon the chapter contains a secret, and the same is true of the chapters on *yalad* (I:7) and *ḥay* (I:42).<sup>190</sup> Zeraḥiah attributes to ibn Tibbon the sentiment that “he who reveals their interpretation transgresses the injunction” (*shevu'ah*), that is, Maimonides' injunction not to comment on the *Guide*. Zeraḥiah adds: “Furthermore, it seems to me that he who knows the interpretation of those three chapters [I:6, 7, 42] and explains them according to their hidden meaning [*ke-fi nistareihem*] transgresses the injunction. However, I have hinted to you the meaning of the interpretation of ‘man’ and ‘woman.’ I will now add to it in order to make known to you another meaning.” Zeraḥiah then connects the terms “man” and “woman” to *ma'aseh bereshit*, recalling that Maimonides advises the reader to “connect [the *Guide*'s] chapters with one another.”<sup>191</sup> Further on in the same chapter, I:6, Zeraḥiah continues: “[if you] should you say ‘what secret is there in this?’ that is, in the meaning

**184** Jacob Fridman, “The Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen,” in *Jacob Fridman Memorial Volume*, ed. Shlomo Pines (Jerusalem: Institute of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University, 1974), 7 [Hebrew].

**185** ms. Cambr. Add 1235, f. 4v.

**186** ms. Cambr. Add 1235, f. 46v.

**187** cf. Commentary on Preface, Chapter 5, and Zeraḥiah's commentary on I:1, ms. Cambr. Add 1235, f. 5r.

**188** ms. Cambr. Add 1235, f. 5r.

**189** ms. Cambr. Add 1235 f. 7r.

**190** The ms. of the Long Version has *'od*, but the construction and the context suggest otherwise (*ki yesh ba-zeh ha-pereq 'od*). In my opinion the correct reading is *sod* (the Short Version has *sod*). See ms. Cambr. Add 1235, f.7v.

**191** *ibid.*

of ‘in his own likeness, after his image’ [Gen 5:3] – one would transgress the injunction if he interprets it. But when I reveal to you this secret with a single hint [*remez*], undoubtedly the discerning individual will understand it [*ha-mevin yavin*]. That individual would point out to me that it is not proper to speak of it at length so that every person would understand it, but rather [speak only to] those who are accustomed to such secrets. And it is not astounding that he who understands the secret of the “first man” [i.e. Adam] will understand the purpose of the chapter on *yalad* [I:7], [in light of] that which the Gaon, our Rabbi, the author mentions therein by saying ‘begat a son in his own likeness, after his image’ along with what is explained [there] regarding it – the discerning individual will understand that what has been revealed to him is the entire purpose of man.”<sup>192</sup>

I do not wish to speculate here on Zeraḥiah’s possible meaning(s) for the passages that he labels as “secrets.” Rather, I bring up this excerpt to illustrate how concepts and principles of exegesis introduced in the Preface direct Zeraḥiah’s reading. The passage quoted invokes several *topoi*: the “injunction”; *ma’aseh bereshit*; the notions of “hint,” “secret,” and “internal meaning”; the technique of interpreting the *Guide* through the *Guide*, that is, reading chapters in light of other chapters; and the idea that the meaning of secrets contained in the *Guide* and in Scripture can only be explained to certain individuals. It is heavily intertextual, combining several chapters of the *Guide*, Scripture, Samuel ibn Tibbon, and Zeraḥiah’s own views. Finally, the quotation makes clear that for Zeraḥiah, the method of explanation through “hints”, which points to a secret but leaves its interpretation to the reader, is acceptable to a loyal Maimonidean even in light of the strong-worded injunction not to comment on any word of the *Guide*. Zeraḥiah somewhat neutralizes the strength of the injunction through appeal to the Maimonidean concept of connecting chapters to one another. The method exhibited above provides a theoretical basis for Zeraḥiah’s enterprise of a commentary on the text despite Maimonides’ injunction. The passage points to importance of the Preface of the *Guide* for the commentary as a whole and for the construction of a distinctly Maimonideanist method of esoteric exegesis.

### 2.3.2 Zeraḥiah Ḥen’s Exegetical Methods on the Preface to the *Guide*

Zeraḥiah’s general method in the commentary on the Preface is to begin with a lemma and follow with his own comments. He begins with a brief paraphrase, in one or two sentences, before moving on to give an example or an explanation in simple language. Two of the examples Zeraḥiah gives in the commentary on the Preface are drawn from elsewhere in the *Guide*, a tendency that we have seen in Moses of Salerno

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192 *ibid.*

earlier.<sup>193</sup> He addresses the reader directly with formulas such as “I will now explain to you...”<sup>194</sup> or “let it not be difficult for you...”<sup>195</sup> and anticipates objections with “should you say...”<sup>196</sup>. In most instances the lemmata and the commentary are clearly set apart from each other through the use of formulas such as “[Maimonides] says in the Preface,” “the commentator says,” or “end of quote.”<sup>197</sup> Thus while his commentary as a whole has been characterized as paraphrastic,<sup>198</sup> the commentary on the Preface suggests a more complex picture.

In two passages, the elucidation of equivocal terms, and of the sixth cause of contradictions, Zeraḥiah's method changes entirely.<sup>199</sup> Instead of lemmata followed by commentary, he focuses entirely on the meaning of those technical passages, which he explains through appeal to the Greco-Muslim logical tradition. He names the sources for his explanation (Aristotle, ibn Rushd, al-Farabi), and proceeds to quote them verbatim. As characteristic of Zeraḥiah, he likely translated those quotations from the Arabic himself.<sup>200</sup>

Following the quotations Zeraḥiah gives illustrative examples. In the case of the equivocal terms the examples are taken from those same sources. He gives an extended example for the sixth cause of contradictions involving Creation, termed here a “certain matter among obscure matters.” The example aims to explain the “concealed contradiction” of the sixth cause<sup>201</sup>: it refers to the contradiction between Creation *ex nihilo* and existence of the world *a parte ante*. Zeraḥiah obliquely implies that the peripatetics held the latter while the Mutakallimūn held the former. He illustrates the sixth cause by comparing it to a syllogism with the following necessary conclusion: “[it is as if] you said that every body is a composite and every composite is created, and the conclusion is that every body is created.”<sup>202</sup>

Zeraḥiah is adopting an esoteric mode of writing with this extended example. On a surface reading, it is merely an illustration of how Maimonides describes the sixth cause. In the *Guide*, the sixth cause refers to two contradictory propositions whose

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**193** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶1, ¶7.

**194** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶9.

**195** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶7.

**196** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶13.

**197** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶1.

**198** Fridman, “The Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” 7.

**199** The equivocal terms are in Pines 5, Ibn Tibbon 4; the sixth cause appears in Pines 18, Ibn Tibbon 16.

**200** The well-known awkwardness of Zeraḥiah's translations comes through in the translation below, Chapter 5. Several of the works he translated were re-translated decades later owing to their excessive literalness.

**201** The manuscript text has “fifth cause,” but it is clear from the context that this is an oversight by either Zeraḥiah or an early copyist; it is also found in the Abridged Version. See Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version/Abridged Version, Commentary, ¶11.

**202** Ibid.

contradictoriness is not evident. But if we consider each proposition separately, writes Maimonides, and turn them into valid syllogisms by joining a valid premise to each, and drawing necessary conclusions, we will reach two equally necessary yet contradictory conclusions, exposing the contradictoriness of the original two propositions. In the surface reading of this example, Zeraḥiah is illustrating how to join a premise to a proposition in order to draw a necessary conclusion.

There is more than meets the eye to this passage. It turns out to be a simplification of what Maimonides gives in the *Guide* as the first of the “common premises” of the Mutakallimūn, which describes the Kalām version of atomism. Unlike classical Greek atomism, where atoms themselves are neither created nor destroyed, Maimonides reports that the Mutakallimūn hold that God creates atoms “whenever he wishes” and they can also be destroyed.<sup>203</sup> This view is, of course, fully compatible with Creation *ex nihilo*, which the Mutakallimūn espoused. The significance of this move is not to be underestimated, for readers of the *Guide* are well aware of Maimonides’ strongly negative views on both the validity and soundness of Kalām arguments. Zeraḥiah’s example implies that in the matter of Creation, Creation *ex nihilo* is the incorrect disjunct of the contradiction, and existence of the world *a parte ante* is the correct disjunct.

Zeraḥiah’s exegetical orientation in the commentary on the Preface, whether paraphrastic or otherwise, is to focus entirely on the explanation of arguments, concepts, and to a more limited extent, terms. Like other commentators, he may have had problems understanding the language of the ibn Tibbon version, since in one passage he openly admits, “this passage is not easily understood” (though this observation, too, could refer to a conceptual difficulty).<sup>204</sup> Nonetheless, linguistic elucidation is not a primary concern in Zeraḥiah’s commentary; he is relatively uninterested in resolving textual difficulties of either syntax or translation. Moreover, he does not engage in the practice of rewriting that I mentioned in connection with Moses of Salerno and which also appears in ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne. This picture indicates a commentary less concerned with textual clarification than with discussing the philosophical meanings of difficult passages and terms in a format that is friendly to beginners. Zeraḥiah’s emphasis on the explanation of logical concepts necessary for basic comprehension constitutes a response to the needs and limitations of introductory students. It shows certain tension between the practice of commentary and the purposes of teaching. A teacher is not free to teach in whatever manner he wants because she must attend to the limitations of his students, while no such requirement exists for

<sup>203</sup> I:73, Pines 195, Ibn Tibbon 169–170.

<sup>204</sup> Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶4. There is further textual evidence, outlined by Ravitzky, implying that Zeraḥiah did have some problems understanding ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew. Ravitzky also states that the original Judeo-Arabic text of the *Guide* was not available to Zeraḥiah. See Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 32.

a commentator.<sup>205</sup> Hadot designates this as a “zetetic” process, the tension between requirements inherent to a certain discipline weighed against external needs of a pragmatic nature.<sup>206</sup> In the Maimonidean tradition as a whole, the tension translates to the necessity of learning disciplines in a certain order, beginning with logic and proceeding gradually to metaphysics (and thus the *Guide*), against the desire of the commentator to impress upon students a correct understanding of the *Guide*, a text that assumes that such propaedeutic learning has already taken place.<sup>207</sup>

Zeraḥiah comments only on a few topics found in the Preface to the *Guide*: the equivocal terms; the necessity of teaching only through *mesḥalim* and riddles (here he emphasizes that natural science, too, must be taught through *mesḥalim*, and that this is a secret); the causes of contradictions. The selection of topics points to Zeraḥiah's concern with Maimonidean pedagogical and exegetical methods, founded upon the method of transmission through *mesḥalim*, as well as the preoccupation with logic as a tool for understanding ground concepts in the *Guide*.

All of the elements outlined above—the choice of passages from the Preface, the repeated mention of the notion of “secret,” and the example given in the explanation of the sixth cause—point to a concern with esotericism, embodying Zeraḥiah's persistent dilemma in his oeuvre between “the oath not to reveal and a trend towards popularization.”<sup>208</sup>

### 2.3.3 A Theme in the Preface to the *Guide*: Logic

The brief commentary on the Preface is singularly concerned with logical terms and concepts found in the text. In addition to the theme of teaching through *mesḥalim*, Zeraḥiah discusses the interpretation of equivocal terms and the causes of contradictions at the beginning and end of the commentary, respectively.<sup>209</sup> With respect to those two subjects, he is not interested in the interpretation of the text, or in uncovering Maimonides' intent, or rewriting ibn Tibbon's syntax. Rather, his interest

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**205** “Le maître adapte son enseignement aux possibilités de ses élèves, comme le médecin qui ne développe pas tout son art lorsqu'il soigne un malade, mais qui cherche ce qui convient à tel patient: l'enseignement implique un dialogue avec les élèves. La conférence publique se rapproche donc, par ses caractéristiques, des oeuvres écrites, bien que l'effet 'oral' soit toujours recherché.” Pierre Hadot, “La préhistoire des genres littéraires philosophiques médiévaux dans l'Antiquité,” in *Les genres littéraires dans les sources théologiques et philosophiques médiévales: définition, critique et exploitation: actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve, 25–27 mai, 1981* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1982), 5.

**206** Hadot, “La préhistoire des genres,” 7, 9.

**207** On the order of learning for readers of the *Guide*, cf. Epistle Dedicatory, in Pines 3–4, Ibn Tibbon 3.

**208** Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 49–50.

**209** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Long Version, Commentary, ¶2–¶3, ¶9–¶10, ¶12–¶13. All further references in this chapter are to the Long Version unless noted otherwise.

revolves around the clarification of textual concepts on the basis of elementary Aristotelian logic.

Maimonides mentions in the beginning of the Preface four concepts that, as Zeraḥiah notes, are “explained in books of Logic”<sup>210</sup>: equivocal, metaphorical, amphibolous (ambiguous/analogous) and univocal terms.<sup>211</sup> No definition is given for these terms in the *Guide*; they are described only by how they are misread by the ignorant. The equivocal term is misread as corresponding to “only one or some” of its meanings. The metaphorical term is misread as corresponding only to the original meaning from which secondary meanings derive.<sup>212</sup> The nature of the amphibolous term, according to Maimonides, is that sometimes it is read as equivocal, and sometimes as univocal; nothing is said regarding univocal terms. As is characteristic of his overall method in the Preface to the *Guide*, Maimonides seems to assume that the reader is already familiar with the meaning of such terms.<sup>213</sup>

Zeraḥiah’s definition of equivocal term is a verbatim quotation from ibn Rushd’s *Middle Commentary on the “Categories”*: “things which have nothing general and common, except for the name alone.” Instead, “the definition of each, which states its essence in consideration of the meaning of the equivocal name, differs from the definition of the other one and is peculiar to its own definiendum.”<sup>214</sup> The example that follows is the term “lion” that designates a living lion and the sculpture of a lion. This example immediately reveals Zeraḥiah’s preference in terms of sources, for an analogous example – that of a living man and the picture of a man – is mentioned in the *Categories* and in ibn Rushd’s *Middle Commentary* as “equivocal,” while in Maimonides’ *Millot ha-Higgayon* (henceforth *MH*) it is given as amphibolous, a subcategory of equivocality.<sup>215</sup> Zeraḥiah writes that the name shared by the two objects is termed

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**210** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶2.

**211** Pines, 4, has metaphorical as “derivative.”

**212** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶1. Zeraḥiah’s example is the word “hand,” which is invariably read as referring to a human hand, even where context clearly suggests otherwise, that is, when it is used for inanimate things. He concludes this example by saying “the ignorant believe that all of its usage refers to its first meaning.” This example is problematic because it is introduced as an illustration of equivocal terms (*meshuttafim*), but the conclusion is closer to the definition of metaphorical or derivative terms (*mush’alim*). The text is somewhat ambiguous on this point; cf. Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶1, notes.

**213** Accordingly, he does not define the logical terms used to describe the nature of the sixth cause of contradictions, which Zeraḥiah also explains in the Commentary.

**214** See notes to Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶2.

**215** As Harry Wolfson notes, there were two terms used for “equivocal” in the Arabic translation of the *Categories* and in Ibn Rushd’s *Middle Commentary*, which are *mushtarak* and *muttafiq*. He writes that *muttafiq* is the older term, used by al-Farabi, but Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali use *mushtarak* instead. The *Middle Commentary*, then, quotes the older term (*muttafiqah*) but ibn Rushd adds “that is, *mushtarakah*.” Wolfson reads this addition as evidence that *muttafiq* had lost the meaning of “equivocal,” and observes that it was used in the sense of “ambiguous” by al-Ghazali. This change in the meaning of *muttafiq* may explain why Maimonides uses the example as “amphibolous” and not as

“equivocal” because the definitions for each are distinct, which is the same explanation given in Aristotle and in the *Middle Commentary*.<sup>216</sup> Zeraḥiah’s next example is not as straightforward.

Some equivocal terms, he writes, “bear a distant resemblance [*dimayon raḥoq*], such as the term ‘dog’ to refer to a star, due to the resemblance to warmth and dryness that occurs (in margin of manuscript: in the days) when the sun is present more than in other days of the year. This is the kind of similitude that is indicated by derivative (i.e. metaphorical) terms.”<sup>217</sup> This is a singular use of this example. Although it has a long history, it is nowhere else given as an example of a metaphorical term. Harry Wolfson notes that “dog” was offered as the example of an equivocal term by Philo, to indicate marine and terrestrial animals as well as a star (the star in question is Sirius, in *Canis Major*). Furthermore, it is given as equivocal by al-Kindi, Maimonides, and Peter of Spain (in the *Tractatus*).<sup>218</sup> One variation is found in *Kol melekhet higgayon* (Hebrew translation of ibn Rushd’s *Epitome of the Organon*). There, it is mentioned as an example of “equivocality by indirect [or distant] accident” (*shittuf be-miqreh raḥoq*).<sup>219</sup> Though these and other sources cited by Wolfson interpret “dog” as either equivocal or amphibolous, none give it as metaphorical. A possible solution is that Zeraḥiah may have in mind not the similitude between an animal dog and the star, but rather the similitude between the star and the period of the year named “dog days” in the summer, which are in fact so named because Sirius has its first heliacal rising around the warmest part of the year. Hence his mention of the “resemblance to warmth and dryness that occurs when the sun is present more than in other days of the year.” Thus a charitable reading might interpret Zeraḥiah saying that a certain period of the year is named after the star because that is when it is most visible. Even then, it remains an unusual example for metaphorical terms.

The univocal and amphibolous terms merit far less attention in the commentary. Zeraḥiah sees the univocal term as what we would term a “class name,” and he gives the examples of “living” and “rational.”<sup>220</sup> These examples are closer to ibn Rushd’s *Epitome of the Categories* than to the *MH*. In the former, the univocal name indicates one meaning but many entities, “whether individuals or species,” while in the *MH* the univocal term is that shared by one or more individuals but is also constitutive of

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“equivocal.” But as I note here, Zeraḥiah clearly reads it as it appears in the *Middle Commentary*, that is, as equivocal. See Harry Wolfson, “The Amphibolous Terms in Aristotle, Arabic Philosophy and Maimonides,” in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, eds. Isadore Twersky and George H. Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1:472–473.

**216** See *Categories* 1, 1a-5a, and *Averroes’ Middle Commentary on Porphyry’s “Isagoge” and on Aristotle’s “Categoriae,”* trans. Herbert A. Davidson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1969), 32.

**217** Zeraḥiah Ḥen, *Commentary*, ¶3.

**218** *Ibid.*

**219** *Ibid.*

**220** *ibid.*

their essence. Thus “laughing” as said of both “man” and “hyena” would not qualify as a univocal term according to the *MH*, since it is a *differentia* (*hevdel*) that is not an essential property, while “rational” would apply univocally for all humans. Zeraḥiah’s quoted definition then leaves no doubt as to which of the two sources he has in mind: “The univocal term is the one that expresses one single notion but encompasses more than one individual.”<sup>221</sup> With respect to the amphibolous term, however, Zeraḥiah’s definition is closer to the *MH*, but the example is as found in the *Epitome*. “The amphibolous term is said of two things between which there is a resemblance concerning one of their aspects,” he writes. In the *MH* the amphibolous term only differs from the univocal in that the term in question is not constitute of the essence of any of the individuals designated by it (the example given there is the term “laughter” as it refers to man and to a hyena). Zeraḥiah’s example of the term “beginning” as it is applied to the “beginning of a path” and the “beginning of life that is in the heart” is listed in the *Epitome* under “amphiboly by analogy.”<sup>222</sup>

Among the seven causes of contradictions, Zeraḥiah explains only a few of the concepts mentioned in connection with the sixth cause (proposition, premise, conclusion, and syllogism). He quotes verbatim ibn Rushd’s middle commentary on the *Prior Analytics* for the definition of “premise” and “syllogism,” and quotes from al-Farabi’s short commentary on *Prior Analytics* for the definition of “proposition.”<sup>223</sup> There is also a quotation from Ali ibn Ridwan regarding the syllogism, but the manuscript is unclear on this point (the Abridged Version of Zeraḥiah’s Commentary does not mention ibn Ridwan).<sup>224</sup> Zeraḥiah’s definition of conclusion, “that which is entailed from a syllogism is called a conclusion and also the consequence,” parallels the definition found in the *MH*.<sup>225</sup> He borrows examples from al-Farabi but without specifying them further, as al-Farabi does, as technical contraries, subcontraries, and conditional syllogisms of the affirmative mode.<sup>226</sup> Zeraḥiah’s purpose, then, is to offer his students and the reader of the commentary only the most introductory explanations of the logical concepts that he identifies in the Preface, but without technical specifications. This may also account for his freedom in pairing examples from one source with definitions found in another.

What can we make of the extended treatment of logical concepts in the commentary? Given the context for its composition, as the fruit of Zeraḥiah’s school lessons on the *Guide*, it may be possible that Zeraḥiah thought that logical works that had been translated into Hebrew by then (al-Farabi’s original works on Logic and commentaries on Aristotle, some of ibn Rushd’s middle commentaries, and the *MH*) might

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221 *ibid.*

222 *ibid.*

223 Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶9–¶10.

224 Cf. Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶9–¶10, Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Abridged Version, Commentary, ¶10.

225 Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary ¶10.

226 Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, ¶13.

be considered too advanced for his students. Alternatively, it is possible that those translations simply were not available to his students for one reason or another.<sup>227</sup> We might also imagine that as a translator himself Zeraḥiah could have deemed the existing translations as inadequate (he tended to be a more “literalist” translator than most). Regardless of the reason, Zeraḥiah’s commentary on the Preface was an instrument in transmitting elementary notions of logic, but sometimes to the relative detriment of textual explanation, as he makes no attempt to read the definitions or examples back into the *Guide*.

The appeal to logic in Zeraḥiah’s commentary is reminiscent of ibn Falaquera’s procedure in the *Moreh ha-moreh*, who like Zeraḥiah brings to the foreground the idea of the *Guide* as belonging to or drawing from the Greco-Arabic philosophical canon, while relegating to a secondary place the relationship of the *Guide* to the Jewish philosophical-religious canon. The common intellectual background of Zeraḥiah and ibn Falaquera explains this phenomenon, at least in part. Among the early commentators, Zeraḥiah and ibn Falaquera were the only ones who had direct familiarity with Maimonides’ Greco-Arabic intellectual tradition, as well as with the language and sources of the *Guide*. Such sources were accessible to Moses of Salerno, Joseph ibn Kaspi or Moses of Narbonne only in translation (if at all). These three latter commentators make abundant and explicit connections between the *Guide* and Scripture or Talmud, in addition to investigating the philosophical layer of the text. Methodologically and thematically, they have more in common with each other than with either Zeraḥiah Ḥen or ibn Falaquera. Thus access to sources seems to be in this case a partially determinant factor in the adoption of certain methods and themes.

## 2.4 Joseph ben Abba Mari ibn Kaspi

Joseph ibn Kaspi (also called En Bonafoux or Bonafos) was born in 1279–1280.<sup>228</sup> His date of birth can be established on the basis of passages in *Tirat kesef* and *Menorat kesef* where he writes that he traveled to Egypt in 1315 at the age of 35.<sup>229</sup> His last signed work is dated to 1332; he may have died around 1340. According to Steinschneider all his works were written by 1331.<sup>230</sup> However, his ethical testament (*Yoreh*

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**227** It seems that Jacob Anatoli’s translations were not available to Moses of Salerno, even though they had been finished only a few decades earlier. Evidence for this lies in the attribution of quotations of Aristotle to the Christian scholar rather than to Anatoli.

**228** *HÜB* §40 (91–93); Ernest Renan, *Les écrivains juifs français du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1893, reprinted 1969), 131 (henceforth Renan).

**229** See Isaac Last ed., *Zwei Schriften des R. Josef ibn Kaspi*, vol. 1, *Tirat kesef* (Cracow: Joseph Fisher, 1906), 18–19; and *Menorat kesef* in Isaac Last ed., ‘*Asarah kelei kesef* (Pressburg: Abraham ben David Alkalay and Son, 1903), 2:94.

**230** See *HÜB* §40 (91).

*De'ah/Sefer ha-musar*) has been dated to 1332, and in it he promises to write yet future works such as the logical compendium *Šeror ha-keseḥ*.<sup>231</sup> He was born in the village of L'Argentière (in the Rhône-Alpes department of France) and whence his name, which is derived for the Hebrew word for silver (*keseḥ*). All of ibn Kaspi's works have "silver" in their titles and are named after silver vessels mentioned in Scripture.<sup>232</sup>

Ibn Kaspi traveled extensively around the Mediterranean. He embarked on a trip to Egypt in order to meet Maimonides' descendants, but was sorely disappointed since they did not cultivate the sciences, in his view.<sup>233</sup> Ibn Kaspi's works bear a strong apologetic strain in defense of Maimonides, reflecting the controversies over the study of philosophy in 1304–1306, especially in his supercommentary on Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary on the Torah, and in the commentaries on the *Guide*.<sup>234</sup> The vast majority of ibn Kaspi's works are commentaries and works devoted to biblical interpretation. He was strongly interested in (Aristotelian) logic and Hebrew grammar, borrowing methods from both fields as interpretative tools. He left a detailed list of his works entitled *Qevuṣat keseḥ* (*Gathering of Silver*) that exists in two versions.<sup>235</sup>

All of ibn Kaspi's works were written in Hebrew. Unlike ibn Falaquera and Zerāḥiah Ḥen, ibn Kaspi was not a translator. The extent of his knowledge of Arabic is a matter of some contention.<sup>236</sup> All of his Islamic philosophical sources were available in Hebrew translation in his time. In the commentary on the *Guide* he occasionally mentions original Judaeo-Arabic terms, but this knowledge could have been acquired indirectly from ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*, which constituted one of ibn Kaspi's sources for his commentaries on the *Guide*.

#### 2.4.1 Commentaries on the *Guide*

Ibn Kaspi's two commentaries on the *Guide*, *'Ammudei keseḥ* (*Pillars of Silver*, henceforth *AK*), and *Maskiyot keseḥ* (*Settings or Filigree of Silver*, henceforth *MK*) may once have constituted a single continuous work, which has survived in two or possibly three recensions.<sup>237</sup> Pending a comprehensive critical edition with the several recensions,

<sup>231</sup> Hannah Kasher, ed., *Shulḥan keseḥ* (Jerusalem: Ben-Tzvi Institute, 1996) 29, henceforth SK. *Yoreh de'ah* is in Last, *'Asarah kelei keseḥ*, 2:60–74.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. *Qevuṣat keseḥ*: "I will bring out by number all of the vessels of silver that we have made for use in the service of God [...] as it is written about the vessels for the holy service." In Barry Mesch, *Studies in Joseph ibn Caspi: Fourteenth-Century Philosopher and Exegete* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 9, henceforth QK.

<sup>233</sup> Renan, 134–135.

<sup>234</sup> *HÜB* §40 (92).

<sup>235</sup> The manuscripts are Parma 755 and Munich cod heb. 265. Both versions of *Qevuṣat keseḥ* (in English translation) can be found in QK, 7–42.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. notes to *'Ammudei keseḥ*, Commentary, ¶13.

<sup>237</sup> See Renan, 177–178.

the description that follows corresponds to the *textus receptus* of two separate commentaries.

As is the case for most of ibn Kaspi's works, the date of composition is not known. However, it is certain that the two commentaries are among his later works, produced after 1331.<sup>238</sup> It has been suggested that ibn Kaspi wrote the early recension of the commentaries and set it aside, occupied himself with commentaries on Scripture, and then later thoroughly revised the commentaries on the *Guide*. According to this account, he then finished his literary *oeuvre* with *Gevia' kesef*, *Sharshot kesef*, and dressed up his bibliographical list *Qevuṣat kesef*. However, this chronology cannot account for the substantial differences between the two versions of *Qevuṣat kesef*, for which different explanations have been advanced.<sup>239</sup> Yet other sources indicate that his last work was *Tam ha-Kesef*,<sup>240</sup> and it has been argued elsewhere that that *Gevia' kesef* was written perhaps immediately before *Tam ha-Kesef*, and the commentaries on the *Guide* were written before *Gevia' kesef*.<sup>241</sup>

The *AK* has been described as an “exoteric” commentary, in distinction to the *MK*, which is “esoteric.” Ibn Kaspi indicates the distinction between the two in the preface to *AK*:

Know that our intention in this book is to explain subjects of the *Guide* from among those that [Maimonides] has mentioned as devoid of obvious secrets. Indeed, all the subjects are purely theoretical. We have called it '*Ammudei kesef* [*Pillars of Silver*]. When we come to one of his [Maimonides'] passages in which there is an obvious secret, we will lay the interpretation aside from this [commentary], and explain it in the appropriate place in the book called '*Oṣar adonai* [*The Treasure of the Lord*] which after our name is *Maskiyot kesef* [*Filigree of Silver*].<sup>242</sup>

The preface to *MK*, on the other hand, mentions laconically that the commentary will build a treasure out of the “silver of the secrets of the *Guide*, which are the secrets of metaphysics.”<sup>243</sup>

The descriptions of these works in *Qevuṣat kesef* (Parma version) give a better idea of ibn Kaspi's intended distinction between the two commentaries. There we read that the purpose of *AK* is “to explain many things from the *Guide* which are not concerned with the ‘hidden’; however, all of it involves delicate intellectual matters.”<sup>244</sup> The purpose of the *MK*, according to the same list, is to “explain by way of hint [*remez*] many things from the *Guide* that are concerned with the ‘hidden’ and therefore it was called '*Oṣar 'adonai*. Now I have given it a name derived from [my

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi* 52 n75; SK, 30–31.

<sup>239</sup> SK, 31–36; Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi*, 48–49.

<sup>240</sup> Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi*, 58.

<sup>241</sup> Herring, *Gevia' kesef*, 131–2.

<sup>242</sup> See *Ammudei kesef*, Prologue, ¶2.

<sup>243</sup> See *Maskiyot kesef*, Prologue ¶1.

<sup>244</sup> Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi*, 13. The reading for “hidden” is doubtful (13 n71).

name] Kaspi, ‘and there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner.’ [Prov 24:4].<sup>245</sup> The Munich version of *Qevuṣat kesef* lists an exoteric commentary on the *Guide* under the title *Nequdot kesef*, whose purpose is simply an “explanation of the *Guide* concerning that which is not ‘mystery’ (*sod*)”; the *MK* is briefly described there as “explanation of the *Guide* concerning what there is in it of ‘mystery’.”<sup>246</sup> The Parma version is the later of the two, and it is the one that corresponds most closely to our texts. However, a comparison of the two versions reveals the literary evolution of ibn Kaspi’s interpretation of the *Guide*, one that could be characterized as an increasingly sophisticated approach towards esoteric exegesis.

In terms of the commentaries on *Guide*, the label “exoteric” is an inadequate description of *AK*, which involves “delicate intellectual matters.” In *AK*, ibn Kaspi is both allusive and elusive, deploying a moderate esotericism. He employs expressions that suggest esoteric motives: “pay attention to [this] emphasis,” (*AK*, Commentary, ¶8); “deduce from it” (*ibid.*, ¶14). He mentions the common topos of the esoteric Maimonidean-Tibbonian circle of “an interpretation that reveals a handbreath while concealing a handbreath, and not an interpretation that is completely unconcealed” (*ibid.*, ¶13).<sup>247</sup> He alludes to the fact that the *Guide* begins with the explanation of the term “image” and ends with the term “wisdom,” but the reader is left to ponder the meaning of this claim on his own.<sup>248</sup>

These elements are recurrent in Maimonidean-Tibbonian esoteric texts. The *MK*, on the other hand, develops a different strand of Maimonidean esotericism. In *MK* ibn Kaspi focuses exclusively on the section that describes textual contradictions, which he identifies as the major device of esoteric writing.<sup>249</sup> He points to contradictions as a “procedure among prophets and wise individuals that allows them to find a concealed place (*maqom ṣanuaʿ*) in which to hide their secrets.”<sup>250</sup> The *MK* is also far less exegetical than the *AK*; the text of the *Guide* is a point of depart for discussions on Scriptural and theological contradictions, while the *AK* attempts to explain the meaning of the text and closely follows its order. While the commentaries each emphasize different aspects of Maimonidean esoteric writing, both commentaries can be described as containing esoteric elements rather than as exoteric/esoteric.<sup>251</sup> I return to the issue of esotericism in *AK* below.

<sup>245</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> On the topos, see Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 46–47, and Ravitzky, *History and Faith*.

<sup>248</sup> The allusion occurs in a context where ibn Kaspi is explaining that chapters in the *Guide* are often preparatory for others; see *ʿAmmudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶8.

<sup>249</sup> Pines 17–20, Ibn Tibbon 15–18.

<sup>250</sup> See *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶7.

<sup>251</sup> On Maimonidean esotericism, see for now Sara Klein-Braslavy, *King Solomon and Philosophical Esotericism in the Thought of Maimonides* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996) [Hebrew], and Aviezer Ravitzky, “Maimonides: Esotericism and Educational Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Maimonides*, ed. Kenneth Seeskin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 300–323.

According to Steinschneider, ibn Kaspi is the first to write different texts intended for distinct audiences.<sup>252</sup> Whether this is correct or not, ibn Kaspi saw himself as only following upon the example of the Master: he claims that Maimonides, too, wrote different works for different audiences: the *Guide* for one, and the *Mishneh Torah* for another.<sup>253</sup> Still according to Steinschneider, the motivation to separate the commentary into two came from the after-effects of the controversies around the study of philosophy in 1304–1306.<sup>254</sup>

The *AK* and the *MK* together cover nearly all chapters of the *Guide*, with the *Maskiyot kesef* being the more limited of the two. In the *MK* the commentary on the Preface is circumscribed to one discreet section of the text. In part I, it only covers chapters 1–2, 4–5, 8–10, 14, 16–17, 30–31, 36–37, 40–42, 49, 59, 61–62, 64, 70, and 73. In part II, it comments only on the eighteenth premise (*haqdamah*) of the opening preface, and covers chapters 4, 8–10, 12–13, 19, 22, 29, 32–33, 35–36, 38, 40–41, and 43. In Part III it covers chapters 8, 10, 13, 24, 26–27, 30–31, 34, 36, 41, 43, 46, 49, and 51. On the other hand, the *AK* covers all of part I except for chapter 73, which is in *MK*; in part II, it omits chapter 3, 7, 37, 47 (also lacking from *MK*); in part III, it covers only 2–6, 21, 37, 39, 43–44, 53 (all of which are lacking from *MK* except for chapter 43). Furthermore, relative to other chapters, the *AK* dwells at length in the commentary on I:5 and III:17.<sup>255</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Ibn Kaspi's Exegetical Methods on the Preface to *Guide*: 'Ammudei kesef

The technique of rewriting, described earlier in connection with Moses of Salerno, is one of the preeminent exegetical methods employed in the 'Ammudei kesef. To a more deft degree than the Italian scholar, ibn Kaspi borrows words and sentences from the text of the *Guide* and combines them with his own, producing a unique and hybrid text. He begins each section with abbreviated lemmata, consisting of one sentence or only a few words, followed by "etc.". He then rewrites the larger passage containing that lemma, borrowing and readapting freely from the text, for example,

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The esotericism of 'Ammudei kesef vs that of Maskiyot kesef might be helpfully understood along the lines suggested by Arthur Melzer, with *AK* corresponding to either pedagogical or defensive esotericism and *MK* corresponding to either protective or political esotericism. Arthur Melzer, *Philosophy Between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

<sup>252</sup> See *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, s.v. "Josef Caspi"; Herring, *Gevia' kesef*, 129–130.

<sup>253</sup> See 'Ammudei kesef, Commentary, 13.

<sup>254</sup> *HÜB* §40 (92); Herring, *Gevia' kesef* 130.

<sup>255</sup> See Solomon Z. Werbluner ed., 'Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef (Frankfurt: Yakov Friederich Bach, 1848), 17–21, 128. See the detailed review of Werbluner's edition by Leopold Dukes, "Kritik zur Erklärung des More Nebuchim des Maimonides," pt.1, *Litteraturblatt des Orients* 9:37 (1848), 577–584; pt. 2, 9:38 (1848), 604–608; pt. 3, 9:39 (1848), 618–624.

by changing only some nouns but maintaining the rest of the sentence, or changing a verbal tense. He might also artificially join two disparate sentences from the *Guide*. In the interpretation itself, there is no separation between Ibn Kaspi's own words and those of Maimonides. The procedure may assume that the reader has a good degree of expertise in the text and is able to recognize the difference, or may be a way to exert control over the interpretation of the text. The brief lemmata given at the beginning of each chapter are not there to be commented upon – they seem to serve the function of merely helping the reader to find the appropriate place within each chapter of the *Guide*.

A clear designation of Ibn Kaspi's exegetical orientation in the '*Ammudei kesef*' comes from the author himself. After he writes on the seventh cause, he adds, "this is the explanation of the phrasing of this cause as written in the text. Nonetheless, there is an explanation of this issue and presentation of examples from the *Guide* and the prophetic books [...] in the *Treasury of the Lord* [*Maskiyot kesef*]." <sup>256</sup> This is an indication into the character of the commentary on the Preface, which is generally focused on the phrasing of the text primarily and only secondarily on its philosophical, religious, or political implications. Ibn Kaspi reads meaning into the formal aspects of the text, for example, in the order of subjects or sentences, and in the instances where Maimonides makes a "stipulation" (a general statement followed by a conditional or particularizing statement); Ibn Kaspi raises the question of why Maimonides writes a certain sentence in one way rather than another; and he connects one sentence to another, or to another chapter. <sup>257</sup>

Yet another hermeneutical technique, which betrays an element of esotericism, is to ask the reader directly to "pay attention to the emphasis" (*haflagah*) of a word, sentence or passage, and in one instance, the "emphasis" of the book. <sup>258</sup> Here Ibn Kaspi is concerned with Maimonidean stylistics, with Maimonidean writing as a philosophical-religious style of writing; he mentions the term *haflagah* whenever he wishes to draw the reader's attention to the meaning behind the "material" features of writing, that is, the order of presentation and word choice, and in one instance, *haflagah* is used to point to the meaning behind what Maimonides says in opposition to what one would presume that Maimonides should have said. <sup>259</sup> The concern with the philosophical writing of the *Guide* is also evident in Ibn Kaspi's comparison of Maimonides' style to what he calls the "custom of philosophers," which is to digress from the point under discussion: "in all books of science it has been the custom of the philosophers to do the same, namely, the thread of the discussion deviates from the

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<sup>256</sup> '*Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶23–¶24.

<sup>257</sup> Connecting chapters "one with another" is one of Maimonides' recommendations for understanding the *Guide*; cf. Pines 15, Ibn Tibbon 13.

<sup>258</sup> '*Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶7, ¶8, and *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶6. The insistence on "emphasis" occurs throughout the rest of commentary on the chapters.

<sup>259</sup> '*Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶7.

general and primary intention, as one often reads, ‘we have gone beyond the limits of the subject in this chapter’.”<sup>260</sup> Hence in his view, Maimonides’ declarations of purpose for a chapter, which ibn Kaspi identifies in I:20, I:36 and I:70, can be taken at face value even if the chapter contains other notions.<sup>261</sup>

A related exegetical technique consists of what I term “enumeration.” Ibn Kaspi seeks to flesh out certain concepts by enumerating examples or subcategories found in the passage under question. For example in the passage where Maimonides writes about those who are not meant to understand the totality of the *Guide*, ibn Kaspi’s first impulse is to specify: “here there are three categories of people,” which refers to the “vulgar,” “beginners,” and those who have only engaged in the study of the Law (which ibn Kaspi interprets as those who have only studied Talmud).<sup>262</sup> Though Maimonides does identify those three categories in the text, ibn Kaspi’s goal is to make them clear through systematic enumeration that eliminates “superfluous” phrasing, in this case the sentence “nor to teach those who have not engaged...”<sup>263</sup> A further example is Maimonides’ depiction of the perplexed individual. Ibn Kaspi identifies in the text of the *Guide* seven defining characteristics of such an individual, which he compares to the “seven garments of the priesthood.”<sup>264</sup> Here again the objective is to systematically enumerate Maimonides’ peculiar prose. Finally, regarding the passage “nature and habit in their various forms,” he specifies that nature and habit refer to two distinct notions. Though these examples may seem trivial, or could be interpreted as mnemonic devices, they point to a broader desire to indicate the underlying structure of the text to the reader, by which I mean that Ibn Kaspi wishes to signal that the text is carefully constructed rather than haphazard. One of the ways in which Ibn Kaspi does so is to enumerate or itemize, extrapolating from Maimonides’ peculiar style and sequence of argument. In this light we can understand ibn Kaspi’s remarks that the number of chapters in the *Guide* is the same as the numerical value of the “Garden of Eden,”<sup>265</sup> that the characteristics of the perplexed individual are not arbitrary but are equivalent to the number of garments of the high priest, and that the *Guide* is meant for three different audiences.

Earlier I described *AK* as ibn Kaspi’s exoteric commentary on the *Guide*, in distinction to the esoteric *MK*. I argued that these labels are inaccurate. In the final paragraphs of this section, I give the reader a few more details on esoteric elements of *AK* on the Preface to the *Guide*.

A careful reading of the commentary on the Preface brings to light a few samples of esoteric writing. Ibn Kaspi identifies Maimonides’ exegetical method with regards

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**260** *‘Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶17.

**261** *‘Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶16.

**262** *‘Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶2; the passage by Maimonides is in Pines 5, Ibn Tibbon 4.

**263** Pines 5, Ibn Tibbon 4.

**264** *‘Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶3.

**265** See *‘Ammudei kesef*, Prologue, ¶1.

to prophecy and prophetic *meshalim* as “an interpretation that reveals a handbreath while concealing a handbreath, and not an interpretation that reveals all.”<sup>266</sup> Ibn Kaspi refrains from giving examples of the third and fourth causes, writing only “those who understand the secrets of the Bible will find many of these.”<sup>267</sup> In two potentially problematic passages, ibn Kaspi refers the reader to his other works, reluctant to explain them within *AK*; but the rhetorical effect is precisely to draw attention to the fact that they conceal a secret. Such is the case with a “hint” (*remez*) that there are *meshalim* and riddles in *ma’aseh bereshit*, where ibn Kaspi directs the reader to his *Basin of Silver* (*Mizrequei kesef*, a non-extant commentary on *ma’aseh bereshit*).<sup>268</sup> A second example is Maimonides’ assertion that certain chapters in the *Guide* do not mention any equivocal terms, but “may contain strange matters regarding which the contrary of the truth is sometimes believed”.<sup>269</sup> The interpretation of those “obscure instances,” ibn Kaspi writes, is in *MK*, but “what can be said here” (in *AK*) regarding them is that two examples are I:50–52 and II:13–15, which deal with divine attributes and Creation, respectively. He does not interpret them any further.<sup>270</sup> Yet another significant example is ibn Kaspi’s interpretation of the notion of a *mashal* being “taken for the thing being represented” (*nimshal*) or vice-versa. Ibn Kaspi gives the same biblical proof-text to illustrate both scenarios. In the first, the proof-text is read literally; in the second, it is read allegorically. Ibn Kaspi then adds, “the purpose here is that the statement is [both] revealed and concealed. Sometimes one seizes the revealed when it would have been proper to seize the concealed, and sometimes the opposite; deduce from it.”<sup>271</sup>

Finally, while ibn Kaspi gives an intriguing example concerning determinism and free will for the seventh contradiction, he is explicitly reluctant to comment on the text in the *Guide* that describes the meaning of the cause itself.<sup>272</sup> Expressions of determinism in Scripture, ibn Kaspi writes, are meant to impress the notion of God’s control of the world upon the vulgar, while passages implying free will are meant to teach that an individual is free to act and to repent. He concludes the interpretation by saying that ibn Rushd also noticed “within religions one will find contradictions concerning this notion.”<sup>273</sup> Ibn Kaspi believes that he cannot disclose more in light of his overall purpose for the commentary, and hence he concludes the interpretation with “this will suffice here for our purposes as an interpretation that is available for

266 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶13.

267 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶20.

268 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶12.

269 Pines 10, Ibn Tibbon 9.

270 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶13.

271 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶14.

272 The seventh contradiction can be found in Pines 18, Ibn Tibbon 16.

273 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶24.

all readers.”<sup>274</sup> What is left unsaid is that the purpose of the seventh contradiction, if we recall the text of the *Guide*, is to cause the vulgar to believe a certain way. Hence the intent behind biblical passages either regarding determinism, or either regarding free will, is to cause the reader to believe something rather than to inform the reader that such is the case. This is a significant distinction because it leaves the door open to the possibility that one of these two alternatives may be factually inaccurate, but fulfills the purpose to inculcate a certain belief (a form of the Platonic noble lie). To the extent that this is a logical contradiction, the two alternatives cannot both be true at the same time, and this is why Maimonides writes in the *Guide* that the vulgar should not be aware that there is a contradiction in the first place. Ibn Kaspi leaves the contradiction unresolved and it is up to the reader to work out the full implications of his words. With this example Ibn Kaspi has revealed much, but only implicitly. He goes farther than Maimonides in terms of disclosure by pointing out the existence of the contradiction, but he refrains from explaining its full meaning and significance. In light of the preceding examples, the exoteric label, which has traditionally been applied to the *‘Ammudei kesef*, bears reexamination.

A final distinction between the two commentaries, which may have esoteric overtones, relates to their use of Scripture as a source. While *AK* rarely engages in Scriptural interpretation and is mainly limited to interpretation of the *Guide*, *MK* consistently attempts to find Scriptural prooftexts, and in comparison to *AK*, *MK* is relatively unconcerned with interpreting the text. But to a greater degree than all other commentaries, *MK* goes beyond mere illustration (*mashal*) in its approach to Scripture. It engages in full-fledged theological problems occasioned by the application of Maimonidean causes of contradictions onto the Scriptural text. In a sense, *AK* represents a “safe” or “introductory” esotericism that does not directly confront Scripture, while *MK* opens the door to more radical conclusions.

### 2.4.3 A Theme in the Preface to the *Guide*: *‘Ammudei kesef*: Perplexity and the Perplexed

The *‘Ammudei kesef* touches on a great number of themes, mostly quite briefly. However, ibn Kaspi pays special attention to Maimonides’ description of the perplexed individual, and constructs an original *mashal* to illustrate the nature of perplexity.

In his rewriting of a passage of the *Guide* describing the reader for whom the *Guide* is intended, ibn Kaspi includes both religious and philosophical elements. He enumerates seven defining characteristics of that reader out of Maimonides’ somewhat complex prose, which ibn Kaspi identifies with the seven garments of the

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<sup>274</sup> *ibid.*

priesthood (Exod 28:4).<sup>275</sup> They are: religion has become a habit in the soul because he has performed the practical commandments constantly; the individual believes in the validity of the “Torah of Moses”; he is perfect in belief and character traits – these traits, writes ibn Kaspi, are prescribed in the *Nichomachean Ethics*; he must have studied “the science of philosophy” and “come to know its utility”; his intellect is always *in actu*<sup>276</sup>; he “felt distressed by the externals of the Law”; he knows only a few of the meanings of the equivocal terms, just enough “to perceive some indication [of their meaning].”<sup>277</sup> The characteristics listed range from religious conduct and belief to ethical traits based on a philosophical source, and philosophical knowledge. This method of enumeration within commentaries on the *Guide* begins with ibn Kaspi and becomes commonplace in later commentaries by Profiat Duran and Shem Tov.

A *mashal* on a related subject illustrates the predicament of the perplexed individual. In an extended passage of *Ammudei kesef*, ibn Kaspi constructs a *mashal* to describe the perplexity of an individual who has been introduced to philosophy, but has held on to religion and has spurned the intellect.<sup>278</sup> In the *Guide* Maimonides describes that individual as one who has “brought loss to himself and harm to his religion.”<sup>279</sup> This leads ibn Kaspi to pose the question: since the individual has rejected the intellect, why does Maimonides say that the choice has brought harm to “his religion”? Logically, ibn Kaspi insists, Maimonides should have said that the individual has brought harm to his *intellect*. Ibn Kaspi therefore detects a subtle message in Maimonides’ choice of words: religion without philosophy is harmful to religion. Ibn Kaspi’s *mashal*, which contains within it another *mashal*, is meant to illustrate this point.

The perplexed individual is like one who has two wives, who are Torah and Intellect. The perplexed individual then “approaches them through a prooftext read as a *mashal*, which is ‘let us make man in our image, after our likeness’ (Gen 1:26).” The individual is perplexed because he previously been taught only the literal meaning of “in our image,” as the language of “corporeal representation,” but he now knows that God is not corporeal. He has a “strong belief” that every word in the Torah is true, and the received meaning is that the verse refers to corporeal representation. Both wives, ibn Kaspi notes, are equally beloved. He describes the Intellect as quoted in I Sam 1:6: “And her adversary also proved her sore, for to make her fret” (I read ibn Kaspi as saying that Intellect is the “adversary”; the text is ambiguous) The individual is “unable to reconcile the two and suffers the quarrel between them by himself.”<sup>280</sup>

275 Pines 5, Ibn Tibbon 4; *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶3.

276 Moses of Salerno states the same concerning the perplexed individual (¶11).

277 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶4

278 *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶5–¶7.

279 Pines, 5–6.

280 *ibid.*

Before continuing with ibn Kaspi's *mashal*, let me restate what is taking place in the narrative. Ibn Kaspi is describing two scenes simultaneously. One is the "reader level" of the *mashal*. It directly addresses the predicament of a religious reader who has been exposed to philosophy. This reader is perplexed because he has learned only one meaning for Genesis 1:26, a literal reading implying that God has a body. Now that he has learned philosophy, he knows that God does not have a body. He is unable to decide between the two alternatives.

The second, simultaneous scene, weaved in the text with the reader level, is the *mashal* of a man who has two wives – Torah and Intellect. he says to them: "let us make man in our image," or in other words, ibn Kaspi suggests a literal reading of the proof-text as "let us build a household together and beget children," that is, produce an individual in one's image. But the wives are not able to be at peace with each other. Ibn Kaspi's quotation of I Sam 1:6 is instructive at this point. It means the quarrel between the two wives is analogous to the predicament of the biblical Elkanah. Intellect corresponds to Peninah, one of Elkanah's wives, who was fruitful with children, while Torah corresponds to Hannah, the other wife and the one destined to be the mother of the prophet Samuel, but who for a long time had no children. Peninah mocked Hannah for her lack of childbearing capacity; Elkanah was attached to both and could not let either go. Ibn Kaspi seems to have in mind here that Hannah's child would be that of a "man in our image."

The two levels of the *mashal* meet at the proof-text "let us make man in our image." It is the biblical verse where the reader's received knowledge explicitly contrasts with philosophical knowledge. It is also the man's invitation to each of his wives to produce offspring. Like the biblical verse, the invitation can be understood in different ways. It is not clear to me whether ibn Kaspi means to say that the source of the quarrel is the fact that each wife understands the invitation differently, whether one understands it literally and the other non-literally. Be that as it may, ibn Kaspi clearly points to Elkanah's predicament as a background to this second level of the *mashal* to emphasize that even if they quarrel with one another, both wives are equally beloved. The analogy to Elkanah reveals that ibn Kaspi's choice of proof-text to be explained at the reader level (Gen 1:26) was not arbitrary. Ibn Kaspi means to illustrate how one proof-text can be read in two senses simultaneously.

Ibn Kaspi then returns to the first level of the *mashal*, the "reader" level. He explains that to choose Intellect over Torah means to "renounce the foundations of the Law," quoting from the *Guide*. But to choose Torah over Intellect is to bring loss and harm to himself, as he would see that "his Torah is moldy and a loss, since would establish that God is corporeal, as is the case for the religions of other communities." However, should perplexed individuals learn to read "our image" as a *mashal* – a discourse that indicates another discourse – they would then realize that it can also mean "intellectual form" (as readers of the *Guide* would know from I:1). To conclude the *mashal*, ibn Kaspi switches back to the second level. The reinterpretation of "our image," ibn Kaspi writes, allows the man to remain in peace with both wives, without

quarrel, “and he lies down with both of them together” in a “stately bed” (Ezek 23:41) and a “bed decked out for a scholar” (b. *Shabbat* 25b). The phrase “lies down with both of them together” seems to confirm that the literal reading of the verse “let us make man in our image” as quoted to the wives at the beginning of the *mashal* is meant to be understood as a sexual invitation for producing offspring.

The *mashal* illustrating the condition of perplexity is a *mashal* within a *mashal*. The perplexed individual in the “reader level” of the *mashal* must reinterpret Scripture parabolically in order to resolve the tension in the second level of *mashal* involving the two wives, that is to reinterpret “let us make man in our image, after our likeness” in non-literal terms. In addition, the prooftexts must also be read in the literal sense, with the two wives as not merely conceptual Torah and intellect but also as concrete women (this sense is reinforced by the ending of the *mashal*). The effectiveness of the *mashal*, then depends upon the reader being able to read the prooftexts literally and parabolically simultaneously. It demonstrates in practice the kind of Scriptural reading that a philosophically aware reader ought to adopt to avoid perplexity. This is a point that ibn Kaspi hones on later in the commentary. Ibn Kaspi gives the example of “behold, there met him a woman” (Proverbs 7:10) as an example of a statement that is read both literally and parabolically. It is read literally when a “*mashal* is taken for the thing being represented” and parabolically when the “thing represented [*nimshal*] is taken for the *mashal*”, in which case “woman” refers to “matter.”<sup>281</sup> The prooftext is therefore, according to ibn Kaspi, “[both] revealed and concealed. Sometimes one seizes the revealed when it would have been proper to seize the concealed; deduce from it.”<sup>282</sup>

#### 2.4.4 Ibn Kaspi’s Exegetical Methods on the Preface to *Guide: Maskiyot kesef*

The method employed in the *Maskiyot kesef* is quite distinct from the *‘Ammudei kesef*, and unique among all commentaries in this study. It begins *in media res* by addressing a single topic in the Preface before proceeding to commentary on the causes of contradictions.<sup>283</sup> Lemmata marked apart from the commentator’s words are scarce. To an even greater extent than in the *‘Ammudei kesef*, ibn Kaspi assumes that the reader is quite familiar with the text of the *Guide*; though sometimes he indicates that a certain sentence or word is quoted verbatim, the bulk of his method, where it is used to interpret the *Guide*, consists in the technique of rewriting mentioned earlier in connection with other commentators. The greater part of the commentary on the Preface consists of digressions of a theological and occasionally political nature. These digressions

<sup>281</sup> Pines 10, ibn Tibbon 9.

<sup>282</sup> *‘Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶14.

<sup>283</sup> Pines 17–20, ibn Tibbon 15–18.

consider both sides of what ibn Kaspi considers bona fide (i.e. factual) Scriptural contradictions. He appropriates the concepts and language of the *Guide* and employs them freely as exegetical devices with which to approach Scripture. Thus, the main purpose of *MK* on the Preface is Scriptural interpretation rather than commentary on the text of the *Guide*. Ibn Kaspi “instrumentalizes” the *Guide* to uncover secrets in Scripture, and though he discusses both contradictory sides of a given issue at length, he is reluctant to offer a final word on what he considers to be the correct opinion when a contradiction is deemed factual. Instead, he turns to certain techniques of esoteric writing, outlined below, to conceal his own opinion. The effect of such a method is to teach the reader of the *Guide* how to read Scripture and identify contradictions therein, but not necessarily to teach the reader the substance of what one ought to think. Ibn Kaspi three times rejects rabbinical solutions for biblical contradictions, because in his view the Rabbis did not interpret them as strict logical contradictions. The rabbinical solutions imply that both sides of the contradiction are true, but not simultaneously. The examples are: one concerning the contradiction between verses implying parents are punished for the sins of their children, against verses implying the opposite; a second on the contradiction between Num 6:26 (“the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee”) and Deut 10:17 (“who does not lift up his countenance”); and a third on verses that declare that a divine decree of punishment can be averted by means of repentance, fasting and prayer, against other verses declaring the exact opposite.<sup>284</sup> Ibn Kaspi rejects rabbinical solutions on the basis of what he considers to be equivalent to the “fourth cause,” non-simultaneity. For the latter set of contradictions, for example, he quotes and rejects the solution proposed in b. *Rosh ha-shanah*: “the former came before the decree and the latter came after the decree” (18a).<sup>285</sup>

The *Maskiyot kesef* is generally designated as ibn Kaspi’s “esoteric” commentary and is extremely focused. The commentary on the Preface covers only two subjects found in the Preface, both of which are mentioned in the *‘Ammudei kesef* as inappropriate for a commentary that is “available for all readers”<sup>286</sup> and they are therefore relegated to *MK*.

The first topic in *MK* on the Preface is the notion that certain chapters of the *Guide* do not deal with the explanation of any equivocal terms, which, I shall recall, is the *Guide*’s primary purpose. Ibn Kaspi enumerates from the text of the *Guide* that such chapters exhibit one of three purposes: one, they may be “preparatory” for other chapters (a better term might be “introductory”). Two, the chapters might merely hint at the meaning of an equivocal term that Maimonides does not want to discuss at that

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**284** That is, the rabbinic solutions resolve the contradictions by appealing to the “fourth cause,” which is an apparent but not factual contradiction according to Maimonides’ own admission (“a contradiction appears to have been said, whereas there is no contradiction,” Pines 17, ibn Tibbon 15). See *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶5, ¶12.

**285** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶12.

**286** *‘Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶24.

place. Three, the chapters might explain a *mashal*, or point out that a “certain story is a *mashal*.”<sup>287</sup> Ibn Kaspi explains this purpose through exemplification, pointing to I:17 as a model. He writes that it neither contains an equivocal term nor is it preparatory, but hints at the equivocality found in I:16. What is the hint in question? Ibn Kaspi notes only that “as we will explain in the appropriate place,” a statement whose implications I examine in the next paragraph. The same is true of I:31–36: like I:16, they are preparatory for what follows them.<sup>288</sup>

This interpretation raises several questions, and it is likely that ibn Kaspi is being purposefully oblique. The statement of deferral, “as we will explain in the appropriate place” takes the reader to the commentary on *Guide* I:17 in the same *Maskiyot kesef*.<sup>289</sup> There ibn Kaspi introduces a concept that counterbalances the “preparatory” nature of a chapter: some chapters are but a “complement” (*hashlamah*) to others. Thus according to ibn Kaspi I:2 is a complement to I:1, and I:5 is a complement to I:4, and I:17 is a complement to I:16. Most importantly, ibn Kaspi adds that I:17 reveals something of divine science while concealing something of natural science. In the text of the *Guide*, however, Maimonides says nothing of revealing divine science; in fact, Maimonides begins the chapter with “do not think that only the divine science should be withheld from the multitude...”<sup>290</sup> What is at stake in *Guide* I:17 is whether natural science should be hidden too, and to what extent. Ibn Kaspi’s statement that I:17 reveals something of divine science is thus significant in that it openly contradicts the letter of the *Guide*.

Going back to this first topic broached in *Maskiyot kesef* on the Preface – the notion that some chapters of the *Guide* do not deal with equivocal terms – we can detect another aspect that characterizes ibn Kaspi’s interpretation as oblique, that is, as esoteric. As I mentioned, ibn Kaspi writes that *Guide* I:17 neither contains an equivocal term nor that it is “preparatory;” it is complementary (the first purpose). I:17 seemingly accords with the second purpose, in that it hints at the equivocality found in I:16 – but he has not explained the substance of the hint, only its formal presentation (as complementary to I:16). What is important to notice is that ibn Kaspi omits any consideration that I:17 may exhibit the third purpose: that the chapter may contain a *mashal* or point out that a certain story is a *mashal*. In fact, I:17 does point to a story being a *mashal*: the ancient pseudo-Platonic designation of Matter as Female and Form as Male.<sup>291</sup> Ibn Kaspi is thus drawing the attention of the reader to this chapter and the *mashal* precisely by not mentioning it. A reader of the *Guide* would instantly recognize the *mashal* as appearing in the Preface as well: Maimonides points

<sup>287</sup> Pines 10, ibn Tibbon 9.

<sup>288</sup> *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶1.

<sup>289</sup> See Werbluner, ‘*Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 32–33.

<sup>290</sup> Pines 42, ibn Tibbon 37.

<sup>291</sup> On the origin of this *mashal* quoted by Maimonides, see James T. Robinson, “Some Remarks on the Source of Maimonides’ Plato in *Guide of the Perplexed* I:17,” *Zutot* 3 (2003), 49–57.

to Matter as Female in his interpretation of the *mashal* of a “harlot” who is also a “married woman,” and a woman who is not a harlot but a wife “who confines herself to attending to the welfare of her household and husband”.<sup>292</sup>

In other words, because ibn Kaspi excludes the first two purposes for chapters of the *Guide* that do not explain equivocal terms and is silent regarding the third purpose, a careful reader would naturally ask whether he means to say *sub silentio* that I:17 falls under the third purpose. Ibn Kaspi indicates that may be his intention by adding “as we will explain in the appropriate place.” By consulting “the appropriate place” where the chapter is explained (*Maskiyot kesef* on I:17), ibn Kaspi reveals that it does indeed fall under the third purpose: the *mashal* discloses something of divine science. One likely conclusion is that the third purpose and the disclosure are identical, that is, that I:17 discloses divine science through the *mashal* of matter as female and form as male. This conclusion takes the reader back to the text of the Preface, where Maimonides gives an equivalent (though not identical) *mashal* in which matter is also likened to female. Hence the reader is likely to ask whether ibn Kaspi’s intention is to ultimately point to Maimonides’ *mashal* in the Preface as a disclosure of divine science.<sup>293</sup>

Ibn Kaspi’s interpretation exhibits some characteristics of his esoteric method: drawing attention to something by leaving it unsaid or unexplained; referring the reader to another work or another passage in the same work; using examples but refraining from fully interpreting them (as is the case for I:31–36). The result of these strategies is to force the reader to look elsewhere, and compare several passages, in order to reconstruct ibn Kaspi’s interpretation, as I performed in the paragraphs above. In this manner, he deploys Maimonides’ recommendation to the reader to “connect [the *Guide*’s] chapters one with another” as an exegetical technique, by encouraging the reader to connect the chapters of *Maskiyot kesef* and passages of the *Guide* with one another.

The second subject discussed in *Maskiyot kesef* on the Preface is the causes of contradictions, and here ibn Kaspi is primarily concerned with contradictions found in Scripture but not explored in the *Guide*. This may be in part because by Maimonides’ own admission that only the fifth and seventh causes are found in the *Guide*, and therefore exegesis of the *Guide* is not helpful in illustrating the other causes.

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<sup>292</sup> Pines 13, ibn Tibbon 12.

<sup>293</sup> Additional evidence seems to reinforce this conclusion: the *mashal* in I:17 is philosophical in origin, while the *mashal* in the Preface to the *Guide* is biblical; Maimonides draws from the text of Proverbs. Since it is all but certain that ibn Kaspi read the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, he may have been acquainted with the *mashal* reported there that Plato learned divine science from the Jews (ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶13). Thus Proverbs and Plato have a common origin and are not in fundamental disagreement; they are two presentations of the same truth. Additionally, the *mashal* Maimonides gives in the Preface is not explained at all in *‘Ammudei kesef*, reinforcing the contention that it is not fit for explanation to general readers.

However, even with respect to the fifth and seventh causes all of the examples given in the *Maskiyot kesef* come from Scripture. Due to the nature of the examples and the extended discussions regarding them, *MK* on the Preface to the *Guide* is a thoroughly “theological” commentary. Ibn Kaspi offers explanation of biblical contradictions such as prooftexts indicating resurrection of the dead against others stating that the dead will never return to life, others concerning individual punishment against punishment for the sins of prior generations, and prooftexts stating that divine providence is real against others that deny its reality. None of these contradictions, per ibn Kaspi, belongs to either the fifth or seventh causes. He occasionally mentions rabbinical harmonization of contradictions, but again when it comes to a contradiction due to the seventh cause, he rejects the rabbinical solution. In the paragraphs to follow I examine ibn Kaspi’s interpretation of the causes of contradiction in *MK*.

In the application of the causes to the biblical text, ibn Kaspi is uninterested in the first and the second, because, “God forbid the prophets or the philosophers” should habitually employ them, “unless they are engaged in explaining the difference [of subjects] among various speakers or times periods.”<sup>294</sup> This signals that ibn Kaspi is not at all interested in contradictions occurring in Talmud, since Maimonides explicitly points to Talmud as a source where the first and second causes can be found.

The third and fourth causes are, in ibn Kaspi’s opinion, the primary method by which the writings of the prophets are esoteric: “these causes constitute their entire principle for concealing their secrets.”<sup>295</sup> To recall, Maimonides writes that the third cause occurs when two statements contradict each other and one ought to be read in its literal sense, while the other is a *mashal* and therefore has an “inner content”; or two statements are both *meshalim* that contradict each other, but only at the literal level of the *mashal*.<sup>296</sup> The fourth cause occurs because a “proviso” (i.e. a conditional statement or stipulation) was omitted by the author, or because a subject was not explained “in its proper place” (ibid). Ibn Kaspi makes an incisive observation regarding these causes: they are not factual contradictions. He describes them only as a custom proper to the Hebrew language and a philosophical custom (that is, normative philosophical writing style) according to which it is sometimes necessary to speak through *meshalim*.<sup>297</sup> The fourth cause, too, can be traced to philosophical custom, and ibn Kaspi indicates here that philosophers omit terms for the notion of “existence.” He then goes on to give more examples of the third and fourth causes from Scripture, but in doing so he casts doubt on whether all these contradictions really can be explained through the third or fourth causes. For the third cause, he offers an example concerning resurrection of the dead (which he declares to be the real and true statement), and for the fourth cause, he gives a logical example followed

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<sup>294</sup> *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶2.

<sup>295</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>296</sup> Pines 17, ibn Tibbon 15.

<sup>297</sup> *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶2.

by two biblical examples (punishment of children for the sins of the fathers, and divine providence). Though he adds that the Rabbis solved all these by means of the fourth cause, ibn Kaspi points the reader to his own solution for the contradiction of divine punishment of children in a “more strictly religious context, though not in the manner that the Sages did,” in the lost *Qe’arot kesef* (the contradiction is also mentioned in *Tam ha-Kesef*).<sup>298</sup> However, ibn Kaspi revisits this same example later on in *MK* on the Preface. This time ibn Kaspi refers the reader to his treatise *Table of Silver*, and describes the contradiction in *MK* as “a very obscure matter and a lofty secret.”<sup>299</sup> This statement implies that the contradiction regarding divine punishment of children may in fact be due to the seventh cause, a point to which I shall return. In this second interpretation of that contradiction, ibn Kaspi adds another layer of meaning, or a layer of suggestion, by adding a proof-text describing God as just and right [Deut 32:4]. Ibn Kaspi is not entirely clear here, but it seems to me the implication is that a just and right God would not punish a child for the sins of the parent, notwithstanding other Scriptural statements to the contrary.<sup>300</sup> Ibn Kaspi gives additional Scriptural examples, all of which are contradictory statements concerning divine justice and punishment of the innocent.

As I mentioned earlier, ibn Kaspi indicates that the third and fourth causes are not factual. Now following the mention of *Qe’arot kesef* he indicates a political purpose for them. The author employs them so that the vulgar will accept a certain notion in accordance with their capacity; ibn Kaspi is explicit that “this is a notion devoid of truth,” or in other words a noble lie.<sup>301</sup> The lie is necessary insofar as he states that the vulgar cannot accept the truth as it is without a breakdown of social order.<sup>302</sup> He repeats that these contradictions are but a convention, one that allows the authors to “find a concealed place in which to hide their secrets.”<sup>303</sup> In the next section I locate such a political purpose within the seventh cause. Finally, ibn Kaspi dismisses the sixth cause laconically as “but an error by the author.”

Having now disposed of causes one through four, as well as the sixth cause, Ibn Kaspi is now left with explaining the fifth and seventh causes, which Maimonides had

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**298** Cf. *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶15, notes.

**299** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶15.

**300** *ibid.*

**301** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶6.

**302** Ibn Kaspi writes, “the vulgar cannot bear the matter as it is without losing their mind, behaving disorderly and becoming completely unraveled” (*Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶6). In the *Decisive Treatise* ibn Rushd writes that interpreting certain notions mentioned in the Law to the vulgar corrupts them and steers them to “unbelief.” Such notions must be understood by the vulgar according to their external sense exclusively. See *Decisive Treatise & Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 26–27, 29. See also parallel passages in the *Exposition of Religious Arguments*, trans. Ibrahim Y. Najjar, *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes’ “Exposition of Religious Arguments”* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 56–57, 69–70.

**303** *Maskiyot kesef*, ¶6.

indicated as purposefully inserted in the *Guide*. Ibn Kaspi explicitly designates these two causes as genuine contradictions, that is, two or more statements that are contradictory at the literal level and neither of which is meant to be read parabolically. According to ibn Kaspi, these two causes are found only in philosophical sources, which include the *Guide*, but the seventh perhaps also appears in prophetic writings.<sup>304</sup> Ibn Kaspi deftly disposes of the fifth, because it is only for pedagogical purposes, but describes the seventh as statements that are contradictory “under every aspect” or that are contrary, by which he means that both statements can never be true at the same time. The logical distinction between contradictory and contrary statements allows ibn Kaspi to observe that if they are contraries they may both be false.<sup>305</sup>

He then turns to Maimonides’ cryptic statement at the end of the Preface: “Whether contradictions due to the seventh cause are to be found in the books of the prophets is a matter for speculative study and investigation. Statements about this should not be a matter of conjecture”.<sup>306</sup> Ibn Kaspi displays a tone of surprise at this statement, and states that it does occur in Scripture: “The whole of Scripture, however, is full of such instances”<sup>307</sup> of the seventh cause. Ibn Kaspi is very careful in the presentation of his next example of biblical contradiction, a major theological problem that reappears in several of his writings: how can we reconcile Scriptural passages stating that God’s word is never retracted with passages implying the opposite?<sup>308</sup> In the next section I argue that this is meant to be an example of the seventh cause.

Ibn Kaspi closes *MK* on the Preface with certain cryptic, esoteric statements. He pointedly refuses to give a *mashal* for the seventh cause regarding creation vs. eternity of the world (drawing thereby the reader’s attention to the problem that there is such a contradiction), nominally because of Maimonides’ statements in II:25: “nor are the gates of figurative interpretation shut in our faces.” Ibn Kaspi adds that the interpretation of miracles belongs to the seventh cause, and refers the reader to his commentary on II:29 (which implies that ibn Kaspi reads Maimonides as believing in eternity of the world).<sup>309</sup> I shall return to these statements in the next section.

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**304** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶8.

**305** The heading of the section of the Preface on the contradictions does in fact include contrary propositions: “one of seven causes should account for the contradictory or contrary statements to be found in any book or compilation” (Pines 17, ibn Tibbon 15).

**306** Pines 19, ibn Tibbon 17.

**307** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶10.

**308** On this motif in ibn Kaspi’s writings, see Hannah Kasher, “Joseph ibn Kaspi as a Philosophical Exegete,” Ph.D. diss Bar-Ilan University, 1982 [Hebrew]. Ibn Kaspi deals with this problem from a different perspective in *Gelilei kesef*, a commentary on Esther, where he tries to show that two apparently contradictory royal decrees can be harmonized on the basis of logic. See Robert Eisen, “Joseph Ibn Kaspi on the Secret Meaning of the Scroll of Esther,” *REJ* 160:3–4 (2001), 376–408.

**309** Cf. *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶16, notes.

As in the *'Ammudei kesef*, ibn Kaspi rewrites the text in *Maskiyot kesef*, but to a much more limited degree. He employs some of the same markers of esotericism, such as referring the reader to other works and passages, mentioning the existence (or the interpretation) of secrets, drawing the reader's attention to the "emphasis" of the text, but goes beyond these features as described above in connection with the subject of chapters that lack equivocal terms. He is ready to critique Maimonides, or more precisely, to step firmly where Maimonides feared to tread, as is evident from his interpretation of the seventh cause. Although he offers several hints with respect to the problem of whether divine decrees can be retracted, he is circumspect concerning Creation, which was a much more immediate theological problem in light of his surrounding context.<sup>310</sup> Ultimately, however, one of the strongest contributions of *MK* on the Preface to the *Guide* is to clearly illustrate the ways in which the *Guide* was used as a manual for biblical interpretation, and in particular, for esoteric biblical interpretation. This approach to the *Guide*, far more characteristic of the 14th century than the 13th, also appears in Moses of Narbonne's commentary on the Preface.

#### 2.4.5 A Theme in the Preface to the *Guide*: *Maskiyot kesef*: Scriptural Contradictions and the Seventh Cause

One of the major themes of the *Maskiyot kesef* does not appear in the Preface to the *Guide* at all. The topic of the causes of contradictions provides ibn Kaspi with an opportunity to seek examples of contradictions in Scripture. This search, in turn, gives him an opportunity to introduce a thorny subject that appears in several of his writings, namely, whether God's word can be retracted.<sup>311</sup> In connection with this problem, he is particularly interested in the "seventh cause," which involves a genuine contradiction.<sup>312</sup> Maimonides writes that the "vulgar" must not be made aware of the

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**310** For ibn Kaspi's views on Creation, see Mesch, *Joseph ibn Caspi*, 97–100, and Kasher, "Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete," 54–61. For the fourteenth-century context, see Dov Schwartz, "The Doctrine of Creation in the Neoplatonic Circle of Jewish Thought in the Fourteenth Century," *Tarbiš* 60:4 (1991), 593–623 [Hebrew]; Tamar Rudavsky, "Time and Cosmology in Late Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse*, eds. Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riaño (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 147–162; Barry S. Kogan, "The Problem of Creation in Late Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in *A Straight Path: Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture: Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman*, ed. Ruth Link-Salinger (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 159–173.

**311** Cf. *Tirat kesef*, in Isaac Last ed., *Zwei Schriften des R. Josef ibn Kaspi*, vol.1 (Cracow: Joseph Fischer, 1906), 28–29; *Mašref la-kesef*, in Last, *Zwei Schriften*, vol. 2, 286–291.

**312** What constitutes a "genuine contradiction" in this case is that two statements are read strictly at the literal level, rather than as *mashal*, or metaphor, or where the contradiction is the result of an implicit stipulation (a "proviso"), or the contradictory statements are said by different speakers or regarding different subjects. Cf. ibn Kaspi, *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶13. See also Samuel ibn Tibbon, *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim*: "the content of the secrets of Torah does not remove the literal

contradiction, which involves “very obscure matters.”<sup>313</sup> The seventh cause becomes the method through which ibn Kaspi resolves a theological tension with the help of a political solution. In that process, and with the aid of further examples, he conveys to the reader that the seventh cause as a whole may have a political dimension.

The tension revolves around biblical statements declaring that God’s word can be retracted (that is, divine decrees can be annulled) against statements proclaiming that God’s word and decrees can never be changed. This is a capital question for ibn Kaspi, as it contains a political dimension in addition to being a theological problem. He writes that “we are constrained to establish [that divine decrees can be abrogated] so that they will fast, and pray, and renounce the evil in their hands, which is for the good ‘of him for whose sake the whole world was created’ [...] even though the truth of the matter is otherwise.”<sup>314</sup>

The political dimension of the issue has two prongs. First, the retraction of divine decrees is an incentive for the multitude to avoid evil, with the implication that it supports the maintenance of social order. As ibn Kaspi writes regarding the third and fourth causes, “a notion devoid of truth—which is what the author intends—since the vulgar cannot bear the matter as it truly is without losing their mind, behaving disorderly and becoming completely unraveled.”<sup>315</sup> Second, the maintenance of social order is necessary for the good “of him for whose sake the whole world was created.” In the Preface to the commentary on the Mishnah, ibn Kaspi’s likely source, Maimonides quotes this same rabbinic dictum to describe the perfect wise man for whose sake the multitude exists so that he can live in society. In the *Guide*, too, Maimonides expresses the idea that the political-social order is necessary for the procuring of basic needs, which in turn is a necessary (though by no means sufficient) condition for the flourishing of the intellect, the “welfare of the soul.” As he writes, “an individual can only attain all this [i.e., the fulfillment of basic needs] through a political association.”<sup>316</sup>

Ibn Kaspi is clear regarding where he personally stands on the matter of divine decrees: “that the word of God will not be abrogated is the one true proposition that is completely established.”<sup>317</sup> In other words, prayer or fasting are ineffective in bringing about change to what God has determined. There are different reasons for this stance. A philosophical objection to the retraction of divine decrees is that it would

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sense of biblical verses, God forbid,” Mordekhai Leib Bisliches ed (Pressburg: Anton Edlen v. Schmid, 1837) 174. On ibn Kaspi’s literal readings of Scripture, see Cyril Aslanov, “L’aristotélisme médiéval au service du commentaire littéral: le cas de Joseph Caspi,” *REJ* 161:1–2 (2002), 123–137.

**313** Unsurprisingly, this cause along with the fifth were the two generally associated with esoteric writing.

**314** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶14. The quotation comes from b. *Berakhot* 6b; see notes in *Maskiyot kesef*.

**315** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶6.

**316** III:27, Pines 511, ibn Tibbon 469.

**317** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶13.

imply a change (and therefore imperfection) in God, and a religious objection is that it would imply that God's word is false. As Ibn Kaspi asks "how can we find it in our hearts to say [...] [that] his word is false"?<sup>318</sup> However, he emphasizes that for both the prophets and for "us" – presumably referring to the Jewish philosopher-theologians of his day – it is "necessary to declare to the multitude that the word of the Lord can be abrogated;" in the same paragraph, ibn Kaspi writes "we are constrained to establish such before the multitude."<sup>319</sup> Though both the prophets and the philosophers know full well that such a declaration is false, they have an obligation not to disclose its true meaning. This attitude fits with the description of the seventh cause, which is described in the *Guide* as a concealed contradiction, one that must not be disclosed to the multitude, and it parallels ibn Rushd's positions in the *Decisive Treatise* on non-disclosure of potentially problematic interpretations.<sup>320</sup> It reflects, too, ibn Kaspi's contentious positions towards the multitude and the lay leadership of the Jewish community, whom he faults for their limited intellectual abilities, and towards the rabbinical class, whose expertise he depicts as strictly limited to legal matters and excludes theology or Scriptural interpretation (let alone philosophical knowledge).<sup>321</sup>

Though he makes his position known, ibn Kaspi still refrains from giving the reader more details to his solution to the problem, twice deferring a more detailed explanation of this "obscure matter" to the *Table of Silver*.<sup>322</sup> It is significant however, that ibn Kaspi reveals the existence of such a contradiction, along with his own controversial interpretation regarding that contradiction, within a commentary on the *Guide*. It may be an indication that ibn Kaspi meant the *MK* to be read primarily by fellow partisan scholars and not by the general public – all the more so in a commentary designated as an examination of the "secrets of the *Guide*," which are the "secrets of metaphysics."<sup>323</sup> The deferral of a full explanation to another treatise appeals only to those who are familiar with ibn Kaspi's other writings (and presumably agree with his views) rather than casual readers. In this sense, the *Maskiyot kesef* conforms to the idea that the "vulgar must in no way be aware of the contradiction."<sup>324</sup>

Ibn Kaspi may have therefore considered this particular example of the seventh cause as one that could be safely exposed in writing, especially if more details are meant to be found in a separate context, thus forcing the reader to connect ibn Kaspi's works with one another. Ibn Kaspi gives now further examples in the *Maskiyot kesef*

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318 *ibid.*

319 *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶14

320 Cf. *Decisive Treatise*, trans. Butterworth, 8–22.

321 See Avraham Grossman, "Social Controversy in Josef ibn Kaspi's Commentaries on Scripture," in *Studies in Hebrew Poetry and Jewish Heritage: in Memory of Aharon Mirsky*, eds. Efraim H̄azan and Yosef Yahalom (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006), 103–124 [Hebrew].

322 *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶13, ¶14.

323 *Maskiyot kesef*, Prologue, ¶1.

324 Pines 17, ibn Tibbon 16.

that are not so straightforward, and at the end of the commentary on the Preface, the language and tone take a more esoteric turn.<sup>325</sup> He returns to the example involving divine justice, the contradiction between verses stating that children will be punished for the sins of the parents against verses expressing individual punishment. Ibn Kaspi had earlier cited the same example as an instance where the Rabbis solved it according to the “fourth cause.” In the earlier passage he had only claimed that his own solution is not identical, referring the reader to the lost *Qe’arot kesef*.<sup>326</sup> In this passage towards the end of *MK* on the Preface ibn Kaspi now adds that in his view Maimonides thought this problem falls under the fourth cause.<sup>327</sup> But ibn Kaspi’s own judgment of the contradiction is that “undoubtedly this is a very obscure matter and contains a lofty secret.” This description does not correspond to the fourth cause, but rather the seventh; as we saw with the prior example regarding divine decrees, it too is called an “obscure matter,” and unlike the seventh cause, the fourth cause is never called a “secret.” Thus, for ibn Kaspi the biblical contradiction concerning the punishment of children is likely an example of the seventh cause, although he is careful not to label it as such explicitly. Only those readers who understand what ibn Kaspi means by “obscure matter” and “secret” would connect the example to the seventh cause.

There is a further element that supports the idea that we have here an example of the seventh cause. In the earlier statement of the problem the rabbinical solution of the contradiction was rejected because it was on the basis of the fourth cause; in this second restatement, Maimonides’ solution is on the basis of the fourth cause. Likewise, at the end of his discussion on whether God’s word can be abrogated, ibn Kaspi briefly considers (and then rejects) a possible Maimonidean solution to that problem, once again on the basis of the fourth cause.<sup>328</sup> In the beginning of his presentation of the contradiction regarding divine justice, Ibn Kaspi opens with “it seems to me there is yet another prophetic *mashal* that falls under the fourth cause in the opinion of the Teacher.” But Ibn Kaspi had just rejected a possible solution by Maimonides to another contradiction (on divine decrees) because it was on the basis of the fourth cause. The effect, then, is to lead the reader to question Maimonides’ solution to this contradiction (on divine justice) as well. Ibn Kaspi goes on to mention yet another contradiction, between verses promising salvation of a city or land from destruction if pious individuals could be found therein against passages that announce complete

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**325** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶15.

**326** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶5.

**327** Ibn Kaspi likely has in mind the statement in I:54 (Pines 127, ibn Tibbon 108) that reinterprets the punishment of the children as only applied for the sin of idolatry “and not to any other sin;” this would, according to the fourth cause, constitute an implicit proviso that renders the contradiction as only apparent and not real.

**328** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶14.

destruction. Here, too, he declares, “there is no doubt that this is a very obscure matter and a lofty secret,” another implicit example of the seventh cause.

Ibn Kaspi considers two final sets of contradictions as so obscure that he cannot give even *meshalim* for them. The first example is the creation in time, the Platonic view, against the Aristotelian view that the world is uncreated. He writes that he may not give any *meshalim* due to Maimonides’ statement in II:25: “nor are the gates of interpretation shut in our faces.”<sup>329</sup> In II:25 Maimonides claims that verses indicating the creation of the universe in time could, in principle, be interpreted figuratively. However, Maimonides continues, belief in the eternity of the universe has not been demonstrated. Such a belief would destroy “the Law in its principle” and give “the lie to every miracle,” unless the miracles, too, are to be interpreted figuratively. Nonetheless, Maimonides adds that this “would result in some sort of crazy imaginings.”<sup>330</sup> The preliminary conclusion, then, is that creation should be interpreted as creation in time. Ibn Kaspi’s second set of contradictions is the “account of miracles written in the Torah and the prophets,” and he writes that Maimonides possibly believed that verses concerning miracles should be ascribed to the seventh cause. Ibn Kaspi closes with a statement implying that eternity of the universe is the correct view and refers the reader to his own commentary on *Guide* II:29.<sup>331</sup>

Ibn Kaspi’s statements aim to convey to the reader that a necessary condition for determining the seventh cause is that the prooftexts are considered at the literal level. In other words, the contradiction is visible when neither side of the contradiction is considered to be a *meshal*. He makes a remark to this end in the course of his presentation of the example of whether God’s word can be retracted.<sup>332</sup> Accordingly, the two examples regarding Creation and miracles are described in *Guide* II:25 as matters that cannot be interpreted figuratively and must be read literally. In his commentary on *Guide* II:29 ibn Kaspi writes that although the account of creation as given in Scripture may be a “*meshal* [intended] for Moses and his times,” that possibility alone does not deny the validity of the literal sense. In the same passage, he then likens the literal sense to silver, “while the rest is as gold.” Therefore, despite the validity of the literal sense, politically or historically valuable, the philosophically-coherent inner meaning is the most valuable.

Thus ibn Kaspi esoterically connects these two examples, inasmuch as they are both examples of theological problems that Maimonides says must be interpreted at the literal level, to the “settings of silver” mentioned in the Preface to the *Guide*, which Maimonides designates as indicating a political value. By doing so ibn Kaspi seems to suggest that the seventh cause as a whole has a political dimension. Reasons of a political nature, then, might constitute for ibn Kaspi the meaning

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**329** Pines 327, ibn Tibbon 286.

**330** Pines 328, ibn Tibbon 286.

**331** See references in *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶16.

**332** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶13.

of the undefined “necessity” mentioned by Maimonides in the description of the seventh cause in the *Guide*.<sup>333</sup>

## 2.5 Moses ben Joshua ben David of Narbonne

Moses of Narbonne, often called the Hebrew moniker Moshe Narboni, was born in 1300 and grew up in Perpignan, where many Jews had found refuge after the expulsion from lands controlled by the king of France (1306).<sup>334</sup> He left Perpignan, then part of the Crown of Aragon, and traveled widely throughout Spain. He apparently died in Sória a few months after completing the commentary on the *Guide* in April of 1362.<sup>335</sup> Like Joseph ibn Kaspi, Moses of Narbonne was not a translator. Most, if not all of his sources were available in Hebrew translation and it is unclear how much Arabic or Latin he knew (if any).<sup>336</sup> Further details regarding his life are scant, but he writes of having learned the *Guide* with his father.<sup>337</sup> He may have taught the *Guide* to his son as well. Moses of Narbonne writes in a postface to the commentary on the *Guide* that it was his son who urged him to write that commentary (I shall return to this point momentarily).<sup>338</sup> The vast majority of Moses of Narbonne’s works are commentaries and supercommentaries.

Moses of Narbonne composed his commentary on the *Guide* towards the end of his literary career, consonant with a pattern that we have seen for other commentators. It is his last known work. An internal reference in the commentary shows that he had moved to Sória in 1358.<sup>339</sup> According to the postface to the commentary, found in some manuscripts, Moses of Narbonne began it in Toledo in 1355 and finished it in Sória seven years later.<sup>340</sup>

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**333** Pines 18, ibn Tibbon 16.

**334** Renan, 320–322; *HÜB* §175 (311–313).

**335** A manuscript of the *Treatise on Free Will* states that he died in March 1362, but he apparently finished the *Commentary on the Guide* in April of 1362 and cites the *Treatise* in the *Commentary*. Cf. Renan, 321.

**336** See Renan, 320–1, who states that he knew Arabic and Latin.

**337** See Moses of Narbonne, Prologue ¶4.

**338** See text of postface in Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Quntras ha-Mafteaḥ* (Vienna: G. Brag, 1881), 32–34; Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986), 181–182.

**339** Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 45v (on II:47). Moses of Narbonne records a visit to a 130-year old woman (possibly in his capacity as a physician) in Sória in the year 5,118 (=1358).

**340** See Gitit Holzman, “R. Moshe Narboni’s Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides,” *Da’at* 74–75 (2013), 200 [Hebrew], and the text of postface in *Moshe Narboni*, trans. Maurice-Ruben Hayoun (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986), 117–119 and in Jellinek, *Quntres ha-mafteaḥ*, 32–34.

### 2.5.1 Commentary on the *Guide*

The postface includes key details surrounding the writing of the commentary on the *Guide*. Moses of Narbonne writes that two immediate reasons delayed its completion: he was the victim of an attack against the Jewish community on the second day of the holiday of Shavuot in 1355; the second reason is that Moses of Narbonne spent most of his time occupied with his other commentaries “on the *Metaphysics* and on the books of the *Physics*.” Moses of Narbonne mentions a work of his by the title *Treatise on Metaphysics*, about which nothing else is known.<sup>341</sup> It is probably correct to assume that these are not references to actual commentaries on Aristotle, but rather general descriptions of subjects that preoccupied Moses of Narbonne.<sup>342</sup> Alternatively, it could be reasonably understood to be a reference to some of his exegetical works on ibn Rushd, such as a supercommentary on the middle commentary on the *Physics*, or a commentary to *De substantia orbis*.<sup>343</sup>

He then turns to the reasons that led him to compose the commentary on the *Guide* in the first place. As he writes, the scholars of his day, though versed in the sciences, did not grasp the inner meaning of the text. He singles out the “scholars residing in Toledo,” to whom the words of the *Guide* were as if a “sealed book.” He therefore decided that a “book that guides our nation towards the truths” must not remain “darkened by a cloud” that would hinder its light.<sup>344</sup> Moreover, he adds later on in the commentary that the time has come to “widen the apertures of the filigree of silver” and reveal more of the truths [of metaphysics], as this generation is better prepared to receive them.<sup>345</sup> A second catalyst was a request – or a complaint – by Moses of Narbonne’s own son. Still according to the postface, Moses of Narbonne’s

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**341** Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* 29, 117.

**342** Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* 120 n4.

**343** In the supercommentary, Moses of Narbonne raises critical questions after commenting on each chapter, and attempts to answer them, reminiscent of Scholastic methods. The unique unpublished manuscript has neither title nor preface. Moses of Narbonne’s authorship of the text has been recently challenged; cf. Ruth Glasner, “Two Notes on the Identification of Two Anonymous Hebrew Commentaries on the *Physics*,” *Aleph* 9:2 (2009), 335–344; Glasner, “The Evolution of the Genre of the Philosophical-Scientific Commentary: Hebrew Supercommentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics*,” in Freudenthal, *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, 182–206; and Glasner, “Textual Criticism in Hebrew Supercommentaries on Aristotle,” in Hamesse and Weijers, *Écriture et réécriture*, 185–194. The commentary on *De substantia orbis* is still in manuscript. For the text by ibn Rushd, see *Averroes’ “Questions in Physics”: From the Unpublished “Sēfer ha-Derûšîm ha-Tib’îyim”*, trans. Helen Tunik Goldstein (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), and *Averroes’ “De substantia orbis”*, trans. Arthur Hyman (Cambridge, MA and Jerusalem: The Medieval Academy of America and the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1986); Renan, 328, Hayoun 20–21. See also Shalom Rosenberg, “The Hebrew Translations of the ‘Commentary on Physics’ by Ibn Rushd and its Commentaries by R. Moses of Narbonne,” *Qiryat Sefer* 57:3–4 (1982), 715–724 [Hebrew].

**344** Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* 118.

**345** In the commentary on II:19. Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar* 34r.

son pointed out to him that Moses of Narbonne had written commentaries on *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, on Logic (probably the supercommentary on the *Epitome of the Organon*), on “Metaphysics” (a reference to other works that dealt with metaphysics or to the *Treatise on Metaphysics* mentioned earlier), and on al-Ghazali’s *Intentions of the Philosophers*. However, his son indicates, Moses of Narbonne had neglected the *Guide*.<sup>346</sup> The postface closes with a series of statements comparing the *Guide* and metaphysical truths to light, to the flame guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden, and to the sun. The presence of a postface is unique among early commentaries on the *Guide*.<sup>347</sup>

The commentary has no specific title, but it became transmitted as a *be’ur* (explanation, commentary, clarification) to the *Guide of the Perplexed*.<sup>348</sup> Though Moses of Narbonne’s commentary is quite comprehensive in terms of the chapters covered, he does not comment on the totality of every chapter, focusing only on notions that he considers problematic. He pays special attention to the problem of divine attributes (I:50–60); to I:68–74<sup>349</sup>; to the *haqdamot* at the beginning of part II; and dwells at length on II:14, 19, 29–30; III:13, 19–20. The length of chapters in the commentary varies widely; some chapters merit only one line or less, while others receive more extended treatment. The *be’ur* or commentary only omits chapters 6, 12, 15, 18, 20, 22, 53, 76 in part I; in part II, chapter 22;<sup>350</sup> in part III, none.

The commentary contains many historical details in addition to exegesis and interpretation of the text. Moses of Narbonne mentions his work as a physician;<sup>351</sup> he writes of visiting the then elderly philosopher-kabbalist Joseph ibn Waqar in Toledo;<sup>352</sup> of a public philosophical dispute, apparently within the Jewish community, when he was a youth, and in which he defended the *Guide*;<sup>353</sup> of his participation in a philosophical disputation against a Christian scholar, before an audience

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**346** Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* 118.

**347** Postfaces are occasionally found in Hebrew commentaries, but rarely so in the case of commentaries on the *Guide*.

**348** The terms *be’ur* and *perush* are largely interchangeable when referring to a formal commentary, but Moses of Narbonne’s work is nearly always designated in both the manuscript and print tradition as *be’ur* (*Be’ur narboni*) rather than *perush*.

**349** Much of the commentary in these chapters is dedicated to the notion that God is the intellect, the intellectualizing subject and the thing intellectualized and these are all one; at the end of I:68, Moses of Narbonne states that this notion disproves the Trinity. He examines at length the notion that God is the “form of the world” and in some instances opposes Maimonides to ibn Rushd; Maimonides’ supposed errors are imputed to borrowings from ibn Sina, an idea that Moses of Narbonne mentions in the prologue to the commentary. In chs. 73 and 74, he is primarily concerned with the problem of eternity of the world.

**350** Chapters 18 and 21 in part II can be found in manuscripts but are missing from the edition by Goldenthal. Cf. Gitit Holzman, “R. Moshe Narboni’s Commentary,” 233–234.

**351** In the commentary on II:47, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 45v.

**352** In the commentary on I:28, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 4r.

**353** In the commentary on I:50, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 5v.

of local villagers;<sup>354</sup> of encountering an anti-Maimonidean scholar in Perpignan;<sup>355</sup> of learning about *ma'aseh merkavah* with his teacher Moses Hasha'alah(?);<sup>356</sup> and of first learning the *Guide* with his father at the age of 13.<sup>357</sup>

### 2.5.2 Moses of Narbonne's Exegetical Methods on the Preface to the *Guide*

In the commentary on the Preface, Moses of Narbonne comments on the following topics: the “divine purpose” that has concealed from the vulgar certain truths necessary for the apprehension of God;<sup>358</sup> the method of concealment found in the Torah, Talmud and the *Guide*, which is the use of *meshalim*; a brief mention of the Epistle Dedicatory and Maimonides' opening poem that precedes the Preface proper; the meaning of “science of the Law”;<sup>359</sup> the nature of perplexity over Torah and science, and the meaning of *ma'aseh bereshit*; teaching natural science through *mashal*; the *mashal* of lightning; the “aim” of the Torah; Jacob's ladder; the meaning of “proximate” (matter) and the proof-text quoted in the Preface, “It is time to do something for the Lord” [Ps 119:126]; and finally, the fifth cause of contradictions, along with a list of biblical examples of contradictions. The selection of passages is evidence of the extent to which Moses of Narbonne is concerned with different aspects of the esoteric method of writing (*mashal*, contradiction, and textual secrets), including some of its political ramifications (the “aim” of the Torah). Interspersed throughout are mentions of his views *inter alia* on the soul, the relationship between God and the existents, and the differences between natural and divine science. All of Moses of Narbonne's scientific-philosophical ideas expressed here can be found in his earlier writings, and are not original to the commentary.

Moses of Narbonne's primary formal exegetical method is the rewriting of the text, which was described earlier in connection with Moses of Salerno and Joseph ibn Kaspi. He blends his own words with those of the text, creating a unique work that straddles the border between paraphrase and formal commentary. He does not clearly identify lemmata as such apart from his interpretation, and does not use common expressions such as “etc.,” “that is to say” or “in other words,” (*ve-khuleh, klomar, roseh lomar*), common within the commentaries. From that perspective, the closest

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354 In the commentary on II:19, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 32r.

355 In the commentary on II:30, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 39v.

356 There are no known scholars with this name; it may have been mistranscribed by the editor. See the commentary on III:7, in Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar* 48r.

357 See Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶4; commentary on I:63, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar* 11v; commentary on II:30, Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar* 40r. On these passages see Holzman, “R. Moshe Narboni's Commentary,” 198.

358 Pines 7, ibn Tibbon 5.

359 Pines 5, ibn Tibbon, 4.

formal parallel to Moses of Narbonne's commentary is ibn Kaspi's *Maskiyot kesef*, in which such expressions are employed less frequently. Moses of Narbonne sometimes adds digressions, again reminiscent of ibn Kaspi's commentary.<sup>360</sup> Similarly to *'Ammudei kesef*, on the other hand, Moses of Narbonne investigates the meaning of single words and the implications of Maimonidean phrasing, fulfilling his own promise in the Prologue to the commentary to comment on the "obscure language" of the *Guide*.<sup>361</sup> But in his method of rewriting Moses of Narbonne goes farther than *'Ammudei kesef*. The resulting hybrid and rewritten text, which skillfully blends his own words with Maimonides', assumes a high and precise degree of familiarity with the *Guide*.

Needless to say, this exegetical method is not always friendly to readers.<sup>362</sup> Evidence for the difficulty of the commentary can be found in the manuscript tradition. Many manuscripts of Moses of Narbonne's commentary feature signs or marks placed above words borrowed from the *Guide* to distinguish them from those of the commentator. The number and extension of marginalia found within this manuscript tradition is greater than for any other of the commentaries under examination in this study. There also exists a set of signed marginal notes by the owner of a manuscript, Baruch Peschiera, which covers much of the commentary and constitutes a super-commentary of sorts.<sup>363</sup> The difficulty of the text seems to have posed no hindrance to its dissemination and probably actually furthered it: there are far many more extant manuscripts than for any other commentary on the *Guide*. The evidence from textual witnesses suggests that it ranked among the most (if not the most) widely read and disseminated.<sup>364</sup>

The commentary on the Preface follows neither the letter nor the order of the text closely. Moses of Narbonne begins with his own words, and only then begins quoting from the middle of the Preface, and then pivoting back to the Epistle Dedicatory (following on the steps of ibn Kaspi, the first among the philosophical commentators to interpret it) and then the opening poem. He then comments on the beginning of the Preface, and skips to the middle, omits some material, and picks up again towards the end. The lack of order is significant, for it potentially reveals that Moses of Narbonne had a distinct perspective on the *Guide* vis-à-vis other commentators. His concern is more focused on translating the language of the *Guide* into Averroistic ideas, to

**360** Cf. Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶2, ¶5, ¶7.

**361** Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶5. On the use of this method in the commentary as a whole, see Holzman, "R. Moshe Narboni's Commentary," 219–221.

**362** This difficulty was recently pointed out by Rémi Brague, "Deux livres recents sur Moïse de Narbonne," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 80:1 (1992), 85–90, and developed by Gitit Holzman, "R. Moshe Narboni's Commentary," 234–235. The English-Hebrew edition in Chapters Five and Six addresses this concern by employing different characters for the text and commentarial interpolations for all commentaries.

**363** ms Bodleian Opp. 597.

**364** Discussed in Chapter One.

a greater degree than on explanation of the text itself, and the primary criterion of explication is relevance to or congruence with Aristotle in Averroistic garb.<sup>365</sup> Moses of Narbonne follows the order of the text loosely because he is only concerned with passages that allude to ibn Rushd in one way or another (with the exception of Scriptural examples of contradictions). Nonetheless he does not necessarily follow ibn Rushd uncritically. For example, in a passage of the commentary Moses of Narbonne seemingly sides with Maimonides and against ibn Rushd on the notion that the multitude should not to be taught to believe the literal meaning of anthropomorphisms, that is, they should be informed that God is incorporeal.<sup>366</sup> However, that passage of the commentary seems to have an esoteric bent that ultimately places Moses of Narbonne in agreement with ibn Rushd. I shall return to it below.

A key aspect of Moses of Narbonne's exegetical orientation can be seen as early as the Prologue to the commentary, where he describes the perplexed individual as primarily a scholar for whom the literal meaning of Scripture is philosophically confounding.<sup>367</sup> Later in the Prologue, he describes the *Guide* as a book meant for "those who have practiced philosophy" (*mi she-hitfalsef*).<sup>368</sup> Moses of Narbonne describes his audience for the commentary in the following terms: "we explained [the *Guide*'s] words to the philosopher and to those who are suitable for it, and to all those who long for it, though not to those who are not fitting."<sup>369</sup> Strictly speaking, then, the commentary is therefore not meant for a wider public or beginners in the study of philosophy (unlike the stated aim of Zerahiah's commentary, for example). Moses of Narbonne adds that in some places he will point to philosophical disagreements within the *Guide*, which Moses of Narbonne attributes to Maimonides' use of ibn Sina as a source.<sup>370</sup> But Moses of Narbonne will not write on it at length, "since it is not obligatory for me to do so in a commentary," that is, in a commentary on the *Guide*. "Rather, [the commentary] will serve as an abridgment to those who have not seen the required preliminary sources,"<sup>371</sup> a statement that indicates the commentary is also meant as a remedy for the lack of access to critical sources such as ibn Sina. Though his stated purpose may be to shed light on Maimonides' positions against those of ibn Rushd or ibn Sina, the reluctance to write on it "at length" is related to Maimonides' injunction

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365 Cf. Holzman, "R. Moshe Narboni's Commentary," 210–211.

366 Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶2

367 Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶2.

368 Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶4

369 Ibid.

370 Ibn Sina is not mentioned by name in the *Guide*. On Maimonides' use of ibn Sina as a source, see Shlomo Pines, translator's introduction to Pines xciii–ciii. See also Warren Zev Harvey, "Maimonides' Avicennianism," *Maimonidean Studies* 5 (2008), 107–119, and Mauro Zonta, "Maimonides' Knowledge of Avicenna: Some Tentative Conclusions About a Debated Question," in *The Trias of Maimonides: Jewish, Arabic, and Ancient Culture of Knowledge = Die Trias des Maimonides: jüdische, arabische und antike Wissenskultur*, ed. Georges Tamer (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2005), 211–222.

371 Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶4.

not to comment on the *Guide*. As Moses of Narbonne clarifies, it is necessary “to obey [Maimonides’] command without transgressing his injunction.”<sup>372</sup> Towards the end of the Prologue, Moses of Narbonne adds that he has revealed the interpretation of most of the secrets of the *Guide* in his other “scientific” books, “which are not restricted this manner.”<sup>373</sup>

Thus in distinction to his other commentaries and treatises – he cites here specifically the commentaries on the *Intentions of the Philosophers* by al-Ghazali, on the *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction* by ibn Rushd, and on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* by ibn Tufayl<sup>374</sup> – the context of a commentary on the *Guide* is that unlike other scientific books, it falls under a specific “oath” of non-dissemination, and is not meant for revealing the meaning of secrets.<sup>375</sup> Nonetheless, Moses of Narbonne allows that he will “rescue [the reader] from the words [of the *Guide*]” while signaling to its “secrets and innermost parts,” though only “in proper manner and measure and [as] destined specifically for suitable readers.”<sup>376</sup>

In the commentary on the Preface Moses of Narbonne also points to the secrets of Scripture. In his interpretation of the contradictions, the method recalls that of the *Maskiyot kesef*: part of his concern is to apply the causes of contradictions on the biblical text. However, Moses of Narbonne goes further than ibn Kaspi in the concealment of the secrets within contradictions. At the end of the commentary on the Preface, he gives a long list of prooftexts he deems contradictory without any further explanation and hardly any hints or allusions.<sup>377</sup> Moses of Narbonne’s esotericism comes forth even more fully in his opening sentence for this list. He writes that the examples constitute “a matter for speculative study and investigation.” A careful reader would recognize the sentence as a borrowing from the Preface. Here context is critical: the full sentence in the *Guide* reads “whether contradictions due to the seventh cause are to be found in the books of the prophets is a matter for speculative study and investigation”.<sup>378</sup> Thus, despite explicit statements that the examples in the list are “parabolic” (corresponding to the third cause) and “some in which the speakers are distinct” (a reference to the first cause), Moses of Narbonne is implicitly ascribing at least some of the examples in the list to the seventh cause.<sup>379</sup>

Elsewhere in the commentary on the Preface, Moses of Narbonne includes biblical prooftexts in his interpretation of the *Guide* as well as in the rewriting of the text.

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372 *ibid*

373 Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶5.

374 *ibid*.

375 Holzman, “R. Moshe Narboni’s Commentary,” 207.

376 *ibid*.

377 See Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶16

378 Pines 19, ibn Tibbon 17.

379 Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶16. For Moses of Narbonne’s interpretation of Scripture in the commentary as a whole (and not just in the section on the Preface), see Holzman, “R. Moshe Narboni’s Commentary,” 214–219.

However, the full sweep of his scriptural exegesis only emerges when the prooftexts he cites are set in context. Moses of Narbonne begins the commentary on the Preface by juxtaposing a string of three seemingly unrelated prooftexts (Jer 23:18, Hos 1:2, 2 Chr 13:12), whose meaning only emerges when they are set against their biblical contexts and against the Maimonidean interpretation of those contexts.<sup>380</sup> In the case of these texts, there is an implication that true prophecy is clothed in anthropomorphic expressions, but only at first (in the sense of time), and its true meaning can only be realized once anthropomorphisms are eliminated. In another passage, Moses of Narbonne concludes his exegesis of the narrative of Jacob's ladder – one in which every element has a discrete meaning, according to Maimonides – by stating that it indicates that God is the First Cause, “above the ladder, separate from every physical body, but not in it—the contrary of what heretics say: ‘a tower whose top may reach unto Heaven’ (Gen 11:4).” Moses of Narbonne's prooftext from Genesis relates to the Tower of Babel, interpreted in Samuel ibn Tibbon's treatise *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* as philosophical heresy of unbelief in the existence of God or of any intellect separate from matter, and an attempt to reach the heavens and stars through the senses. It is therefore the opposite of the Ladder of Jacob upon which stands the incorporeal God and angels (which Moses of Narbonne reinterprets in the same paragraph of the commentary as the separate intellects).<sup>381</sup>

One further instrumental example is his discussion of substance and generation. He quotes part of Genesis 1:26, “let us make,” which he completes with “in the beginning [*be-reshit*] and through the principle” [*be-hathalah*], drawing upon the Maimonidean distinction between “beginning” and “principle” as they are explained in *Guide* II:30, and the special connotation implied by the verb “to make” (*asah*), which is explained in that same chapter of the *Guide*.<sup>382</sup> There, Maimonides writes that the verb *asah* “tends toward the road of the belief in the eternity of a certain matter.”<sup>383</sup> Thus generation is not the creation of a substance: “existents come into being through a principle [*hathalah*] residing in their substance,” and the latter is presumably pre-existent. This, Moses of Narbonne writes, is the meaning of *ma'aseh bereshit*.<sup>384</sup>

Last, Moses of Narbonne closes the commentary on the Preface with a rewriting of the prooftext at the head of the first chapter of the *Guide*: “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth faithfulness may enter in” (Isa 26:2). Moses of Narbonne makes a few substitutions and additions, an example of rewriting; they are in brackets: “Open ye the gates [by the equivocation of terms], that the [perfect]

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**380** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶1, notes.

**381** See Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶12, notes.

**382** Pines 348–359, ibn Tibbon 305–315.

**383** Pines 358, ibn Tibbon 315.

**384** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶7.

nation which keepeth [the truths] may enter in.”<sup>385</sup> His modifications imply that the system of equivocal terms, introduced in the first paragraph of the Preface to the *Guide*, is the key that unlocks the *Guide* (or possibly Scripture). Moses of Narbonne substitutes “perfect” (*shalem*) for “righteous” (*ṣaddiq*), a significant move since the former was often used as a technical philosophical term as equivalent to *perfectio* or *eudaimonia*, while the latter tends to indicate moral virtue.<sup>386</sup> Moses of Narbonne substitutes “faithfulness” (*’emunim*) for “truths” (*’amitot*), which once again reflects his philosophical priorities: rather than *fides*, the perfect nation preserves objective truth.

### 2.5.3 A Theme in the Preface to the *Guide*: Elitism

In the *Maskiyot kesef* ibn Kaspi brings up the political dimension of a theological problem in connection with the seventh cause, whose existence can never be disclosed to the multitude. Moses of Narbonne, too, emphasizes some of the political aspects of esoteric writing. Among the most significant is elitism and the relationship between a scholar and the multitude.

In Moses of Narbonne’s view, the Torah is divided into two parts. The first is meant for the elite, which is identified with scholars (*ḥakhamim*) who are the “chosen individuals” (*yeḥidei ha-segullot*).<sup>387</sup> Though the multitude understands some of this Torah, it does so only in a restricted sense according to its limited intellectual capacity.<sup>388</sup> In terms of content, this first part is identical to philosophy, its secrets being understood by the elite through demonstration.<sup>389</sup> Thus both in terms of content and of method, the Torah of the elite is distinct from that of the multitude.<sup>390</sup> As Moses of Narbonne puts it, “the modes of conceptualization of truths diverge between what is understood by the multitude and what is apprehended by scholars.”<sup>391</sup>

The first part of the Torah presents no perplexity for scholars. It is only to the extent that the second part of the Torah is present in it that it then seems “as if there is a conflict between Torah and science.”<sup>392</sup> The second part of the Torah is specifically meant for the multitude, and Moses of Narbonne obliquely implies that it is ethical in

**385** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶16.

**386** cf. III:53, Pines 631, ibn Tibbon 692.

**387** On the background of this expression, see Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶2.

**388** Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶2.

**389** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶1.

**390** Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶2.

**391** *ibid.*

**392** *ibid.*

nature.<sup>393</sup> Although it is not meant for scholars, it is suitable and congenial to them.<sup>394</sup> This second part is common to both the scholar and the multitude and it precedes the first in time.<sup>395</sup> As the scholar returns to this “second Torah,” he must abstain from revealing any of its secrets. Just as the method of the Torah is to keep its secrets concealed, a scholar, too, must follow the same method. One who reveals a secret of Torah will be “put to death by God.”<sup>396</sup> Moses of Narbonne explains this cryptic sentence as follows: “the revelation of secrets distorts the hierarchy [of the existents] and destroys what has been thus ordered.”<sup>397</sup> The concealment of secrets, and hence the gap between the elite and the multitude, is fixed in the order of the universe; it is not up to the philosopher to change it.

Moses of Narbonne’s depiction of Aristotle and Plato in one of his earlier works can shed further light on these statements. In his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* Moses of Narbonne recalls the origins of the designation of “peripatetics” (i.e. “those who walk”). What this means, he writes, is that ancient peripatetics had the custom of walking outside ostensibly for the purpose of gymnastics, but in his view they went outside in search of solitude and distance from the multitude. Plato, on the other hand, sought to practice philosophy in the town square in order to enlighten and ultimately to turn the multitude into scholars. He erred in this, writes Moses of Narbonne, for neither God nor the prophets sought to do the same. The multitude and the scholars each have their own portion meant specifically for them, and the same species cannot comport both irrational and rational beings.<sup>398</sup> The implication of Moses of

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**393** He describes the Torah as a whole as containing only allusions to intellectual virtues and metaphysical notions, but it “explains ethical virtues and treats them at length.” Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶1. Later on in the commentary, he offhandedly writes that the perfection of the soul includes “the two parts [of the Torah] mentioned earlier regarding ethics and intellect,” Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶3.

**394** Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶2.

**395** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶1.

**396** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶2.

**397** *ibid.* The terms *seder* (“order,” “organization”) and *mesudar* (“ordered,” “organized”), which recur in the commentary on the Preface in reference to the organization of the existents, has affinities with the use of the term *sidur* (“order”) by Levi ben Gershom; cf. *Wars of the Lord*, volume 1, book 1, *Immortality of the Soul*, trans. Seymour Feldman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1984–1999), Chs. 10–11. This order is responsible for the flourishing of the social order; cf. Feldman, *Wars*, Volume 2, Book 2, Ch. 2, an idea that appears also in Moses of Narbonne’s commentary on the Preface. See also Gad Freudenthal and Resianne Fontaine, “Gersonides on the Dis-/order of the Sublunar World and on Providence,” *Aleph* 12:2 (2012), 299–328. Freudenthal and Fontaine describe how the order preserves the sublunar existents; cf. the statement by Moses of Narbonne that “the divine will decrees the order of existence and preserves natural circumstances, the forms, and all that which contributes to the welfare of society—they are all “given from one shepherd” (Eccl 12:11). Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶10.

**398** The commentary on *Ḥayy* is unpublished; see the relevant excerpts and analysis in Gitit Holzman, “Religion, State and Spirituality in the Thought of Rabbi Moses of Narbonne,” in *Religion and Politics in Jewish Thought: Essays in Honor of Aviezer Ravitzky*, eds. Benjamin Brown et al (Jerusalem:

Narbonne's view is that a scholar who reveals secrets to the multitude is like one who seeks to educate those of a different species and to elevate them to the rank of scholars. Since the multitude retains political power over the scholar, however, the consequences can be disastrous and scholars such as Socrates can be put to death merely for daring to break with the natural order of existence.<sup>399</sup> Thus solitariness and distance from the masses, while not always achievable, is the ideal condition in which to practice philosophy.<sup>400</sup>

Moses of Narbonne observes that Maimonides' position on anthropomorphic expressions in Scripture constitutes one significant exception to the distinction between the elite and the multitude. "The Rabbi [Maimonides] thought that the eradication of anthropomorphism does not belong to the class of secrets. He says that it is proper that the multitude as well as the elite both adopt the notion of eradication of anthropomorphism, even though the instruction of the multitude is distinct from that of the elite."<sup>401</sup> Thus while the method of instruction of the scholar and of the multitude remains distinct, on the matter of anthropomorphism the content that must be apprehended is equivalent for both. In I:35 Maimonides clarifies that the denial of corporeality to God "ought to be made clear and explained to everyone according to his capacity and ought to be inculcated in virtue of traditional authority."<sup>402</sup> However, the matter is not so clear. Here in the commentary on the Preface Moses of Narbonne does not explicitly say that he agrees with Maimonides – he merely reports the Teacher's opinion. In his commentary on *Guide* I:35, however, Moses of Narbonne takes note of the fundamental difference between Maimonides and ibn Rushd on this point, which he had not mentioned in the commentary on the Preface to the *Guide*.<sup>403</sup> Though Moses of Narbonne does not side with either authority, he reports on ibn Rushd's view in detail. He writes that according to ibn Rushd the multitude ought to be instructed that God is neither corporeal nor incorporeal; rather, God is to be likened to "light." Moses of Narbonne then cites a proof-text to support ibn Rushd's point: "He reveals deep and secret things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him" (Daniel 2:22). Though Moses of Narbonne is neither explicit in the commentary on I:35

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Israeli Institute for Democracy, 2012), 194–195 [Hebrew]. Cf. also Yair Shiffman, "On the Translation of 'Risāla Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān' into Hebrew," *Leshonenu* 69:3–4 (2007), 333–359 [Hebrew].

**399** The idea that persecution or the threat thereof is a catalyst for esoteric writing is of course Leo Strauss' main thesis in his influential essay "Persecution and the Art of Writing," in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1952), 22–37.

**400** Cf. Holzman, "Religion, State, and Spirituality;" Gittit Holzman, "Isolation, Education, and Conjunction in the Thought of R. Moshe Narboni," *Kabbalah* 7 (2002), 111–173 [Hebrew]. Cf. also Moses of Narbonne's Hebrew reworking of ibn Bajja's *Governance of the Solitary*, found within his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*: Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, "Moses of Narbonne and Ibn Bajja: the *Book of the Governance of the Solitary*," *Da'at* 18 (1987), 27–44 [Hebrew].

**401** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶2.

**402** Pines 81, ibn Tibbon 69.

**403** See Goldenthal, *Der Kommentar*, 4v.

nor here in the commentary on the Preface, the implicit conclusion is that Moses of Narbonne ultimately sides with ibn Rushd on this point.

In light of Moses of Narbonne's other statements regarding the multitude, this is evidence that his conception of elitism can be seen as a continuation and amplification of the strong elitism already found in ibn Kaspi, who also believed that the Torah has two meanings, one for the multitude and another for the elite.<sup>404</sup> This notion is analogous to Moses of Narbonne's view of the two parts of the Torah. On the question of anthropomorphism, ibn Kaspi adopts the maxim "the Torah speaks in the language of men."<sup>405</sup> This, too, is analogous to Moses of Narbonne's view that the multitude only learns "imaginary notions" (the elite, on the other hand, learns "true notions").<sup>406</sup>

Moses of Narbonne's elitism is undoubtedly a source of his self-appointed authority as a commentator of the *Guide*. As Aaron Hughes points out, "interpretive authority [...] is often composed of a complex web in which an elite, or what comes to be an elite, speaks to a community, and itself, through the medium of a commentary."<sup>407</sup> This sort of authority works in tandem with the commentator's self-conceived role as the one who "widens the apertures of the filigree" of silver encasing the apple of gold, for only one who has apprehended the gold – or one who sees himself as having achieved such knowledge – is able to give indications about its true meaning. The wide readership and reception of Moses of Narbonne's commentary confirms that his scholarly audience did see him as one who possessed knowledge of the gold encased in the silver, even if some, like Isaac Abarbanel and Joseph Delmedigo, may have criticized him for misinterpreting Maimonides or for revealing the meaning of too many secrets.<sup>408</sup>

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**404** Though he takes a dim view of the multitude, ibn Kaspi does not hesitate to publicize several of his radical views. Although esoteric in some points, he is explicit regarding the political interpretation of the seventh cause. He was chided by Qalonymos ben Qalonymos for the extent in which he makes his views known; the latter writes that it is "good and fitting and necessary to leave the multitude in that with which they grew up and which they can bear." See Joseph Perles ed., *Sendschreiben an Joseph Kaspi* (Munich: T. Ackerman, 1879), 3; Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi*, 44, 83–87.

**405** *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶12.

**406** Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶4.

**407** Aaron Hughes, "Presenting the Past: the Genre of Commentary in Theoretical Perspective," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 15:2 (2003), 158.

**408** Cf. *The Guide of the Perplexed in the Translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon with the Commentaries by Efodi, Shem Tov, Crescas, and Isaac Abarbanel* (Warsaw: Y. Goldman, 1872, reprinted 1960) 20v [Hebrew]; see also Eric Lawee, *Isaac Abarbanel's Stance Towards Tradition: Defense, Dissent, and Dialogue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 74–75; Abraham Geiger ed., *Melo Chofnajim* (Berlin: L. Fernbach, 1840), 18 [Hebrew], 23–24 [German].

## 3 Moses ben Solomon of Salerno: Hebrew-English Text

### 3.1 Moses of Salerno's Commentary: the Manuscripts

There are eleven extant manuscripts of Moses of Salerno's commentary:

Cambridge, Add. 672 (Italian, 15th–16th century/F17001 / 139 ff.)<sup>1</sup>

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurentiana Plut. II.11 (Spanish, 16th century/F17658/ 132 ff.)<sup>2</sup>

London, Beit Din and Beit Hamidrash 40 (Byzantine, 1429/F4708)<sup>3</sup>

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 60 (Ashkenazi, 16th century/F1140 / f.1r-329r)<sup>4</sup>

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 370 (Italian, late 13th–early 14th century/ F1606 / 296 ff.)<sup>5</sup> [base ms]

Oxford Bodleian, Oppenheimer 576 (Ashkenazi, 1547/F22075 G / ff. 1r-313v)<sup>6</sup>

Paris, BN héb. 687 (Italian, 14th–15th century/F11565 / 187 ff.)<sup>7</sup>

Parma, Palatina, cod. Parma 2435 (=De Rossi 1369) (Italian, 16th century/F13439 / 195 ff.)<sup>8</sup>

Parma, Palatina, cod. Parma 3162 (= De Rossi 106) (Ashkenazi, 1425/F13902 / 222 ff.)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S.C. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), SCR 701 (389–390). This ms has symbols (/I/ or /:/) throughout the Preface, possibly dividing sections of study.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio M. Biscioni, *Bibliothecae Mediceo-Laurentianae catalogus*, vol. 2 (Florence: Imperiali typographio, 1752–57).

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Jews' College London* (Oxford: Printed for private circulation by H. Hart, 1886), 15–16.

<sup>4</sup> Moritz Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Handschriften der K.Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, 2nd. ed. (Munich: in Commission der Palm'schen Hofbuchhandlung, 1895), 40.

<sup>5</sup> Steinschneider, *hebräischen Handschriften der K.Hof- und Staatsbibliothek*, 207–208.

<sup>6</sup> Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886–1906); Malachi Beit-Arié, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. I (A. Neubauer's Catalogue)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Philippe Bobichon ed., *Bibliothèque nationale de France: Hébreu 669 à 703: Manuscrits de théologie* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 188–194. The commentary is in the margins of a manuscript of the *Guide*.

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni B. de Rossi, *Mss. codices hebraici Biblioth. I. B. De-Rossi* (Parma: Publico Typographeo, 1803); *Hebrew manuscripts from the Palatine Library of Parma* (Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

Two mss lack the section on the Preface to the *Guide* and were therefore not consulted: Parma, cod. Parm. 2910/F.13803 (commentary from I:12 through I:68); St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Evr. I 482/F.51349 (begins at I:11). A fragment of the commentary has also been found at the Cairo Genizah (on I:42), but it is in a bad state.<sup>10</sup>

The Hebrew text and English translation below are based on ms. Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 370, ff. 2r-10v, with variants from the other mss. in the apparatus. It was described by M. Steinschneider as either Italian or Ashkenazi and dated tentatively to between 1350 and 1400.<sup>11</sup> Moses of Salerno's commentary occupies the entire codex. The ms. contains several lacunae (especially between II:29 and II:31), which become more frequent towards the end of the ms. The lacuna below in ¶27–¶28 (f. 5r) is instructive in that it occurs in every single manuscript of the commentary, and since cod. heb. 370 is the oldest, it is possible that every other extant ms. derives from this one. On some ff. the text is written on only one side of the page (right or left), as in ff. 265v-267r. The commentary ends abruptly at II:44 and the colophon is therefore not extant. Steinschneider writes that the codex seems to have once contained the entire work (i.e. on all three parts of the book).<sup>12</sup> The writing is very clear, with occasional notes in the margins by different hands. At least one note, in the first person, inserts an additional interpretation "after I composed this" (¶41). Nearly every other ms. copies this marginal note in the body of the text, with the exception of ms. Parma 3162, where it is found in the margin as well. The note on f. 28v may also have been inserted after the ms. was either composed or copied. Another note, on f. 22r, speaks in the first person of the "Christian scholar with whom I associate," who is mentioned elsewhere in several places in the commentary (see e.g. ¶7). Hence there is some reason to suppose that at least some of the marginal notes are by Moses of Salerno himself. Additional evidence for this suggestion can be found in Steinschneider's conjecture that between the first and the second redaction of the commentary Moses of Salerno consulted the *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot* by Samuel ibn Tibbon, which he names *petiḥah* or *haqdamah*. The marginal note in ¶41, for instance, refers to the "*petiḥah* that the sage *ḥakham* Rashbat (i.e. Samuel ibn Tibbon) composed for this book after he copied it" (or: "translated," *he'etiqa*).

The Hebrew text is based on the following manuscripts:

- ⌘ Munich 370 (base)
- Ⓒ London, Beit Din/Beit Hamidrash 40
- Ⓐ Cambridge Add. 672
- Ⓣ Paris BN héb 687

<sup>10</sup> TS AS 143.242. For description and images, see <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/fotm/august-2007/> Accessed August 1, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Steinschneider, *Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek*, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Steinschneider, *Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek*, 207–208.

- ה Florence Plut. II.11 (ms damaged; readable text begins at ¶5).  
 י Munich 60  
 ז Parma 3162 (ms begins at ¶6).  
 נ Bodleian Opp. 576  
 ט Parma 243

Conventions and sigla for Hebrew text and apparatus:

- + addition  
 = repetition  
 {} marginal note  
 ? uncertain reading  
 strike through word stricken through in ms  
 ... omission by commentator in quotation from *Guide*

Conventions for English translation:

- Normal font: text of commentary  
*Italic font*: quotations from *Guide* within the text  
**Bold font**: biblical prooftexts  
**Bold italic font**: biblical prooftexts also found in the *Guide*  
 ... omission by the commentator in quotation from *Guide*

### 3.2 Moses of Salerno's Commentary: Reception

Very little is known regarding the reception of Moses of Salerno's commentary. It seems to have been overlooked by later readers and interpreters. With the exception of the early manuscript used for this edition, all manuscripts were produced at least a century after the author's death, to judge by the extant record.

The commentary did find wide readership in the form of a glossary. Moses of Salerno translates many terms and expressions into Italian. Some of these were gathered by his son Isaiah and circulated independently.<sup>13</sup> To judge by the number of manuscripts, the glossary was quite popular. However, as for the commentary, we do not know in what ways or for what purposes the glossary was used.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Giuseppe Sermoneta, *Un glossario filosofico ebraico-italiano* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1969).

<sup>14</sup> Jean-Pierre Rothschild, "Remarques sur la tradition manuscrite du glossaire hébreu italien du commentaire de Moïse de Salerne au Guide des Égarés," in *Lexiques bilingues dans les domaines philosophique et scientifique (Moyen Âge-Renaissance)*, eds. Jacqueline Hamesse and Danielle Jacquart (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 49–88.

Excerpts from the commentary have been critically edited by Caterina Rigo and reproduced by Roberto Gatti.<sup>15</sup> Other excerpts can be found in an important early study by Sermoneta.<sup>16</sup> The early Latin translation of the *Guide* used by Moses of Salerno has attracted much attention as well.<sup>17</sup> In his studies regarding the Maimonidean philosophical legacy in the 13th century and beyond, Ravitzky included Moses of Salerno among those who belonged to the philosophical circle inaugurated by Samuel ibn Tibbon, detailing the former's reliance on the latter.<sup>18</sup> Last, there has appeared a recent M.A. thesis containing a critical edition of the commentary on chapters regarding prophecy.<sup>19</sup>

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**15** Rigo, "Per un'identificazione"; Roberto Gatti, *Ermeneutica e filosofia: introduzione al pensiero ebraico medioevale (secoli XII-XIV)* (Genova: Il Melangolo, 2003), 103–111.

**16** Giuseppe Sermoneta, "The Glosses of Moses b. Solomon of Salerno and Nicholaus of Giovinazzo on the Guide to the Perplexed, I:52–53," *Iyun* 20 (1970), 212–240 [Hebrew].

**17** Joseph Perles, *Die in einer Münchener Handschrift aufgefundenene erste lateinische Übersetzung der Maimonidischen "Führers"* (Breslau: S. Skutsch, 1875); W. Kluxen, "Literaturgeschichtliches zum lateinischen Moses Maimonides," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21 (1954), 23–50; Gad Freudenthal, "Pour le dossier de la traduction latine médiévale du *Guide des Égarés*," *REJ* 147:1–2 (1988), 167–172; Görg K. Hasselhoff, "The Reception of Maimonides in the Latin World: the Evidence of the Latin Translations in the 13th–15th Century," *Materia Giudaica* 6:2 (2001), 258–280; Mauro Zonta, "Traduzioni e commenti alla *Guide dei Perplessi* nell'Europa del secolo XIII: a proposito di alcuni studi recenti," in *Maimonide e il suo tempo*, eds. Geri Cerchiai and Giovanni Rota (Milan: Franco Angelli, 2007), 51–60. See also Luciana Pepi, "Lettori e letture di Maimonide nell'Italia meridionale," *Materia Giudaica* 11:1–2 (2006), 159–168.

**18** See the studies in Ravitzky, *History and Faith*, 205–303 and in Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zerahiah b. Isaac b. Shea'lti'el Hen & the Maimonidean-Tibbonian Philosophy in the 13th Century," Ph.D. diss. Hebrew University, 1977 [Hebrew], 25–35.

**19** Asher Binyamin, "Rabbi Moses of Salerno's Commentary on the Chapters on Prophecy in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* – Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes," M.A. thesis, Ben-Gurion University, 2005 [Hebrew].

Moses Ben Solomon of Salerno  
 Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*

[Preface to Commentary]

[1] In the name of God we shall complete [this work] and prosper: an *expanded interpretation*<sup>20</sup> by the sage R. Moses ben Solomon of Salerno on two parts of the *Guide*,<sup>21</sup> written by the great sage R. Moses [Maimonides]: an interpretation of the equivocal, derivative and amphibolous terms written by the perfect sage our master, the Rabbi who guides to righteousness, our great rabbi our Rabbi Moses son of the honorable rabbi Maimon the judge, in the Preface to his precious treatise, the Treatise of the Perplexed.<sup>22</sup>

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]

[2] *Equivocal terms* are called “equivochi”<sup>23</sup> in the vernacular.<sup>24</sup> The meaning is that their shared [characteristic] is the name only, but they diverge in meaning and their definitions are various,<sup>25</sup> such as the [Hebrew] terms ‘*ayin* or *ruah*.<sup>26</sup> They agree in name<sup>27</sup> but diverge in meaning. It is said of ‘*ayin* as “organ of sight” in **for the Lord’s is the eye [‘ayin] of man** [Zech 9.1], and it is said of ‘*ayin* as “well” in **and the angel of the Lord found her by a well [‘ayin] of water** [Gen 16.9]. [The term] is equivocal and not borrowed,<sup>28</sup> since neither meaning takes priority over the other.<sup>29</sup> There are many such examples.

<sup>20</sup> *tosafot be’ur*. The expression is a slightly modified quotation from the Epistle Dedicatory (Pines 3–4): *Then I saw that you demanded of me additional knowledge (tosefet be’ur)*.

<sup>21</sup> Moses of Salerno’s commentary survives for parts I and II. It is not clear whether he wrote a commentary on part III as well, but if he himself penned this opening paragraph (which is doubtful), it may indicate that he only intended to comment on the first two parts. Sermoneta believes he either limited himself to the first two parts or did not have the time to finish the commentary. Giuseppe Sermoneta, *Un glossario filosofico ebraico-italiano del XIII secolo* (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1969), 48 n46 [henceforth *Glossary*].

<sup>22</sup> A two-part opening. The first sentences introduce the commentary as a whole, followed by the sentences that describe part I (“an interpretation ...”). Part II of Salerno’s commentary includes its own opening as well (cf. ms Munich cod. heb 370, f. 174r). This format thus parallels the *Guide* itself, which features a general preface and a preface for each part. The title of “Treatise of the Perplexed” (*Ma’amar ha-nevukhim*) is unusual and may have been a copyist’s error (cf. other mss in critical apparatus).

<sup>23</sup> Moses of Salerno explains *shemot meshuttafim* (equivocal terms) as *equivochi* in *Glossary*, 239–242. Cf. also *PMZ*, s.v. “shem meshuttaf”: “a single term that refers to different species, none of which merits precedence over another in the applicability of the term,” 85. An early Latin translation of the *Guide* used by Moses of Salerno has *aequivoca*. See Görges K. Hasselhoff, “The Reception of Maimonides in the Latin World: the Evidence of the Latin Translations in the 13th–15th Centuries,” *Materia Giudaica* 6 (2001), 258–280.

[משה בן שלמה מסלרנו]  
[מבוא לפירוש מורה הנבוכים]

1 [1] בש"ש נעשה ונצלח. תוספות ביאור שעשה החכם ר' משה ב' שלמה ז"ל מסלרנו על שני חלקי  
2 המורה שחיבר החכם הגדול רב משה ז"ל. ביאור השמות המשותפים והמושאלים והמסופקים שכתב  
3 החכם השלם אדונינו הרב מורה צדק רבינו הדגול, רבינו משה בן כבוד רבנא מאימון הדיין זצוק"ל  
4 בפתחת מאמרו היקר מאמר הנבוכים.

5 [פירוש מורה הנבוכים - פירוש על פתיחת הספר]  
6 [2] שמות משותפים אִיקִיבוקי בלעז. והרצון בהם ששיתופם בשם בלבד אבל הם חלוקי העניינין! [וגדריהם  
7 משתנים, כשם עין או רוח שמושכם בשם ונחלק בעינין, שנאמ' על עין הרואה כי לה' עין אדם [זכריה  
8 ט,א] ונאמ' על עין המים וימצאה מלאך ה' על עין המים [בראשית טז,ז]. משותף לא מושאל כי אין אחד.  
9 מאילו קודם לאחר, וכיוצא בהם רבים.

1 בש"ש] ב שבם שהם הוּחַס חסר | נעשה והצליח | הוּחַס חסר | תוספות] בדהוחס חסר 2-1 ביאור ... ז"ל] בהט חסר וח  
ביאור ר' משה מסלרנו על שני חלקי המורה | שלמה] ה +ונכתבו ע"י ישעיה בנו ונפטר קודם השלימו השלישי | מסלרנו] ג  
חסר 4-2 ביאור ... הנבוכים] ה חסר | 3 בן כבוד רבנא] ג בר' רבינו ח ב' כבוד רבינו ר' משה | 4 מאמר] בגדהוחס +מורה  
אִיקִיבוקי בלעז] 6 אִיקִיבוקי בלעז] דח חסר | והרצון] דח הרצון | העניינין] בגד הענין | 7 עין או רוח] ט חסר | שמושכם] ו  
שמוש גם אִיקִיבוקי בלעז] 8 ה' על עין המים] ג +נגד שם המים] ג +["לך לך" בהתאם ל"מלאך"] 9 | בהם רבים] ד באלו

24 *bela'az*, in this case Italian. Moses of Salerno provides many Italian versions of Hebrew terms (both technical and non-technical) throughout the commentary. Italian may have served as the common language between Moses of Salerno and the Christian scholar with whom he studied the *Guide*. Cf. Colette Sirat, "Les traducteurs juifs à la cour des rois de Sicile et Naples," in *Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen-Âge*, ed. Geneviève Contamine (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1989), 176–177.

25 I.e. different entities with different definitions but which share the same name.

26 'Ayin can mean either "eye" or "spring, well" (of water). *Ruah* can mean "wind," or "spirit, soul." The terms are designated as equivocal because one signified thing is not related to the other, either semantically or ontologically. In the *Guide*, Maimonides explains the different senses of 'ayin and *ruah* in I:44 and I:40, respectively.

27 *Muskam be-shem*, literally, "they are univocal in name."

28 i.e. not a metaphorical (translated by Pines as "derivative").

29 In other words, there is no hierarchy of meanings in relation to the particular term. The notion of relation by "priority" is explained in *MH* ch. 12, 57–58.

[3] *Others are derivative terms.*<sup>30</sup> Derivative is called “trasonti” in the vernacular.<sup>31</sup> These are terms that have a primary meaning, that is, one that is prior to another.<sup>32</sup> The prophets and the poets borrowed such terms [to mean] different things,<sup>33</sup> such as the terms *yalad* or *regel*<sup>34</sup>: the primary meaning [of the former] term is to give birth: **and Arpachshad begot** [*yalad*] **Shelah** [1 Chr 1:18]. It was borrowed to [mean] the *bringing into existence of natural things*<sup>35</sup>: **before the mountains were brought forth** [*yuladu*] [Ps 90:2] since there is a similitude by virtue of accident, though not of essence.<sup>36</sup> It was borrowed to [mean] *the notion of earth bringing forth: makes it bring forth* [*ve-holidah*] **vegetation** [Isa 55:10]; and to [mean] *happenings occurring in time*<sup>37</sup>: **for you know not what a day may bring forth** [*yeled*] [Prov 27:1]; and to [mean] *happenings within thought*<sup>38</sup>: **they abound in foreign ideas** [*yaldei nokhrim*] [Isa 2:6].<sup>39</sup>

[4] *Others are amphibolous terms.*<sup>40</sup> They are called “dubeti” in the vernacular; some call them “enalaghi.”<sup>41</sup> They are said amphibolously so that at times they are believed to be amphibolous, *at times they are believed to be univocal, and at other times equivocal*. In the chapters concerning [divine] attributes our great rabbi Maimonides explained *univocal* as equivalence in name and definition. However, the sage R. Joseph of Acre would determine [the meaning of] “amphibolous” from the word for “sufficiency,” that is, the [amphibolous terms] suffice for both uses.<sup>42</sup>

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**30** Shlomo Pines’ translation of *mush’al* here is “derivative,” but he also translates it elsewhere in the *Guide* as “figurative” (II:47, 407–409). It is equivalent to “metaphorical.” For philosophical background, see *Glossary* 243–244 (#130). Cf. also *PMZ*, s.v. “shem meshuttaf,” 86.

**31** “Trasonti” is generally rendered as “transumption” in English translations of medieval Latin texts; the Latin translation of the *Guide* has *transsumptiva* (*Glossary*, 244). It appears in the *Glossary* as “trasonta,” cf. 243–244 (#130).

**32** *PMZ*, s.v. “shem mush’al,” 85–87.

**33** *MH* ch. 13 also mentions poets (though not the prophets) as using many metaphors (60).

**34** Maimonides explains *yalad* in *Guide* I:7 (32–33); *regel* is explained in *Guide* I:28 (59–61).

**35** I:7, Pines 32.

**36** There are a number of ways to read this remark. One possible reading is that Salerno means that this is a kind of analogical metaphor, so that its basis is an “analogy with regard to some of the features of the subsidiary and the principal subjects, or features possessed by the former and imputed, by the use of the metaphor, to the latter ... in these cases, particularly where the principal and the subsidiary subjects as a whole fall into two different categories, no simple sharing of qualitatively identical or similar features obtains or is possible. What we have instead are analogical qualities or relations.” An example of such relations is “He has an iron will” and “he has iron in his soul,” in relation to the physical properties of iron. This reading assumes that the metaphorical resemblance (*dimayon*) that he describes as “accidental” (*miqri*) means “coincidental.” If we suppose that he means rather “sharing accidental properties,” that implies the existence of some feature common to both human birth and the growth of plants, but the said feature is something other than the defining characteristic of either. An example is “Jack has an angry roar,” if we assume that the essential feature of

- 10 [3] ומהם מושאלים מושאלים טְרָאָסוֹנְטִי בלעז. והם שמות שיש להם הנחה ראשונה ר"ל שקדם זה לזה.  
 11 והשאלום הנביאים והמשוררים לעיניינים אחרים, כשם ילד או רגל. שהנחתו הראשונה ללידת הבנים:  
 12 וארפחשד ילד את שלח [דברי הימים א' א, יח]. והושאל להמצאת הדברים הטבעיים: בטרם הרים יו  
 13 לְדו [תהלים צ, ב], כי יש דמיון מקרי ביניהם ולא עצמי. והושאל להצמאת הארץ: והולידה והצמיחה  
 14 [ישעיה נה, י] ולחידושי הזמן: כי לא תדע מה ילד יום [משלי כז, א] ולחידושי המחשבות: ובילדי נכרים  
 15 יספיקו [ישעיה ב, ו].

- 16 [4] ומהם מסופקים דוֹבְטִי בלע' ויש שקורין אותם אֲנָאֲלָאָגִי. והם יאמרו בהסתפק, פעם יחשב בהם שהם  
 17 יאמרו בהסתפק, פעם יחשב בהם שהם יאמרו בהסכמה, ופעם יחשב בהם שהם משתתפים. ובפרקי  
 18 התארים פירש רבינו הגדול בהסכמה בשווי השם והגדר. והחכם ר' יוסף מעכו היה גורס מְסַפְקִים לשון  
 19 סֶפֶק ולא לשון ספק, כלומר' שהם די לשני פנים שלו.

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10 שקדם זה לזה] ב [שקדם זה לזה] 16 פעם ... בהסתפק] בט חסר 19–17 ובפרקי ... שלו] ב חסר 18 בשווי] בנוח בעניני  
 מְסַפְקִים] ג מְסַפְקִים 19 סֶפֶק] גַּד סֶפֶק ו סֶפֶק א סֶפֶק] גַּ סֶפֶק א דִּין ד דִּי

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the lion is bravery and the essential feature of Jack is reason. In *Guide* I:7 Maimonides explains the relation as “in resemblance to childbirth” (*demut be-ledah*), which Pines translates as “by analogy with procreation,” apparently following our first reading. Haig Khatchadourian, “Metaphor,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 8:3 (July 1968), 230. See also Harry A. Wolfson, “Aristotelian Predicables and Maimonides’ Division of Attributes,” in Twersky and Williams, *Studies in the History of Philosophy*, 2:195–230.

37 I:7, Pines 32.

38 *ibid.*

39 In the last proofverse “abound” derives from the same root as *yalad*. It corresponds to Maimonides’ extended meaning of *yalad* as “opinions or doctrines produced in thought” (I:7).

40 *shem mesuppaq*: ambiguous, analogous; the Scholastic parallel is *ambigua*, which is the term that appears in the Latin translation of the *Guide*. For the philosophical background of the term, see *Glossary* 245–246 (#131), and Harry A. Wolfson, “The Amphibolous Terms in Aristotle, Arabic Philosophy and Maimonides,” in Twersky and Williams, *Studies in the History of Philosophy*, 2:455–477.

41 *Enalaghi* translates Thomas Aquinas’ version of amphibolous terms (=analogia); “dubeti” is the vernacular version of *ambigua*. H. Wolfson, “The Amphibolous Terms,” 475–476; Shlomo Pines, “Scholasticism after Thomas Aquinas and the Teachings of Ḥasdai Crescas and His Predecessors,” *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 1:10 (1967), 30; *Glossary* 223–225 (#118), 245–246 (#131).

42 That is, one single term is sufficient to indicate either a univocal use or an ambiguous use (for example, “existence,” if said of two substances, is univocal; if said of a substance and an accident, it is ambiguous – see below ¶7). The identity of R. Joseph of Acre remains an open question.

[5] Univocity<sup>43</sup> occurs when it becomes a convention in language to say one term for more than one thing, that is, for many things that are individuals or species.<sup>44</sup> It means either many individuals from one species or several species that are distinct from one another, as the name of a species is said equally of all individuals of that species.<sup>45</sup> A *mashal* is the name “man.”<sup>46</sup> It is said of Ruben, Simon, Levi and Judah, and it is also called universal term.<sup>47</sup> The name of a genus is likewise said of all [sub] species and all the individuals of those species. A *mashal* is the term “living.” It is the name of the genus that is said of man, of beast, of fish and of fowl, and of all their individuals that are in each of their species, because each one of them is called “living.”<sup>48</sup>

[6] *At other times equivocal*<sup>49</sup> – they are *believed to be said* by equivocation. The sage R. Jacob bar Abba Mari [Anatoli] writes in his original book *Malmad ha-talmidim* [A *Goat for Students*]:

Maimonides apparently intended the amphibolous term to mean a term that occasionally replaces another term. For example, the term *sur* is said of a rock as well as a place where stones are quarried; it replaces the term for “source.” For example **look unto the rock whence you were quarried**<sup>50</sup> [Isa 51:1]. The term occurs in places regarding the foundation of all and its beginning, as Maimonides indicated in quoting **thou shall stand upon the rock** [Exod. 33:21],<sup>51</sup> and it is believed he was speaking regarding the **rock of flint** [Isa 50:7, Deut. 8:15].<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Haskamah*. The term points to one of the problems in Maimonides’ Preface – the ambiguous (amphibolous) terms “are sometimes believed to be univocal,” but nowhere is “univocal” explained. In *MH* ch. 13 the *shemot muskamim* are a subcategory of *meshuttafim*.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Jacob Anatoli, *Malmad ha-talmidim*, parashat Noaḥ: “and among [the terms] there is the ‘univocal term’ (*ha-shem be-haskamah*) concerning more than one single thing, whether individuals or species, such as the name of any given species, which is said equally of all individuals of that species, and the name of a genus, which is also said equally of all the species under it, and of all their individuals.” Ed. Mordekhai L. Bisliches (Lyck: Meqīsei Nirdamim, 1868), 10r.

<sup>45</sup> This is a “maximalist” view of univocal terms. As Shalom Rosenberg points out, the univocal term can be an abstract term that comprehends many “definitions” (*intentio*, *inyanim*), in which case it is the name of a genus, or one “definition” that comprehends many individuals, in which case it is the name of a species. An example of the first is the term “living,” as it includes beings with different definitions (as in Moses of Salerno’s example: man, beast, fish, etc) and an example of the second is the term “man” (which includes Ruben, Simon, etc), that is, individuals that fall under the same definition but otherwise distinct. For Moses of Salerno the univocal term explicitly covers both cases, but Rosenberg points out that Maimonides’ examples of univocal terms are names of genera only. Shalom Rosenberg, “The Doctrine of Terms in Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” *Iyun* 27 (1976–1977), 111 [Hebrew].

20 [5] הסכמה היא באה כשיסכים הלשון לאמר שם אחד על עניינים יותר מאחד, ר"ל על עניינים רבים  
 21 אישים או מינים. והטעם הן על אישים רבים ממין אחד הן על מינים רבים מוחלקין זה מזה, כשם כל מין  
 22 ומין הנאמ' על כל אישי המין בשוה. והמשל בו שם אדם; יאמר על ראובן, שמעון, לוי ויהודה ונקרא גם כן  
 23 שם כללי. ובשם הסוג שנאמ' גם כן על כל המינים ועל כל אישי המינים ההם; והמשל בו שם חי, שהוא שם  
 24 הסוג יאמר על האדם, ועל הבהמה, ועל הדגים ועל העופות, ועל כל אישיהם שלכל מין ומין שבהם, כי כל  
 25 אחד מהם יקרא חי.

1 [6] ופעם יחשב בהם שהם משתתפים יחשב בהם שיאמרו בשיתוף. והחכם ר' יעקב בר' אבא מרי זצ"ל  
 2 כתב בספר מלמד התלמידים שחיבר:  
 3 נראה שרוצה הרב בשמות המסופקים שפעם ילקח האחד במקום האחר, כשם צור שיאמר על הסלע  
 4 ויאמר על מקום מחצב אבנים. והוא במקום מקור כמו שבא הביטוי אל צור חצבתם [ישעיה נא, א]. וזה  
 5 השם בא במקומות על יסוד הכל והתחלתו, כמו שהורה הרב באמרו ונצבת על הצור [שמות לג, כא]  
 6 ויחשב שאמ' על צור החלמיש [דברים ח, טו].

23 אישי] בנחוט האישי | ההם | ט ועל כל אישי המין  
 3–4 כשם ... והוא | ט חסר | 4 אבנים | בג האבנים | 5 שהורה | גהוח שבאה

46 Anatoli, *Malmaid ha-talmidim*, 10r.

47 Or: general (*kelali*). The remark "universal term" is not found in the source of the paragraph (see *Malmaid*, previous note). This addition brings forward the character of univocity in the 13th century as opposed to the Aristotelian schema found in the *Categories*: for Aristotle the univocal term expresses a relationship between things, while for Moses of Salerno it is a linguistic relationship. See also Rosenberg, "Doctrine of Terms" 110, n15; and David Z. Baneth, "On Maimonides' Philosophical Terminology," *Tarbiš* 6:3 (1935), 10–40.

48 With respect to the notion of univocity, a univocal term is said of either (a) all the individuals of the same species or of (b) several species under the same genus, and all the individuals comprised therein. The univocal term can be, therefore, either the name of a species or of a genus, as long as it refers to at least two individuals that share some characteristic. However, the term need not express the essence, as noted earlier.

49 Here the discussion is not on equivocal terms per se but rather regarding instances when ambiguous terms are used equivocally; it is a continuation of the comment begun in ¶4.

50 In I:16, the verse denotes a quarry from which quarry-stones are hewn (Pines 42)

51 I:16 (Pines 42).

52 *Malmaid ha-talmidim*, parashat Noah, 10v.

[7] The Christian scholar with whom I collaborate<sup>53</sup> said that amphibolous terms are terms each of which is a name to many things, such as path, road, way and route, but their meaning is one.<sup>54</sup> However, the status of the meaning is not [always] equivalent, as it befits one [term] in the first degree and another in the second degree. For instance, “existence,” which applies to both essence and accident, is said of both equally; nonetheless for essence it is said with certainty and for accident it is said amphibolously.<sup>55</sup>

[8] In fact, as it appears in the words of the perfect sage this is not what it seems, that is, according to what our great Rabbi wrote in the chapters concerning [divine] attributes, the matter is not how it appears to be. He drew attention to it in chapter 56 of the first part [of *Guide*], speaking on other names that are said in the books of the prophets concerning God: *Do not deem that they are used amphibolously. For when terms are used amphibolously they are predicated of two things between which there is a likeness in respect to some notion, which notion is an accident attached to both of them and not a constituent element of the essence of each one of them etc.*<sup>56</sup>

[9] *It is not the purpose of this Treatise to make the totality of these terms understandable to the vulgar,*<sup>57</sup> that is, it is not my purpose to proclaim the meaning of these equivocal, derivative and amphibolous terms to the vulgar among the people [since] they do not have the capacity to cognize the truth in an absolute sense or to *beginners in speculation* who have just begun to learn because they, too, do not have the capacity to ascend to the palace of the king immediately.<sup>58</sup>

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53 This scholar is named by Moses of Salerno as Niccolò da Giovinazzo, in his commentary on I:1: “I once read this chapter with the scholar who is a colleague of mine whose name is Nicola Diovinatso” (ms Munich cod. heb 370, f. 11r, in Hebrew characters). Giuseppe Sermoneta (along with earlier scholars) identified him as Nicola Paglia, a Dominican friar from Giovinazzo. Cf. *Glossary*, 50–53; Sermoneta, “The Glosses of Moses ben Solomon of Salerno and Niccolò da Giovinazzo on the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” *Iyun* 20 (1970), 212–240 [Hebrew]. More recently, Caterina Rigo has presented persuasive arguments against the identification of the “Christian scholar” with the same Nicola Paglia mentioned by Sermoneta; cf. Caterina Rigo, “Per un’identificazione del ‘sapiente cristiano’ Niccolò da Giovinazzo, collaboratore di Rabbi Mosheh ben Shelomoh da Salerno,” *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* 69 (1999), 64–146. The formula “the scholar with whom I collaborate” is also used by Anatoli in the introduction to *Malmad*, 1v.

54 That is, they are synonyms: different terms that refer to a plurality of individuals but one single meaning (i.e. one single definition).

55 It is not clear how the two examples of amphiboly are at all related. In the first case we have several terms with the same definition; in the second case, we have one term that refers to different definitions. The expressions “with certainty” and “amphibolously” are equivalent to one of the traditional definitions of amphibolous terms, where an amphibolous term refers to one thing “in the

7 [7] והחכם הנוצרי שנתחברתי עמו אמר כי השמות המסופקים הם שמות שכל אחד מהם הוא שם לדברים  
 8 רבים כגון אורח, דרך, ושביל ונתיב והענין שלהם אחד. אמנם משפטו שלענין איננו שוה מפני שיאות  
 9 לאחד במעלה ראשונה ולאחר במעלה שניה. כגון מציאות שיאות לעצם ולמקרה לשניהם יאמר מציאות  
 10 בשוה אמנם לעצם יאמר בוודאי ולמקרה יאמר בסיפוק.

11 [8] אכן כפי הנראה מדברי החכם השלם אינו נראה כן, ר"ל כפי מה שכתב רבינו הגדול בפרקי התארים אין  
 12 הדבר נראה כך. כי מצינו לו בפרק נ"ז מזה החלק הראשון אמר על השמות האחרים האמורים בספרי  
 13 הנביאים על השם יתברך: ולא תחשוב שהם יאמרו בספוק כי השמות אשר יאמרו בהסתפק הם אשר  
 14 נאמרו על שני דברים שביניהם דמיון בענין והענין הוא מקרה בהם ואינו מעמיד עצם אחד מהם וכו'.

15 [9] ואין עינינו הכוונה במאמר הזה להבינם כולם להמון כלומר אין כוונתי להגיד עינין אילו השמות  
 16 המשותפים, המושאלים והמסופקים להמון העם. שאין בהם כח להשכיל האמת על בוריו, ולא למתחילין  
 17 בעיון מקרוב כי גם בהם אין כח לעלות אל היכל המלך מיד.

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7 עמו] ט חסר [8 משפטו] בהוח משפט ט של משפטו [שלענין] בנדט של עניין [מפני] בדהוח לפני [10 בשוה] גהוח כשוה ד  
 בשוה [11 הנראה] גהוחט הנראות [12 לו] גהוח בו [נ"ז] גהוחט נ"ז [16 להשכיל] ט השכל [האמת] ט האמתי [1  
 17 מקרוב] ז בקרוב [לעלות] ד לעמוד ד + [לעלות] ט לעמוד [אל היכל] ט בהיכל

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first degree" (priority, *per prius*, primary, first) and to another in the "second degree" (posteriority, *per posterius*, subsequent, next). Rosenberg points out that there were, three distinct uses of "amphibolous term" in Arabic and Jewish philosophy, according to criteria of resemblance, *per prius et posterius* (*be-qadimah ve-'ihur*), or analogy. Rosenberg, "Doctrine of Terms," 112–116; *Glossary* 52 n53; 161–162 (#67), 164 (#69), 259 (#143).

56 Pines, 131. On Maimonides' treatment of divine attributes and equivocation, see Herbert Davidson, "Maimonides on Divine Attributes as Equivocal Terms," in *Tribute to Michael: Studies in Jewish and Muslim Thought Presented to Professor Michael Schwarz*, ed. Sara Klein-Braslavy, Binyamin Abrahamov and Yosef Sadan (Tel Aviv: The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities; the Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, 2009), 37–51 [English section].

57 Moses of Salerno's quotation comes from the ibn Tibbon translation, which differs from Pines on this point. While Pines has "its totality" (referring to the *Guide*), ibn Tibbon has "their totality," which the commentator interprets as the totality of the equivocal terms (pure equivocal, derivative, amphibolous). Similarly, ibn Kaspi substitutes rewrites the sentence substituting "terms" for "totality" (see 'Ammudei kesef, Commentary, ¶2).

58 The reference is to Maimonides' *mashal* of the sultan's palace in III:51 (Pines 619).

[10] *Nor to teach those who have not engaged in any study other than the science of Talmud, because it is an explanation of the practical commandments only. For the purpose of this Treatise and of all those like it is the science of Law in its true sense. The science of Law in its true sense is the superior science, i.e. ma'aseh merkavah, that which is called "divinitati" in the vernacular.*<sup>59</sup>

[11] *Or rather its purpose is to give indications to a religious man etc ... [such a man] having studied the sciences of the philosophers and the divine intellect having drawn him on and led him to dwell within its province.*<sup>60</sup> This means that he grasped with his intellect and his intellect became actual,<sup>61</sup> and he must have felt distressed by the externals of the Law [Torah]. They seem to be, upon first thought, opposed to the opinions of the philosophers, which he had learned. [The externals] are verses whose simple sense indicates that God is corporeal, and similar verses. *As he continued to understand them by himself, as he continued in his perplexity to understand them by himself, or was made to understand by another*<sup>62</sup> teacher the meanings of the terms just mentioned, *he would remain in a state of perplexity and confusion, because he would not know to which of those two he should incline: whether he should follow his intellect or hold fast to his understanding of the simple sense of Scripture.*

[12] *Renounce what he knew concerning the terms in question, and consequently consider that he has renounced the foundations.* This means when he comes across predicates of terms regarding God which indicate that God is a body or which apprehend God with physical apprehension, whether he should renounce these terms and others like them and consider {that he renounced} the foundations of the Law ... while at the same time perceiving that he had brought loss to himself and harm to his religion. This means his understanding would have brought loss to himself and harm and he would be left with those imaginary beliefs. In other words, imaginary<sup>63</sup> means fictitious, "vani" in the vernacular. *And on their account he owes his fear and weakness and would continue to suffer from heartache in all his days. On their account, on account of the [imaginary] beliefs – and he is perplexed.*

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<sup>59</sup> The implication to Salerno's comment is that the purpose ('inyan) of the *Guide* is to explain Aristotelian metaphysics.

<sup>60</sup> In this picturesque statement, Maimonides says the *human* intellect (*ha-sekhel ha-'enoshi*) has drawn the religious man on and led him to dwell within its province. Salerno's quotation has, instead, the divine intellect (*ha-sekhel ha-'elohi*), found in every manuscript of the text. Moses of Salerno may have in mind here I:1, where Maimonides describes the intellect in man as divine: it is "because of the divine intellect (*ha-sekhel ha-'elohi*) conjoined with man that is said of the latter that he is in the image of God and in His likeness" (Pines 23).

18 [10] גם לא ללמד אותה למי שלא יעיין רק בחכמת התלמוד שהוא פתרון המצוות המעשיות בלבד כי ענין  
 19 המאמר הזה וכל מה שהוא ממינו הוא חכמת התורה על האמת. וחכמת התורה על האמת היא החכמה  
 20 העליונה ר"ל מעשה מרכבה והיא שנקראת דיביניטטי.

1 [11] אבל המאמר הזה להעיר איש בעל דת וכו' ועיין בחכמת הפילוסופים. ומשכו השכל האלוהי להשכינו  
 2 במשכנו כלומ' שהשכיל ויצא שכלו לפועל והציקוהו פשוטי התורה, שיראה מהם בתחילת המחשבה  
 3 שהם כנגד דעות הפילוסופים אשר למד, והם פסוקין שיוורו פשוטין שהשם גוף וכיוצא בהן. ומפני שלא סר  
 4 היותו מבין מדעתו כלומ' מפני שלא סר ממבוכתו להבין מדעתו או הבינהו מלמד זולתו מעינייני השמות  
 5 הנוכרים, נשאר במבוכה ובהלה כי לא ידע לאי זה משניהם יטה; אם ימשך אחר שכלו או שישאר עם  
 6 מה שהבין מפשוטי הכתובין.

7 [12] וישליך מה שידעהו מהשמות ההם ויחשב שהוא השליך פינות. רוצה לומר במוצאו תארי השמות לשם  
 8 המורין שהשם גוף או ישגו אותו ממשיגי הגוף, אם ישליך שמות הללו וכיוצא בהם יחשוב {שהוא שהשליך}  
 9 פינות התורה ... ויראה עם זה שהוא הביא עליו הפסד ונוק בתורתו. כלומ' עיונו הביא עליו הפסד ונוק וישאר  
 10 עם המחשבות ההם הדמיוניות כלומ' דמיוניות בדאות באני בלע'. והוא מפניהם בפרד ובחולשה ולא יסור כל  
 11 ימיו מהיות בכאב לב מפניהם, מפני המחשבות והוא נבוך.

20 מרכבה] בנהחחט המרכבה

2 מהם בתחילת] ז זה הם בתחיל 3 דעות] בגדהחח דיעות] פשוטין] ט פשוטן] סר] ט חסר] 4 זולתו] ב מזולתו] 5 נשאר] ז  
 + במשנה 8] {שהוא שהשליך}] ב שהשליך ז שיד' 9 עיונו] גדהחח ענינו] 10 דמיוניות] ד דמיונות] בדאות] ג בדאות] באני]  
 א ב באני ג באני ח ויאני א בלע' ח בלעו] 11 מפניהם] ג מפניה

61 Ibn Kaspi and Efodi explain the phrase in a similar vein to mean that his intellect becomes actual;  
 cf. 'Ammudei kesef, Commentary, ¶4.

62 Pines, based on the Judeo-Arabic text, has *others*, but ibn Tibbon's Hebrew version and Moses of  
 Salerno's quotation is in the singular.

63 *Dimyoniot* does not appear in the *Glossary* but *koah medammeh* is translated there as "uirtut magi-  
 nante," (195) and as "magenativa" in the commentary on I:49 (ms Munich cod. heb 370, f. 67v).

[13] *This Treatise also has a second purpose, etc.*<sup>64</sup> *A sensible man thus should not demand of me, etc. An intelligent man should be unable to do so even by speaking directly to an interlocutor. How then could he put it down in writing, etc.* It is well known that “the wise instructor has available many stratagems, digressions, and circumlocutions with which he can make the understanding student understand his aim when teaching in person, even when his aim is not made clear or explained. But he cannot do this when writing a book.”<sup>65</sup> *Without becoming a butt for every ignoramus ... would let fly at him the shafts of his ignorance.* This means those who do not understand the matter in its complexity; {if} I were to explain everything they would **be insolent and speak brazenly** [cf. Isa 57:4] on something that would deviate from it; they would be considered wise by those who listen to them or in their own eyes. But they are outside of it, that is, of [the teacher’s] understanding. Therefore, it is not appropriate to expound on everything that is said in a *mashal*.

[14] *We have already explained in our legal compilations some general propositions concerning this subject and they are in the beginning of [the Book of] Knowledge, in the commentary on *Pereq heleq*, and in the commentary on *Pirqei ’avot*.*<sup>66</sup> *And we have explained the rabbinic saying: *ma’aseh merkavah* ought not to be taught to one man, meaning even while alone.*<sup>67</sup> *And even those, the chapter headings that I will transmit, are not set down in order in this Treatise in order one after the other. For my purpose is that truths, meaning the secrets of truth be glimpsed by him, their principles be visible, that is, a few of them, and then again be concealed from the learner. By him means “from Maimonides” or “from this Treatise.”*<sup>68</sup> *And so much as to not oppose the divine will, whose method is that which has concealed those truths especially requisite for His apprehension.*

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<sup>64</sup> Pines 6:6–15.

<sup>65</sup> Samuel ibn Tibbon, preface to *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*. See James T. Robinson, “Samuel ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*,” PhD diss. Harvard University, 2002, ¶15, 221–222 (English), 545 (Hebrew). Moses of Salerno adds “when teaching in person” to his quotation.

<sup>66</sup> *Book of Knowledge (Sefer ha-madda’)*, *hilkhot yesodei ha-torah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1993), ch. 2:¶12 [Hebrew]. English trans. *The Book of Knowledge from the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides*, trans. H.M. Russell and J. Weinberg (New York: KTAV, 1983), Treatise 1, ch. 2:¶12 (6–7); *Maimonides’ Commentary on the Mishnah: Tractate Sanhedrin*, trans. Fred Rosner (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981); *Maimonides: Pirkei Avot*, trans. Eliyahu Touger (New York: Moznaim, 1994).

12 [13] וכלל המאמר הזה כוונה שנית וכול'. ולא יבקש ממני המשכיל וכול'. זה אי אפשר למשכיל לעשותו  
 13 בלשונו למי שמדבר עמו פנים בפנים כל שכן שיחברהו בספר. כי ידוע כי הרבה תחבולות וגילגולים  
 14 וסבובי פני הדברים אפשר למלמד החכם לעשותם בלומדו פה אל פה כדי שייבנו התלמידים הנבונים  
 15 כוונתו, וא"עפ שלא יבאר ולא יפרש מה שאי אפשר לעשות בכתובה בספר. שלא ישוב מטרה לכל סכל  
 16 יורה תצי סכלותו נגדו, כלומ' לשאינם מבינים הדבר על עומקו {אם} הייתי מבאר הכל יאריכו לשון  
 17 וירחיבו פה [ע"פ ישעיה נז, ד] לדבר תועה עליו יחשבו חכמ' בעיני השומעים או בעיניהם. והם חוץ ממנו  
 18 ר"ל מהבנתו; לפיכך אין ראוי להשלים כל מה שנאמ' במשל.

19 [14] וכבר ביארנו בתבורינו התלמודיים כללים מזה העיניין והם בתחילת [ספר] המדע, ובפי' פרק חלק  
 20 ובפי' פרקי אבות. וביארנו אמרם ולא במעשה המרכבה ביחיד אפילו ביחיד. ואפי' הראשים ההם ראשי  
 21 פרקים אשר אמסור אינם במאמר הזה מסודרים בסדר זה אחר זה ... כי כוונתו שיהיו האמתות רוצה  
 22 לומר סודות האמת משקיפות ממנו נראות התחלותיהן כלומ' מעט מהן ואחר יעלמו מן המעיין. וממנו  
 23 בא לומ' מאת הרב ז"ל או ממנו מן המאמר הזה. וכל כך למה שלא תחלוק על הכוונה האלוהית אשר  
 24 דרכה דרך זו ששמה האמתות המיוחדות בהשגתו נעלמות.

14 סבובי גח סבוכי | הנבונים | בהוח הנכונים דט הנבוכים | 15 שאי' | ד חסר | אפשר | ד שאפשר | 16 {אם} בגדהחחט אם |  
 17 עליו | ד + רבינו משה | יחשבו | ד ויחשבו | 19 בתיחלת | ז מתחילת | ובפי' | גהוח וכפי ד ובפירוש ט ובפרוש 20 ובפי' |  
 ב ובפרק ד ובפירוש הוח וכפי | 22 נראות | ד עד שיראה

67 That is, it should not be self-taught.

68 The comment explores an ambiguity in the text that reads *that the truths be glimpsed*. The Hebrew text has an ambiguous prepositional pronoun following the verb – *mushqafot mimmenu*, literally, *are glimpsed from him or it*. Salerno's interpretation is that the truths are glimpsed from Maimonides or glimpsed from the *Guide*.

[15] *Know that with regard to natural matters as well, it is impossible to give a clear exposition when teaching some of their principles as they are, etc. The Rabbis spoke through meshalim and riddles, imitating the style of books that are also concerned with this matter,*<sup>69</sup> meaning natural science which is *ma'aseh bereshit*, in *meshalim* and riddles.<sup>70</sup> *For between these subjects and divine science there is a close attachment between them, as will be said later on that natural science borders on divine science;*<sup>71</sup> [Maimonides] had written earlier that *divine science cannot come about except after a study of natural science.*<sup>72</sup>

[16] *You should not think that these secrets, etc. But sometimes truth flashes out to us meaning the apprehension of God, for he is the certain truth, as well as his angels and the apprehension of his angels,*<sup>73</sup> to the extent that the light of His apprehension appears to us as the brightness of day. Afterwards, this great light is concealed. *Matter and habit in their corporeal guise conceal it so that we find ourselves again in an obscure night, almost as we were at first ... so that he is always, as it were, in unceasing light. Thus night appears to him as day. That is the degree of the great one among the prophets, to whom it was said: **But as for thee, stand thou here with Me*** [Deut. 5:28].<sup>74</sup> This means that his activity and thought concerned God alone and he put aside any mundane activities, *and of whom it was said: **that the skin of his face sent forth beams*** [Exod 34:29]. His intellect was forever purified “and his knowledge was joined to the **Rock of Eternity**”<sup>75</sup> [Isa 26:4] and the splendor never departed from him, and he was sanctified as the angels.”<sup>76</sup> *And matter and habit in their various forms never concealed the light of his intellect in all his days. However, by a polished body – “body” here means a corporeal body, as it occurs for instance in Daniel 7:11, Daniel 3:28 and Isaiah 44:14, as interpreted by some of the commentators.*<sup>77</sup>

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**69** In the *Guide* the books in question are sacred works (*sifrei qodesh*).

**70** On the necessity of teaching *ma'aseh bereshit* or natural science in parables and riddles, see I:17, Pines 42–43.

**71** Pines 9, line 5; see below ¶22.

**72** Pines 9, line 4. The English version, based on the Judeo-Arabic, diverges from the Hebrew text here. Moses of Salerno's version reflects the ibn Tibbon translation.

**73** A possible reference to metaphysics (*hokhmat ha-shem u-melakhav*); see *Glossary* 334–336 (#193), 354–356 (#206).

**74** In III:51 this same proof-text is described as a “poetical *masha*” about Moses as someone who “achieves a state in which he talks with people and is occupied with his bodily necessities while his intellect is wholly turned toward Him, may He be exalted.” The same, Maimonides writes, is true of the Patriarchs. Pines 41, 623.

1 [15] ודע כי הענינים הטבעיים גם כן אי אפשר לגלותם בלמד קצת התחלותיהן כפי מה שהם בביאור וכו'.  
 2 ודברו בהן רבותינו ז"ל במשלים וחידות להמשך אחר הספרים שדברו גם הם מזה העניין, ר"ל חכמת  
 3 הטבע שהוא מעשה בראשית במשלים וחידות. בעבור שהם עניינים שיש ביניהן ובין החכמה האלהית  
 4 חברה חזקה כד בעינן למימר לקמן שחכמת הטבע מצרנית לחכמת האלהות. וכבר כתוב לעיל שלא תגיע  
 5 החכמה האלהית אלא אחר חכמת הטבע.

6 [16] ולא תחשוב שהסודות ההם וכו' אבל פעם יציץ לנו האמת. רוצה לומר השגות השם יתב' שהוא האמת  
 7 בוודאי ומלאכיו והשגת מלאכיו עד שנחשב אור השגתו יום מזריח ואחר כך יעלימו האור הגדול ההוא.  
 8 יעלימוהו הטבעים והמנהגים הגופיים עד שנחשוב כליל חשוך קרוב למה שהיינו בו תחלה ... עד כאלו הוא  
 9 באור תדיר לא יסור וישוב הלילה אצלו כיום. וזאת היא מדרגת גדול הנביאים אשר נאמר בו **ואתה פה עמוד**  
 10 **עמדי** [דברים ה, כח]. כלומר ששקו ומחשבתו בשם לבד ויניח עסקי העולם. ונאמר **כי קרן עור פניו** [שמות  
 11 לד, כט] רוצה לומר שנודכך שכלו לעולם ונקשרה דעתו **בצור עולמים** [ישעיה כו, ד] ולא נסתלק ההוד מעליו  
 12 לעולם ונתקדש כמלאכים. והטבעים והמנהגים לא העלימו אור שכלו לעולם כל ימי חייו. אבל כגשם טהור זך.  
 13 גשם גוף כמו **והובד גשמה** [דניאל ז, יא] די **יהיבו** [צ"ל יהבו] **גשמהוּן**. [דניאל ג, כח] וכן **וגשם יגדל** [ישעיה  
 14 מז, ד] על דעת קצת המפרשים.

2 רבותינו ז"ל [ג' רו"ל 12 | כמלאכים] **בנהחט** במלאכים

75 This verse is interpreted in I:16 as a description of God as “the principle and the efficient cause of all things other than Himself.” Pines 42.

76 *Sefer ha-madda*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah*, 7:¶6.

77 The term translated here as “object” (*geshem*) appears in all these verses, and is interpreted as “corporeal body” (*guf*) in the commentaries of Saadia Gaon, Rashi and Abraham ibn Ezra, *ad loc*. See *The Book of Daniel: the Commentary of R. Saadia Gaon*, ed. trans. Joseph Alobaidi (New York: Peter Lang, 2006); *Nevi'im rishonim* (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1525); *The Book of Daniel=Shield of the Spirit: the Commentaries of Rashi and R. Mosheh Alshikh in Sefer Daniel* (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1994). Ibn Ezra wrote two commentaries on Daniel; see the standard rabbinical Bible (*Miqra'ot gedolot*), and H.J Mathews, “Abraham ibn Ezra’s Short Commentary on Daniel,” in *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, ed. Albert Löwy (London: N. Trübner, 1877), 257–276. *PMZ* also makes explicit the connection between *guf* and *geshem*. *PMZ*, s.v. “guf,” 38–39.

[17] *And even this small light that shines over us is not always there, but flashes and is hidden again from us as if it were **the flaming sword which turned every way** [Gen. 3:24].<sup>78</sup> This was clarified for us in the interpretation of this [passage] by the sage Samuel ibn Tibbon in his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, under the verse **He has made everything beautiful in his time** [Eccl 3:11]. He wrote there:*

According to the True Sage [Maimonides] [the flaming sword] hinders man by means of an absence of light, for whoever sees the path by it sees it only *time and time again*, which is why anyone wanting to walk the path cannot walk a straight and continuous line. Instead, he must advance step by step. It is as if the light by which he sees the path is the light of the **flaming sword which turned every way**. One sees it for a moment, but then the sword turns and the flame disappears. This is how it works at all times: it appears and disappears. And the reason it disappears, according to the opinion of the Master, is the nature of man, etc.<sup>79</sup>

[18] *The truth, in spite of the strength of its manifestation, is entirely hidden from them, meaning [in spite of] the subtlety, the depth and the nobility of its degree. As it is said of them: **now men do not see the light that is bright in the skies** [Job 37:21]. Even though the simple meaning of the verse concerns the light of the sun, the teacher our Rabbi [Maimonides] quotes it concerning God, who is the light that illuminates all and spreads over all, and from his light everything illuminates and shines – the lights and **the constellation** [Job 38:32] of the angels of the Most High and the sublime souls.*

[19] *He is unable to explain with complete clarity even the portion that he has apprehended because a scholar is not able to explain it, and even if he had the ability it would not be permissible to do so. Rather there will befall him when teaching another that which he had undergone when learning himself. That is to say, he will apprehend it alone in his intellect at the time when he was learning. However, should he explain to a student the extent of what he apprehended, he will not be able to do so.<sup>80</sup>*

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<sup>78</sup> On “flaming” (*lahat*), see Moses of Salerno’s commentary on I:28 (ms Munich cod. heb 370, f. 36r), *Glossary* 231 (#123).

<sup>79</sup> Samuel ibn Tibbon’s “*Commentary on Ecclesiastes*”: *the Book of the Soul of Man*, trans. James T. Robinson (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), ¶352, p.359–360. The *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* contains an excursus on this verse, see Robinson, “Ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary*” ¶354–346, pp. 360–368 (English); ¶381–391, pp. 663–667 (Hebrew). Ibn Tibbon views the flaming sword as one of the two

- 15 [17] ואפילו האור ההוא הקטן גם כן אשר יזרח עלינו אינו תדיר אבל יציץ ויעלם ממנו כאילו הוא להט  
 16 החרב התהפכת [בראשית ג, כד]. וזה כבר הרחיב לנו ביאורו החכם רשב"ת בפ" קהלת בפסוק את הכל  
 17 עשה יפה בעתו [קהלת ג, יא]. וכתב שם:  
 18 פירש החכם האמתי בטעם מניעתו העלם האור שרואה בו הדרך פעם אחרי פעם, עד שלא יוכל הרוצה  
 19 ללכת בו דרך ישרה תדירה, אך פסקי פסקי, כאילו האור שרואה בו הדרך הוא כאור להט החרב  
 20 המתהפכת שאדם רואה אותו מעט ותהפך החרב ויעלם הלהב, וכן תמיד יראה  
 21 ויעלם. וסבת העלמו לפי דעת הרב הוא טבע האדם וכו'.

- 22 [18] ונעלם מהם האמת עם חוזק הראותו כלומ' לדקותו ועומקו ולגודל מעלתו. כמו שנאמ' בהם ועתה  
 23 לא ראו אור בהיר הוא בשחקים [יוב לז, כא]. אע"פ שפשט הכת' הוא על אור השמש הרב רבינו הביאו  
 24 על השם יתברך שהוא אור המאיר את הכל והמשיע על הכל ומאורו יאיר ויזריחו הכל, אורות ומזרות  
 25 [יוב לח, לב] מלאכי עליון ונפשות היקרות.

- 1 [19] לא יוכל לבאר אפילו השיעור אשר השיגהו ביאור שלם מפני שאין יכולת במשכיל לבאר ואפ' אם  
 2 היה יכול לא היה רשאי. אבל ישיגהו בלמדו זולתו מה שמצאוהו בלומדו לעצמו. בא לומ' שישג אותו  
 3 לבד בשכלו בעת הלימוד, אבל שיבארהו לתלמיד בשיעור שהשיג לא יוכל.

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17 שם] ב + (?) החכם האמתי | 20 תהפך] ד תיהפך | 23 שפשט] ד פשט הפסוק

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watchmen who guard the path to the tree of life, and it "hinders and prevents man from reaching the tree of life; the cherubs, in contrast, help him to achieve this final goal." He therefore understands the meaning of this verse as relating to the "question as to whether God would prevent human beings from attaining their final perfection" (Robinson, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 133–134, 45).

80 The motif of being unable to explain the content of one's apprehension to someone else recurs in other commentaries on the *Guide*: cf. ibn Falaquera, *Commentary*, ¶5–¶6.

[20] *For this reason, all the Sages, etc. They multiplied the parables and made them different in species and even in genus.* The interpretation is that the Sages were obliged to increase the number of diverse parables in order to conceal the secrets of the Torah. They differentiate matters that are within one single species by one following upon another; in other words, they substitute one for its counterpart.<sup>81</sup> All of this is in order to conceal the secret from the multitude. *And even in genus.* That is, even beyond this they felt obliged to illustrate matters that are not within one single species, but which lie within two species. [For example] from the species of “man” to that of “wild animals” and to “domesticated animals”; not that they are under the same genus.<sup>82</sup>

[21] *The situation is such that the exposition of one who wishes to teach without recourse to parables and riddles is so obscure and brief as to make obscurity and brevity serve in place of parables and riddles.* He means that the sage who wishes to speak about these deep matters – if his intellect inclines him to speak without riddle and *mashal* – he will put himself in a position of having to speak about them a very obscure way. It will be difficult for the student to understand his words, just as if they were parables and riddles. Because he did not speak in riddle and *mashal*, he was compelled to speak in an obscure way that does not make the student understand it all. This obscure way that he searched serves in place of the riddle and the *mashal* that he should have used.

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**81** Cf. Saadia Gaon, *Commentary on “Sefer yeširah”*, preface: “if the teacher has to tell his pupil one of [the divine] attributes, the way is that he should choose his words by way of transparent hints and obvious parables ... this was the way of the prophets ... they saw fit to borrow the crude words made up by man and his progeny for the crude things that are created and through them they explained the matters of the Creator, so that the plain meaning of the words would be known.” In Joseph Tobi, *Proximity and Distance: Medieval Hebrew and Arabic Poetry* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 165.

**82** Cf. for example *Exodus rabbah* 23. Note that Moses of Salerno does not mention parables about God, even though they abound in Midrash; anthropomorphisms could be conceived as parables

4 [20] ובעבור זה כשכוון כל חכם וכו'. והרבו המשלים ושמום מתחלפים במין ואף בסוג. פי' הוצרכו החכמים  
 5 להרבות משלים מתחלפים כדי להסתיר סודות התורה והחליפום בדברים שהם תחת מין אחד שזה אחר  
 6 זה, כלומ' שלוקחים האחד תחת חבירו, והכל כדי להסתיר את הסוד מן ההמון. ואף בסוג כלומ' יותר מזה  
 7 שהוצרכו עוד להמשיל בעינינים שאינם תחת מין אחד אלא בעינינים שהם תחת שני מינים; ממין האדם  
 8 למין חייה ובהמה אלא שהם תחת סוג אחד.

9 [21] עד כי אשר ירצה ללמד מבלתי המשל וחידות יבוא בדבריו מן העומק וההעברה מה שיעמוד במקום  
 10 המשל והדיבור בחידות. רוצה לומר כי החכם שיבוא לדבר בעינינין הללו העמוקים כשדעתו נוטה לדבר  
 11 בהם בלי משל וחידה, יכניס עצמו לדבר במ דרך עמוקה מאד שיהא קשה על התלמיד להבין דבריו,  
 12 כאילו הם משלים וחידות. כי בעבור שלא דיבר בחידה ומשל, הוצרך לדבר דרך עמוק שלא יבינו הכל.  
 13 והדרך העמוקה שתפש היא במקום החידה והמשל שהיה לו להביא.

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7-8 שני ... תחת [ב חסר 8 | אלא] **בגזט** לא 9 | מבלתי ... שיעמוד [ה חסר 10 | והדיבור] ד והדבור | 11 יכניס [דט יכנס

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that straddle distinct genera (God being his own genus, anthropomorphic language substitutes the genus "man" for the genus "God"). Through the use of the maxim "Scripture speaks in the language of men," Abraham ibn Ezra and Maimonides develop the notion that some anthropomorphic language constitutes an accommodation to linguistic and/or mental limitations, and it is therefore not necessarily an instance of esotericism – perhaps that is the reason for Moses of Salerno's not mentioning parables about God here. Cf. *Sefer ha-madda'*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah* 1:¶12; I:26 (Pines 56–57).

[22] *The men of knowledge and the sages are drawn, as it were, toward this purpose by the divine will, etc. only after the adoption of intellectual beliefs: true beliefs that are known by the intellect. They are [constituted by] the apprehension of existents that are not visible to the eye, but are known only by the eye of the intellect.<sup>83</sup> The first of which being His apprehension, the apprehension of the knowledge of God. This, in its turn, cannot come about except through divine science, and this divine science cannot become actual except after a study of divine science. This is so since natural science borders [mišranit] on divine science. Mišranit is a term for mešer [boundary]. The meaning is that it is impossible to arrive at divine science until after one has arrived at natural science, since its study precedes that of divine science in time.<sup>84</sup>*

[23] *Hence God caused His book to open with ma'aseh bereshit meaning because he wanted to make us perfect, that is, to apprehend and intellect His truth, he caused his book to open with natural science, which is ma'aseh bereshit. And because of the greatness and importance of the subject, meaning the greatness of ma'aseh bereshit, and because our capacity falls short of apprehending the greatness of subjects. It seems to me it means the greatness of the knowledge of Creation or only the greatness of the science of knowledge of nature. We are told about those profound matters in parables and riddles, which divine wisdom has deemed necessary to convey to us. It conveyed them in parables and riddles and in very obscure words, as the Sages have said: it is impossible to tell mortals of the power of ma'aseh bereshit. For this reason Scripture tells you obscurely: **In the beginning God created** [Gen 1:1]. Hence I said that apprehension of the greatness of the subjects corresponds to "greatness of Creation." That which is said about all this is in equivocal terms so that the multitude might comprehend them, in accord with the limited capacity of their understanding and the weakness of their representation, in abbreviated form.*

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**83** There is a close parallel passage in *Sefer ha-madda'*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah*: "the forms that lack matter cannot be seen by the eye, but are known by means of the eye of the heart, just as we know the Lord of all without the vision of the [physical] eye" (ch.4, ¶7). Elliot Wolfson has suggested that in much of Jewish and Islamic Neoplatonic thought the term "eye of the heart" often means "an intellectual intuition of that which is incorporeal," and is thus synonymous with "eye of the intellect" (1:4 expresses a similar sense, Pines 27–28). The expression "eye of the heart" to mean intellectual apprehension appears also in Moses of Narbonne; see Alexander Altmann, "Moses Narboni's 'Epistle on Shi'ur Qoma': A Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with an Introduction and an Annotated English

14 [22] כאילו החכמים הידועים נמשכים אחר העיניין הזה ברצון האלהי וכו' אלא אחר ידיעות שכליות, ידיעות  
 15 אמתיות הידועות בשכל. והם להשיג מציאות שאינן נראין לעין, אלא בעין השכל ידועות. ותחלתם השגתו  
 16 יתב' השגת ידיעת השם יתב'. וזה לא יתכן ... אלא בחכמת האלהות, וחכמת האלהות לא תגיע אלא  
 17 אחר חכמת הטבע, מפני שחכמת הטבע מצרנית לחכמת האלהות. מצרנית לשון קִצְר--והטעם שאי  
 18 אפשר להגיע לחכמת האלהות אלא אחר הגיע לחכמת הטבע. כי חכמת הטבע קודמת לחכמת האלהות  
 19 בזמן הלימוד.

20 [23] ולזה שם פתיחת ספרו ית' במעשה בראשית כלומ' בעבור שרצה לתתנו שלימים כלומ' להיות משיגים  
 21 ומשכילים אמתתו יתב'--שם פתיחת ספרו חכמת הטבע שהוא מעשה בראשית. ולעוצם הענין ויקרתו  
 22 רוצה עוצם מעשה בראשית. והיותו יכולתינו קצרה מהשג עוצם העיניינים נראה לי שרוצה בו עוצם  
 23 ידיעת הבריאה או רוצה עוצם חכמת ידיעת הטבע לבד. הגיד לנו העיניינים העמוקים ההם במשלים  
 24 וחידות, והכרח חכמת האלהות הביא להגידם לנו והגדם במשלים וחידות ובדברים סתומים מאד כמו  
 25 שאמ' ז"ל להניד כח מעשה בראשית לבשר ודם אי אפשר לפיכך סתם לך הכת' בראשי[ת] ברא ה'.  
 26 ובעבור זה אמרתי השג עוצם העיניינים הוא עוצם הבריאה. ושם הדברים בכל זה בשמות משתתפים  
 27 בעבור שיבינם ההמון על עיניין כשיעור הבנתם המועט וחולשת ציורם בקצור.

14–15 אלא ... השגתו יתב' ה חסר | 16 וחכמת האלהות | ד וחכמת האלהות | 20 שרצה לתתנו | ז לתתנו שרצה | 23 הגיד | גהוח  
 הגיד | 24 והגדם | ד והגידם | 27 בקצור | ד בקיצור

Translation,” in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 267–268. Elliot Wolfson, “Merkavah Traditions in Philosophical Garb: Judah Halevi Reconsidered,” *PAAJR* 57 (1990–1991), 221–223.

84 Salerno explains here uses the term *mešer* (which is of rabbinic origin and has several meanings) to explain the derivation *mišrani* (a medieval coinage that reflects the meaning of contiguity). He seems to be saying that natural science itself constitutes the border to divine science, unlike Munk who takes the passage to mean that there is no intermediate science between natural and divine science (13 n2).

[24] *And the Book of Comparison.*<sup>85</sup> It seems that Maimonides wanted to give it this title because he planned to compare *the difficult passages of the Midrashim ... where the external sense manifestly contradicts the truth. They are all parables. However, when, many years ago, we began, etc. It did not commend itself to us, etc. For we saw that if we should use the method of parables and concealment, meaning if we should employ it without interpreting it because of the need for concealing it, we would not be deviating from the original purpose [of midrash].* Rather, we would continue to be as we were in the beginning: *we would, as it were, have replaced one individual by another of the same species.* The meaning is, because it is necessary to explain in limited measure, it is impossible not to begin to reveal a little.

[25] Because it is necessary to conceal, in order to make a *mashal* one must take an individual of a species in place of an individual of another species. *Inasmuch as a rash fool, devoid of any knowledge of the nature of being, does not find impossibilities hard to accept.* He means that we conceive that he has no ability in natural science and is a fool where it is concerned. The impossible and the possible are the same thing to him. He believes something {impossible} as something possible because in his view everything is possible.<sup>86</sup>

[26] *In view of these considerations I desisted from composing these two books, etc. My speech in the present Treatise is directed ....to one who has philosophized and has knowledge of the true sciences, etc. Such a chapter may contain strange matters regarding which the contrary of the truth is believed, because of the equivocality of the terms.* With respect to the equivocality of terms, scholars became confused and believed in the opposite of what is actually the case. *Or because a mashal is taken for the thing being represented.* He means that sometimes the prophets introduced in their *meshalim* the subject that stands for a given object or meaning in place of the subject that is being represented by it. For example **and he cried, a lion, upon the watchtower of God**, etc [Isa 21:8].<sup>87</sup> The lion is the *mashal* and the watchman is what is represented by it, or [what is represented by it] is [the prophet] Habakkuk, in Rashi's opinion. The {the *mashal*} "lion" took the place of the "watchman" {who is being represented}, or the place of "Habakkuk."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Pines: "Book of Correspondence" (Pines 9).

<sup>86</sup> According to I:73, Tenth Premise, this is one of the errors of the Mutakallimun (Pines 206–209).

<sup>87</sup> King James translation is modified.

1 [24] וספר ההשוואה. נראה שהיה רוצה הרב לקרוא אותו כן מפני שעלה בדעתו להשוות ספיקות הדרשות  
 2 ... שהנראה מהם מרוחק מן האמת והם כולם משלים. וכאשם החליתי זה שנים רבות וכול'. לא ישר  
 3 בעינינו וכו'. מפני שראינו, שאם נעמוד על המשל וההעלם כלומ' אם נעמוד עליו ולא נפרשהו לצורך  
 4 העלמתו לא נהיה יוצאים מן הדרך הראשון ונעמד כאשר היינו תחילה. ונהיה מחליפים איש באיש ממין  
 5 אחר. והטעם מפני צריך לפרש מעט אי אפשר שלא יתחיל לגלות קצת.

6 [25] ומפני שצריך להעלים יצטרך להמשל שיביא בו ליקח איש ממין זה במקום איש ממין אחר. כי לא ירחיק  
 7 הסכל והנמהר הערום מידיעת טבע המציאות הנמנעות. רוצה לומר שמשכיל שאין לו יד בחכמת הטבע  
 8 והוא סכל ממנו--הנמנע והאפשר אצלו שווה. ומאמין הדבר {הנמנע} כדבר האפשר כי הכל אפשר  
 9 אצלו.

10 [26] ומפני זה חדלתי מחבר שני ספרים האלו וכו'. אבל המאמר הזה דברי בו... עם מי שכבר נתפלסף וידע  
 11 חכמות אמתיות וכו'. או יהיה הפרק כולל עינינים זרים שמאמיניהם בה הפך האמת מפני שיתוף השמות.  
 12 והעינין שהשמות נאמרו בשיתוף--בלבלו המשכילים והאמינו בדבר הפך מה שהוא. או מפני שאת  
 13 המשל במקום הנמשל. רוצה לומר שפעמ' שהנביאים נשאו במשליהם העינין שהביאו לדבר מן הדברים  
 14 או לעינין מן העינינים מקום אותו העינין שנמשל בו, כמו ויקרא אריה על מצפה ה' וגומ' {ישעיה  
 15 כא, ח}; האריה משל והצופה נמשל בו, או חבוקק על דעת רש"י ולקח {המשל} האריה מקום {הנמשל}  
 16 הצופה או מקום חבוקק.

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2 רבות] ד רבים | 6 שיביא | ד שיבא | זה] ד +גם כן | 7 שנשכיל] ט שבשביל | 8 {הנמנע} | בנדהוחט המונע | 10 ומפני זה  
 חדלתי] דח חדלתי ומפני זה | 12 בבלבו] ד ביללו הזט בללו | 15 ולקח] הט ונשא ה +{לקח} | {המשל} | ג המשל ונשא דוחט  
 המשל בהו {המשל} | {הנמשל} | גזט הנמשל בהוח {הנמשל} | 15-16 {הנמשל} | הצופה] ד הצופה הנמשל

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88 Cf. Rashi on Isaiah 21:8: "The lion is Ḥabakkuk – 'lion' in gematria is the same as 'Ḥabakkuk'. [The meaning is that] Isaiah was prophesizing that [the prophet] Ḥabakkuk would in the future pray in this manner 'to the watchman of God'." The numerical value for both lion and Ḥabakkuk is the same. *Miqra'ot gedolot, ad loc.*

[27] Likewise **who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?** [Isa 33:14]. “Devouring fire” took the place of “God,” since he is a consuming fire, and there are many such examples. *Or the thing represented is taken for a mashal.*<sup>89</sup> Sometimes they did the opposite, by taking the subject being represented in place of the *mashal* that they brought forward regarding that subject, such as ...<sup>90</sup>

[28] [*Know that the key ...*] is an understanding of the parables, of their import, and of the meaning of the words occurring in them. These are the words of the prophets that are conveyed in the form of *mashal* and riddle; *the meaning of the terms* there as equivocal, amphibolous and derivative.

[29] *You know what God has said: **And by the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes*** [Hos 12:11], at times as a **warrior in battle** [Exod 15:3], and at times as a merciful elder.<sup>91</sup> With respect to other matters that are remote from Him, the prophets likewise expressed them in similitude and *mashal*. You are also familiar with the expression of the learned poet regarding the prophets’ sight of God within visions of prophecy, in a poem that he composed.<sup>92</sup> He means that God appears to prophets within visions that differ from one another, all according to the need and the time. Not that there should be any change in his glory; it is all *mashal* and similitude.<sup>93</sup> Far be it from God, and he is *greatly exalted above every deficiency.*<sup>94</sup>

[30] *Now what did one clever man do?* etc. *I do not think that anyone possessing an unimpaired capacity imagines that the words of Torah referred to here, whose meaning Solomon contrives to understand and deepen through understanding the meaning of their parables, are ordinances concerning the building of a sukkah, the lulab and the law of four trustees, since these are known from tradition. Rather what this text has in view here is, without any doubt, the understanding of obscure matters.* He means the understanding of the secrets of Torah and the order of its parables: they are *ma’aseh merkavah* and among them is *ma’aseh bereshit*, which he investigated in depth and shed light on their obscurities, and learned from them that which the ancients who preceded him did not learn, meaning the ancients of Jerusalem. As it is said: **I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.** [Eccl 1:16].

<sup>89</sup> Pines: “or vice versa.”

<sup>90</sup> There is a lacuna here in all the manuscripts, spanning about 6 to 7 lines.

<sup>91</sup> *Sefer ha-madda’*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah* 1:¶9; *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael Shirata*, ch. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Here Moses of Salerno quotes from a *piyut* (liturgical poem) that seems to have been altered in the manuscript transmission. His quote is *ועת רצון שכנו כדובים תאומים*. A likely source is a *selihah* (penitential poem) attributed to Isaac ibn Ghayat (1038–1089). Ibn Ghayat’s line in question reads *ועת רצון שכנו אורים ותומים*. Ibn Ghayat’s *selihah* fits with Moses of Salerno’s designation of a

17 [27] וכן מי יגור לנו אש אכלה [ישעיה לג, יד] לקח אש אכלה מקום השם יתב' שהוא אש אוכלת וכן רבים.  
 18 או שאת הנמשל במקום המשל. ופעמים עשו הפך זה שנשאו העינין הנמשל מקום המשל שהביאוהו  
 19 עליו כמו [יש כאן פער בכל כ"י]

20 [28] [ודע כי מפתח...] הוא הבנת המשלים וענינים ופירוש מלותיהם. הם דברי הנביאים שבאו דרך משל  
 21 וחידה. ופירוש מילותיהם שכאן בשיתוף וסיפוק והשאלה.

22 [29] כבר ידעת אמרו וביד הנביאים אדמה [הושע יב, יא]. פעם כגיבור מלחמה [שמות טו, ג] פעם כזקן מלא  
 23 רחמים. וכן שאר עינינים שהם רחוקים מהשם דברו עליהם הנביאים בדמיון ומשל. גם ידוע אצלך מה  
 24 שאמר הפייט המשכיל על ראיית הנביאים את השם ית' במראות הנבואה בתחן שחיבר "ועת רצון שכנו  
 25 כדובים תאומים" וכו'. ורצונו בזה שהשם יתב' מתראה לנביאין בתוך בראיית משונה זו מזו; הכל כפי הצורך  
 26 וכפי השעה. לא שיהיה אצל כבודו שינוי אלא הכל משל ודמיון, חלילה ית' השם מזה ומכל חסרון עליו רב.

1 [30] מה עשה פקח אחד וכול'. ואיני רואה שאחד משלימי הדעת יחשוב כי דברי תורה הרמוז אליהם, הנה  
 2 אשר הערים שלמה ע"ה בהבנתם, והמעיק [העמיק] להבין עיניני המשלים שלהם הם משפטי עשיית  
 3 הסוכה והלולב ודין ארבעה שומרים כי אילו מכח הקבלה נודעו. אבל הכוונה הוא הדבר העמוק בלא  
 4 ספק. רוצה בזה הבנת סודות התורה וסדר משליה שהם מעשה המרכבה ובכללם מעשה בראשית אשר  
 5 בהם העמיק ויוצא לאור תעלומותיהן וידע מהן מה שלא ידעו הראשונים שלפניו ר"ל קדומי ירושלם, כמו  
 6 שאמ' אני הנה הגדלתי והוספתי חכמה על כל אשר היה לפני בירושלם ולבי ראה הרבה חכמה ודעת  
 7 [קהלת א, טז].

17 [לקח] ז ונשא 19 כמו] ה חסר ו + [כך היה לפני] 21 [שכאן] דט שבאו | וסיפוק] ד וספוק | 24 הפייט] ט הפייט | בתחן] ה חסר | שכנו] ב שבנו | בתוך] ב + מראה הנבואה | 25 בראיית] ב בראייה | זו מזו] גדהוחט זה מזה | 26 לא שיהיה אצל כבודו שינוי אלא הכל משל ודמיון] ב אלא הכל משל ודמיון לא שיהיה אצל כבודו שינוי  
 3 [אילו] ה אלו | הדבר] ג + [הבנת] 4 | [וסדר] גהוחט | וסדרי | משליה] בוח משלים | 5 ויוצא] ב ומצא | לאור] ד + את | שלפניו בנהוחט שלפניו

prophetic vision. Cf. the collection of *selihot* according to the Tripoli *minhag*, *Sefer sifte renanot* (Livorno, s.a.), 78b.

93 Two notions here have a parallel in Saadia Gaon's commentary on *Sefer yeširah*. First is the idea that God appears to prophets in different ways at different times, and second, that communication by prophecy does not entail change in God (for Saadia, through the intermediary "created glory"). See *Commentaire sur le Sefer Yešira, ou Livre de la Création, par le Gaon Saadia de Fayyoun*, trans. Mayer Lambert (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1891), 61, 94 [French section].

94 I:5 (Pines 29).

[31] *[By lighting] a taper worth an issar. A measure similar to the “Italian issar.”*<sup>95</sup> *Which was dark and sealed, that is, closed from all sides. This mashal itself is worth nothing, but by means of it you can understand the words of the Torah, as it is known that the mashal is like the husk and the secret within is like the fruit.*<sup>96</sup> *Now this pearl is there in a dark house, etc. The Sage has said: A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver [Prov. 25:11]. Their open settings are called “reti” in the vernacular.*<sup>97</sup> *Very small eyelets [mesuvakhim] is another term for “netting” [sevakhah].*

[32] *Now see how marvelously this dictum, etc. While its internal meaning ought to be more beautiful than the external one, since the internal meaning is the foundation.*<sup>98</sup> *In other words, the noble secret that is within it is like gold within silver, which is far more excellent than it. Its external meaning also ought to contain in it something that indicates to someone considering it what is to be found in its internal meaning, meaning there should be an opening*<sup>99</sup> *for the discerning individual so that he may be able to understand the meanings and apprehend [them] with his intellect. As happens in the case of an apple of gold etc., it is deemed to be an apple of silver, etc., that is, [it is deemed] to have no core.*

[33] *The parables of the prophets are similar. Their external meaning contains concrete wisdom that is useful in many respects, among which is the welfare of human societies, meaning the political society – so that all can live at peace with one another and can have the opportunity to immerse in Torah and commandments.*<sup>100</sup> *Their internal meaning, internal to the parables, contains true wisdom that is useful for beliefs concerned with the truth as it is. As is shown by the external meaning of Proverbs and of a small part of Ecclesiastes, such as the statement that has come to us in the form of a mashal: **keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God** [Eccl 4:17].*<sup>101</sup> *The revealed meaning is the Temple, which is the house of the Divine Presence, or the synagogue and house of study. The concealed meaning of “house of God” is the great and superior Temple; that means divine science, which is *ma’aseh merkavah*.*<sup>102</sup> *Likewise with respect to matters in most of this mashal.*

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<sup>95</sup> *Issar ha-italqi* is mentioned in the Talmud as a monetary unit of value that corresponds to the daily wage for field labor in Mishnah *Shevi’it* 8:4; cf. also b. *Qiddushin* 1a. It is less clear whether Moses of Salerno has the Talmudic currency in mind, or a contemporary Italian coin.

<sup>96</sup> In Moses ibn Ezra’s poetics, words are described as “husks” that envelop a “kernel” (the meaning); see Paul Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse dans le “Jardin de la Métaphore” de Moïse ibn ‘Ezra, philosophe et poète andalou du XIIe siècle* (New York: Brill, 1997), 97, 118. Abraham ibn Ezra has a similar idea when he describes words “like bodies” and meanings “like souls.” See Abraham ibn Ezra, Long Commentary on Exodus 20:1, in *Miqra’ot gedolot ha-keter: Exodus II*, ed. Menachem Cohen (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2013).

<sup>97</sup> i.e. “nets.”

8 [31] פתילה בכאיסר, שיעור כאיסר האיטלקי. בית אפל בלום סגור מכל צד. כך המשל אינו כלום ועל ידי  
 9 המשל אתה רואה דברי התורה. כי ידוע שהמשל כקליפה והסוד שבתוכו הוא כפרי. והנה המרגלית  
 10 היא בבית וכו'. אמ' החכם תפוחי זהב במשכיות כסף דבר דבור על אופנו [משלי כה, יא]. משכיותיהם  
 11 הפתוחים ריטי בלע'. המשובכים לשון שבכה.

12 [32] וראה מה נפלא וכו'. וצריך שיהא תוכו טוב מנגלהו כי תוכו הוא העיקר. ר"ל הסוד הנעים שבו כזהב אצל  
 13 הכסף שהוא מעולה הרבה מאד ממנו. וצריך שיהא בגלוי מה שיורה המתבונן על מה שבתוכו כלומר  
 14 שיהא פתח למבין כדי שיהיה יכול להכנס ולהשכיל. כמו זה התפוח וכו' יחשוב הרואה שהוא תפוח  
 15 כסף כלומר שאין תווד בו

16 [33] וכן הם משלי הנביאים—נגליהם חכמה גופנית מועלת בדברים רבים, מכללם תיקון ... הקיבוצים  
 17 האנושיים. רוצה בו קיבוץ המדיני שיהיו בני אדם בשלום זה עם זה ויהיה להם פנאי לעמוק בתורה  
 18 ובמצוות. ובתוכם בתוך המשלים חכמה אמתית מועלת בהאמנת האמת על אמתתו. כמו שיראה מגילוי  
 19 משלי וקצת קהלת, ממה שבא ממנו דרך משל באמרו שמור רגלך כאש[ר] תלך אל בית ה' [קהלת  
 20 ד, יח]. שהגלוי ממנו הוא בית המקדש שהוא בית שכינה או בית הכנסת והמדרש. והנסתר בית ה' הוא  
 21 הבית הגדול והעליון ר"ל חכמת האלהות שהוא מעשה המרכבה וכן דברי רוב משל.

10 משכיותיהם] ד משכיות הם [11 בלע'+] ד חסר [13 הרבה מאד] ד מאד הרבה [14 להכנס] בנהחוטס להבנם  
 16 מועלת] בנהחוטס מעולה [בדברים] ג בדברי [18 מגילוי] בנהחוטס מגילוי [20 והמדרש] ד המקדש [21 משל] בנהחוטס

98 Or: root, principle ('iqqar).

99 That is, a signal or indication, literally "opening" (*petah*).

100 In III:27 Maimonides explains that one of the aims of the Torah is political: "the end of this Law in its entirety" is the political-moral system ("welfare of the body") and holding correct beliefs and opinions ("welfare of the soul"), Pines 510–512.

101 In the King James translation the verse is ch. 5:1.

102 The concealed meaning mentioned here is an adaptation of a passage from the *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, according to which "going to the house of God" ... can refer to nothing else but speculation in divine subjects." Robinson, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, 458.

[34] *Know that the prophetic parables are of two kinds, etc. While in others the mashal as a whole indicates the whole of the thing being represented, meaning one single meaning. In such a mashal very many words are to be found, etc. They serve rather to embellish the mashal, etc. An example of the first kind is the following text: **And behold a ladder set up on the earth** [Gen. 28:12]. He states in this text, the word ladder indicates one subject, and this had been explained to us by the sage Samuel ibn Tibbon in his book *Let the Waters Be Gathered*, in addition to what our great Rabbi explained of it in chapter 15 of this [first] part [of the *Guide*]. Here is a summary of his interpretation: The legs of the ladder are on earth and its top reaches to the sky. It is **the path of life that leads upward** [Prov 15:24]. Undoubtedly that ladder is made from the beam of the tree of life that was discussed by the Sages, its stature being that of five hundred years and its being the measure of the distance that they mention between the earth and the area at the bottom of the lunar sphere.<sup>103</sup>*

[35] *The words **set up on the earth** indicate a second subject, meaning the legs of the ladder are on earth, or in other words, the root of the tree of life are on earth. The intended meaning is that the beginning of apprehension of divine ways, which are on earth and from the earth. They are the beginning of human apprehension and they are the 'ofanim {the four elements}. Man comes into being from them, through them and with them as they are with him in his house.<sup>104</sup> They are that which is also called natural science.*

[36] *The words **and the top of it reached to heaven** indicate a third subject, meaning the tips of the tops of the tree of life reach up to the firmament that is over the heads of the *hayiot* and up to the likeness of the throne within it.<sup>105</sup> The words **and behold the angels of God** indicate a fourth subject, which is very deep. The word **ascending** indicates a fifth subject, which is those individuals whose way of life is [oriented to] above. The Rabbi who guides to righteousness revealed that he understood the word “angels” to refer only to learned individuals among humankind, since they are the ones whose way of life is [oriented to] above. Thus ascension is mentioned first [before descent] to allude that in this passage he meant those [individuals] only but not others who share with him the term alone.<sup>106</sup>*

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<sup>103</sup> Cf. Samuel ibn Tibbon, *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* ch. 11, p. 54. Moses of Salerno's interpretation of the *mashal* of Jacob's ladder, through ¶40, is a collation of notions from I:15, II:10, II:30, and the passage from *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim*. His contribution in quoting ibn Tibbon here is not entirely unoriginal: first, it attests to the high place that Samuel ibn Tibbon occupies in his thought – he seems to accept Samuel ibn Tibbon's interpretation as authoritative even though he respectfully disagrees with some of it. Second, it is evidence for the dissemination of ibn Tibbon's works in 13th century Italy in connection with the dissemination of the *Guide* itself. Third, it shows that Salerno is willing to

1 [34] ודע כי משלי הנבואה יש להם שני דרכים וכו'. ומהם מה שיהיה כל המשל מגיד על כל העניין הנמשל כלומר  
 2 על עניין אחד לבד ויבואו במשל ההוא דברים רבים מאד וכו'. אבל הם ליפות המשל וכו'. אמנם דמיון  
 3 המין הראשון אמרו **והנה סולם מוצב ארצה** [בראשית כח, יב]. כי אמרו סולם יורה על עניין אחד וזה כבר  
 4 באר לנו החכם רשב"ת זצ"ל במאמרו מאמר יקוו המים. מוסף על מה שפירש אותו רבינו הגדול בפרק ט"ז  
 5 מזה החלק. וזה לשונו בקצרה: והסולם הוא שרגליו בארץ וראשו מגיע השמימה. הוא **אורח חיים שהוא**  
 6 **למעלה למשכיל** וכו' [משלי טו, כד]. ואין ספק שהסולם הוא מקורת עץ החיים נעשה שאמרו עליו חכמים  
 7 ז"ל שהיה קומתו מהלך חמש מאות שנה, והוא שיעור הרוחק אשר זכרו שיש בין הארץ ושטח התחתון  
 8 שלגלגל הירח.

9 [35] ואמרו **מוצב יורה על עניין שני** כלומר רגלי הסולם הם בארץ כלומר שורש עץ החיים בארץ. הכוונה  
 10 שתחלת ההשגה בדרכי השם הם בארץ ומן הארץ, שהם תחלת המושגים לאדם והם האופנים {הד'  
 11 יסודות}. והמתהווה מהם ובהם ועמהם מפני שהם עמו בביתו והם מה שקוראין אותו חכמת הטבע.

12 [36] ואמרו **מגיע השמים יורה על עניין שלישי** כלומר ראשי נופי עץ החיים מגיעין עד הרקיע אשר על ראשי  
 13 החיות ועד דמות הכסא אשר בו. ואמרו **והנה מלאכי ה' יורה על עניין רביעי** וזה עמוק מאד. **ועולים יורה**  
 14 **על עניין חמישי** והם אשר ארחם למעלה. והרב מורה צדק ז"ל גילה שהבין מלת מלאכי עם המשכילים  
 15 מבני אדם לבד, שהם אשר ארחם למעלה. ועל כן זכר העליה תחילה לרמוז שאליהם כיון במקום זה לא  
 16 אל זולתם מאשר שנתתפו! [!] עמו בשם ההוא.

1 להם | ד בהם | העניין | ד עניין | 5 מזה | ג בזה | 10 שתחלת | ז שתחילת | והם | ט +הד' יסודות | האופנים | ה הד' יסודות |  
 10–11 {הד' יסודות} | ב {היסודות} | ג {הד' יסודות} | ז הד' יסודות | 12 השמים | ה השמימה | 14–13 ועולים ... למעלה | ב חסר |  
 15 זה | ז זה | 16 שנתתפו | ב שנתתפו | ז נשתת | ה הוא | ב +ועולים יורה על עניין חמישי והם אשר ארחם למעלה

compare ibn Tibbon to Maimonides in the interpretation of a biblical passage and that Maimonides is not necessarily the “winner” in this context.

**104** “House” as a metaphor for the human body and/or for the fact that he is always surrounded by them.

**105** A reference to *ma'aseh merkavah*.

**106** In other words, “angels” may be an equivocal term, but in this passage Maimonides had a determinate referent in mind.

[37] *The words **and descending** indicate a sixth subject.* The intended subject is that which is taught by those from among the perfect, far above the rest of people, concerning what they apprehended in their ascent. The aforementioned sage Samuel ibn Tibbon wrote that this is the opinion of Maimonides, and this is a fine interpretation among those that apply to the matter at hand. However, I do not discard [the interpretation] that the term “angels of God” includes two [distinct] species from among the species included in the equivocality of the term “angel.” Thus one species is “ascending” whereas “descending” is another species. This means that “ascending” is a mention of learned individuals who ascend, that is, those whose way of life is [oriented to] above. “Descending” is an allusion to a species of the separate intellects which flies to man and approaches him, even though he mentions the species of “descending” after the species of “ascending,” etc, as is explained in the same passage of the treatise mentioned above [*Let the Waters Be Gathered*], chapter 11.<sup>107</sup>

[38] ***And behold the Lord stood above it** [Gen 28:13] indicates a seventh subject,* which is the apprehension of God. As one apprehends such matters in order, beginning with the legs of the ladder that is set up on earth, one knows and understands the true meaning of the beam of the tree of life and what originates from it, i.e. from the ladder up to the bottom of the lunar sphere. Afterwards, one knows the true meaning of the treetop, which is the bottom of the sphere of the moon, up to the uppermost part of the superior sphere. One then understands God from every aspect standing above the ladder, which is the top of the tree of life, and the most superior part of the most superior sphere to which one ascends, that is, that same individual through the ladder and from the ladder up to its top. There he finds that God appears with the seraphim that stand upon the ladder.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Angels are identified with the separate intellects in II:4 and II:6, Pines 255–259, 261–265

<sup>108</sup> End of quotation from *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* begun in ¶34.

17 [37] ואמרו **יורדים יורה על עניין שישי**. והוא שכיון על מה שיורו המשיגים מהם מבני אדם השלם למעלה  
 18 לשאר האנשים מאשר השיגו בעלייתם. וכתב החכם הנזכר רשב"ת זהו דעת הרב ז"ל והוא אחד מן  
 19 הפנים הטובים אשר סובל אותם העניין. אך אני איני מרחיק שתהיה מלת מלאכי ה' כוללת שני מינים מן  
 20 המינים הנכללים בשיתוף שם מלאך. ויהיה מן אחד העולים ומין אחר היורדים כלומר שיהיו העולים זכר  
 21 למשכילים מבני אדם הם העולים ר"ל אשר ארחם למעלה. והיורדים רמז במין מן השכלים הנפרדים העף  
 22 אל האדם והמתקרב אליו, ואע"פ שזכר מין היורדים אחר מין העולים וכו', כאשר מפורש שם במאמר  
 23 הנזכר פרק י"א.

1 [38] **והנה ה' נצב עליי** [בראשית כח, יג] יורה על עניין שביעי והוא השגת יתע' כי בהשיג האדם עיניינים אלה  
 2 בסדר יתחיל מרגלי הסולם המוצב ארצה. וידע וישכיל אמתת קורת עץ החיים והוא מה שממנו, ר"ל מן  
 3 הסולם עד תחתיתו שלגלגל הירחי. ואחר כך ידע אמתת נופו והוא מה שתחתית גלגל הירח עד עליונו של  
 4 גלגל העליון. ישכיל אחר כן השם על כל פנים הנצב על הסולם; הוא נוף עץ החיים הוא עליונו שלגלגל  
 5 העליון שאז עולה ר"ל האדם ההוא בסולם ומן הסולם עד ראשו. ובו ימצא נראה השם עם השרפים  
 6 העומדים על הסולם.

20 העולים] ד + למעלה | 21 האף] ה חסר

2 בסדר] ב כסדר | 3 שלגלגל] ז של גלגל | הירחי] ז הירח | 4-3 של גלגל] ב **בנהחוט** שלגלגל | 4 שלגלגל] ז של גלגל

[39] *An example of the second kind, etc. The outcome of all this, that is, of this whole mashal and the elements therein, is a warning against the pursuit of bodily pleasures and desires and there is no further meaning to it. And he likens matter the matter of man which is the cause of these bodily pleasures, to a harlot who is also a married woman ... his entire book is based on this allegory. And I shall explain in various chapters of this Treatise his wisdom, Solomon's wisdom, in likening matter to a married harlot. The Rabbi our rabbi put forth this explanation in chapter 8 of the third part [of the Guide] and it is a deep matter.<sup>109</sup> According to the explanation there and from what appears to follow from his precious words, it seems that the woman mentioned at the beginning of Creation who feeds the fruit to her husband is our Matter. This is a secret from among the secrets of the Torah. We shall explain how he concluded this book of his with a eulogy of the woman when he writes at the end of the book **who can find a virtuous woman?** [Prov 31:10]. It is a praise of Matter upon its coming together with man, a Matter that is propitious to his purpose and capable of perfecting {which does not hinder him from perfecting}<sup>110</sup> what is required of him. The meaning is that it will not compel him to follow anything in his natural dispositions nor in his appetites to excess.<sup>111</sup>*

[40] *For all the hindrances keeping man from his ultimate perfection, every deficiency and every disobedience, come to him from his matter ... as I<sup>112</sup> shall explain in this Treatise. You will find all this in the chapter just mentioned; it is well explained there.<sup>113</sup> That man should not follow only his bestial nature, that is, follow after the animal soul that is part of our [constitution]. For it causes every deficiency and every disobedience to pursue after lust and traits that are defiling. The proximate matter of man is identical with the proximate matter of other living beings. He means that the matter of man is similar to the matter of all other animals, for we are formed from one matter – men and beast [are formed] only from the four elements of the upper part.<sup>114</sup>*

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. III:8 (Pines 431).

<sup>110</sup> The marginal note is in keeping with the tenor of III:8 (Pines 430–436), where it is said that all of one's virtues are exclusively consequent upon form and all of one's disobedience is consequent upon matter; matter in whatever guise is only an impediment and does not contribute to "what is required of man," which is "solely the mental representation of the intelligibles, the most certain and noblest of which being the apprehension, in as far as this is possible, of the deity, of the angels, and of His other works."

<sup>111</sup> In III:8 one's matter is "excellent and suitable" only to the extent that it neither dominates man nor corrupts his constitution. In this chapter, the purpose of the Law is not moderation but rather to "quell all the impulses of matter" and one ought to "be ashamed of them and to set for them limits in his soul." For Salerno, however, the "natural traits" and the "appetites" are not to be condemned per

7 [39] ואמנם דמיון השינוי וכו'. והעולה בידינו מזה הכלל כלומ' מכל זה המשל שנכללו בו דברים הוא ההזהרה  
 8 מהמשך אחר תאות הגופות והנאותהין ואין שם עניין אחר יותר. ודימה החומר, חומר האדם אשר הוא  
 9 סבת התאוות הגשמיות כולם באשה זונה והיא אשת איש ... ועל זה המשל בנה ספרו. והנה אבאר  
 10 בפרקים מזה המאמר חוכמת שלמה בדמותו החומר באשת איש זונה. וזה הביאור באר הרב  
 11 רבינו בפרק ח' מהחלק השלישי, והוא עניין עמוק. ולפי אותו הביאור וכפי הנארה [הנראה] מדברי  
 12 רדפי אמריו היקרים יראה כי האשה האמורה בתחילת היצירה המאכלת מן הפרי לאישה היא החומר  
 13 שלנו, והוא סוד מסודות התורה. ונבאר איך חתם ספרו בשבחי האשה באמרו בסוף הספר **אשת חיל מי**  
 14 **ימצא** [משלי לא, י]. והוא שבח החומר בפגוש באיש חומר נאות לכונתו כשיהא יכול להשלים {ל"א שלא  
 15 ימנע אותו מלהשלימו} המבוקש ממנו. והטעם שלא יפציר בו לתוספת עניין מענייני המדות שבאדם ולא  
 16 לתוספת תאוה.

17 [40] וכל אילו המונעים משלמותו האחרון וכל חסרון וכל מרי אמנם ישיגהו מצד החומר שלו ... כמו שאבאר  
 18 בזה המאמר. וכל זה תמצא בפרק הנזכר מבואר באר היטב. שלא יהיה האדם נמשך אחר בהמיותו לבד  
 19 כלומ' אחר נפש בהמית המשתתפת בנו. שהיא גורמת כל חסרון וכל מרי לרדוף אחרי התאוות והמדות  
 20 המטמאות. חומר האדם הקרוב הוא שאר בעלי חיים הקרוב רוצה בזה כי חומר האדם הוא כחומר כל  
 21 שאר בעלי חיים כי מחומר אחד קורצנו הכל אדם ובהמה מהד' יסודות לבד מהחלק העליון.

11 הנארה] † הנראה | 14 נאות] † ניאות(?) | לכונתו] **בגוּחַס** לבנותו | 14–15 {ל"א ... מהשלימו} † שלא ימנע אותו  
 | מלהשלימו † {לא שלא ימנע מלהשלימו} | 18 בפרק] † בספר | 19 התאוות] **בגוּחַחַס** התאוה המטמאות |  
 21 לבד] † +יסודות

se; what he warns against is excess. In other places Maimonides writes in favor of the "golden mean" as well; cf. *Eight Chapters*, Fourth Chapter, in Raymond L. Weiss and Charles Butterworth eds, *Ethical Writings of Maimonides* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 67–74.

**112** This reproduces ibn Tibbon's version; Pines has *we*.

**113** Cf. III:8 (Pines 430–436).

**114** Cf. Robinson, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 317, 343. The "upper part" may refer to the "upper part" of the "likeness of the man that was on the throne" mentioned in III:7, which is an allegory regarding the separate intellects, according to Samuel ibn Tibbon's interpretation in *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim*, 50, and Moses ibn Tibbon, *Sefer pe'ah*, in *The Writings of R. Moshe Ibn Tibbon* ed. Howard Kreisler, Colette Sirat and Avraham Israel (Beer-Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2010), 115–116, n314, and *Malmaḥ ha-talmidim*, 123r.

[41] *You should not inquire into all the details [occurring in the mashal] etc. nor should you wish to find significations corresponding to them.* This means that you will exert yourself to find a meaning that is appropriate and well received, but you will not be able to do so. *For doing so would lead you into one of two ways: either into turning aside from the intended subject, meaning the intention of the passage, or making an effort to interpret things not susceptible of interpretation and that have not been inserted with a view to interpretation, meaning which are not the intention of the passage.* *The result of such an exertion, that is, making a great and intense effort without any benefit.*<sup>115</sup> *Extravagant fantasies such as are entertained by many.* {After I wrote all this, I came into contact with the preface written by the sage and scholar Samuel ibn Tibbon to this book after he translated it.<sup>116</sup> I saw that he interpreted there the term *hazayah* [fantasy] as a gerund derived from **dreamers** [*hozim*] **lying down** [Isa 56:10]. He interprets it as those who speak foolish things devoid of substance, like those who utter incoherent things in their sleep.<sup>117</sup> They are called “ilunar” in the vernacular<sup>118</sup>). *Fantasy* is a term related to *dreamers* and it is a biblical term: Isaiah [writes] **dreamers, lying down, loving to slumber** [56:10]. [The term] **has neither son nor brother** [Eccl. 4:8] in all 24 prophetic books.<sup>119</sup> It is an expression that conveys deep sleep and deception; in other words, your efforts will be empty and in vain.

[42] Such exertion can be found in many others in these times, they are the many sects that have associated with one another *with a view to finding meanings and interpretations for words whose author in no wise had in mind the significations wished by them*, that is, those were not imagined by the author. Perhaps we should read *written about*<sup>120</sup> *by most of the sects of the world* in the sense that they wrote books.<sup>121</sup> *Your purpose, rather, should always be to know, regarding most parables, the whole that was intended to be known* and this will suffice for you. *My remarking that it is a mashal will be like someone’s removing a screen from between the eye and a visible thing*, meaning, as someone who removes the curtain and the partition, and thus one sees what one wants to see, or in other words, he removes one’s doubt.

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**115** The verb translated here as “making an effort” is translated by Pines as “to assume an obligation.” However, Salerno seems to take it in the sense of “belabor, take pains” (which is the primary meaning of the Hebrew verb used by ibn Tibbon). Al-Ḥarizi’s translation uses a different verb that corresponds to Salerno’s understanding (*yaga’*).

**116** The *PMZ* is sometimes termed as “Preface” (*petiḥah*); cf. commentary on I:7 (ms Munich cod. heb 370, f. 18r).

**117** The passage beginning with “after I wrote” up to “sleep” seems to be a comment inserted by Moses of Salerno’s editor, his son Isaiah (see ¶61, and *Glossary* 49). It appears in most but not all mss; some have it as a marginal note (as is the case for cod. heb Munich 370) while others have it within the text. The interpretation attributed to ibn Tibbon is a word-by-word borrowing from *PMZ*, s.v. “*hazayah*,” 44 (= *delirium*).

1 [41] לא תבקש למצוא כל חלקי העניינים וכו'. ותרצה שהמצא להם דבר נאות בדבר הנמשל. כלומר תטרח  
 2 למצוא דבר נאה ומתקבל ולא תוכל. כי יוציאך זה לאחד משני עניינים. אם שיטך יטה אותך מן העניין  
 3 המבונן כלומר שכיון אמרו או יטרח אותך לפרש עניינים אין פירוש להם כלומר שלא כיון אמרו. ותגיע  
 4 מזאת ההטרחת כלומר לטורח גדול ורב ללא תועלת. כמו ההזייה העצומה אשר יהוה בה רבים. {ואחרי  
 5 אשר חיברתי כל זה בא לידי הפתיחה שחיבר החכם המשכיל רשב"ת לספר זה אחרי העתיקו אותו.  
 6 וראיתי שפירש שם הזיה שם פועל נגזר מהזיז שוכבים [ישעיה נו,ו] שפירושו בו מדברים דברי הבל  
 7 שאין בהם ממש כדברי המדברים בשינה דברי תהו והם שקוראים בלעז אילונא"ר}. ההזיה לשון הזיזים  
 8 ולשון מקרא הוא. ובישעיהו ע"ה הזיזים שוכבים אהבי לנום [שם]. וכן ואח אין לו [קהלת ד,ח] בכל כ"ד  
 9 ספרים והוא לשון תרדמה ושקריות כלומר תטרח לריק ולהבל.

10 [42] כאשר יטרחו אחרים רבים בזמננו זה והם כתות רבות שיתחברו למצוא עניינים ופירושים למאמרים אשר  
 11 לא כיון בהם אומרים כלומר שלא עלה על דעת המחבר. או יש לומר ויחברו בה כתות רבות יחברו ספרים.  
 12 אבל תהיה כוונתך לעולם ברוב המשלים ידיעת הכלל ודיי לך. ויהי אמרי שהוא משל כמי שהסיר הדבר  
 13 המבדיל בין הראות והנראה. ר"ל כמי שמסיר המסך והמחצה ורואה הרואה מה שרוצה לראות כלומר  
 14 יסיר ספיקו.  
 15 צוואה זה המאמר וכו'.

7 אילונא"ר] [ג אַוּלִינְג(ד?) אה ד אַוּלִי(נ?) טוה הח אילונא"ר ז איוליונאה ויצאתי בגי' | 8 ולשון ד + (?) | ובישעיהו]  
 בגדהזחט ובישעיהו | וכן ד ובן 9 | תטרח] בגוח הטרח

118 Cf. David Qimḥi, *Sefer ha-shorashim* (Venice: Cornelius Adelkind for Daniel Bomberg, 1546), 117

119 i.e. it is a *hapax legomenon*.

120 The verb used by ibn Tibbon, *leḥaber*, has two primary meanings: to associate, to come together, etc., and to compose texts. In the first sentence of this paragraph Salerno uses the verb in the reflexive tense ("associated with one another"; in that tense, it can only reflect the first sense of "association"), rewriting the original sentence from the *Guide* to suggest an alternative reading.

121 The difficulty here is establishing the proper meaning and object of the verb *leḥaber* in the context of an awkward syntactical construction. Salerno first rewrites the verb in a reflexive tense, thus changing its meaning and eliminating an unclear prepositional object. Then he suggests keeping the syntax as is, and gives a possible object for the preposition. An example for the use of this verb in both senses can be found in the last paragraph of the Epistle Dedicatory (Pines 4).

[43] *Instruction With Respect to This Treatise, etc. You must connect its chapters one with another, meaning “turn it and turn it again.”*<sup>122</sup> He intended the subject of a chapter to be [connected] to the subject of another chapter that is related to it. Understand the meaning of each chapter and you will fare well. *But also grasp each word that occurs in it in the course of the speech.* Know the interpretation of a word – whether it is equivocal, derivative or amphibolous – or its meaning and subject *even if that word doesn’t belong to the intention of the chapter*, that is, even if it may seem to you that the interpretation of a word is not necessary in view of the meaning of the chapter where it occurs. In any event, analyze it because *nothing has been mentioned out of its place, save with a view to explaining some matter in its proper place.* This means that even though that thing is not necessary in a given chapter, it is necessary for another passage in another chapter. Therefore, one should have *care to avoid failing to explain anything from it.*<sup>123</sup>

[44] *You therefore should not let your fantasies elaborate on what is said here, for that would hurt me and be of no use to yourself.* It seems this means one should not “rush to reply”<sup>124</sup> and pose objections, as his words would hurt the author and bring no benefit to himself. Unless the meaning of *let your fantasies elaborate* is elaborating on it according to opinion of those who have come before you, which you have received from others, and not investigate it deeply in order to understand. For you will seek {will be difficult [to find]} an interpretation based upon your earlier opinion. This seems to agree with our first interpretation, since it was said before *nor should he hasten to refute me.* The Rabbi would not admonish concerning the same thing twice in the same passage.

[45] *I adjure by God, etc. Not to explain to another anything in it,* meaning not to explain to another the secrets that he [Maimonides] has pointed out to be revealed, and not to widen the apertures of their filigree [of the apple of gold],<sup>125</sup> *save that which has been commented upon in the words of those who preceded me,* that alone is to be commented and nothing further. *Nor should he hasten to refute me, for that which he understood me to say might be contrary to my intention,* meaning, it is possible that he has followed through my views to the farthest extent and has introduced difficulties concerning something that he did not understand or comprehend, *he would thus harm me in return for my having wanted to benefit him.*

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<sup>122</sup> Mishnah, *Pirquei ’avot* 5.25.

<sup>123</sup> On contrasting views regarding the interpretation of this passage, see Joel L. Kraemer, “How (Not) to Read the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 32 (2006), 377–378, n90, 390, and Herbert Davidson, *Moses Maimonides: The Man and His Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 395.

<sup>124</sup> Mishnah, *Pirquei ’avot* 5:9.

16 [43] השב פרקיו זה על זה כלומ' הפך בה והפך בה [פרקי אבות ה.כו]. וכווין עינין זה הפרק על עינין פרק  
 17 אחר שהוא מעינינו. והבן עינינו שלזה ועינינו שלזה ויעלה בידך אז טוב. לא להעלות בידך גם כן מלה  
 18 שבאה בכלל הדברים. ודע ביאורה אם היא משותפת או מושאלת או מסופקת או מה טעמה ועינינה.  
 19 אע"פ שאינה מענין הפרק כלומ' אע"פי שיראה לך שאין צריך ביאורה לטעם הפרק שהיא בו. מכול מקום  
 20 תדקדק בה מפני שלא נאמ' בו דבר בזולת מקומו אלא לבאר עינין במקומו והטעם אע"פי שלא צריך  
 21 הדבר בפרק זה צריך הוא במקום אחר בפרק אחר; לפיכך ישמור אדם מלחסר ביאור דבר ממנו.

22 [44] ולא תרדפהו בזממך שתזיקני ולא תועיל עצמך. נארה שרוצה לומ' שלא יהא אדם נבהל להשיב  
 23 ולהקשות כי זיק בדיבורו למחבר ולעצמו לא יועיל. או שמא טעם תרדפהו בזממך--תרדוף אותו לפי  
 24 הדעת שקדם לך שקיבלת מאחרים ולא העמיק להבין מה שבו. כי יבקש {יקשה} בעיניך לפירוש מדעתך  
 25 הקדום. וזה נראה יותר מן הראשון כי לפנים יאמר ולא יהרוס להשיב. ולא היה מזהיר הרב מדבר אחד  
 26 שני פעם במקום אחד.

1 [45] ואני משביע בה' וכו'. שלא יפרש ממנו דבר לזולתו. רוצה לומ' שלא יפרש לאחר הסודות שמציין לגלותן  
 2 ולא ירחיב נקבי משכיתן אלא מה שהוא מפורש בדברי מי שקדמני, וזה לבד יפרש ולא יותר. ולא יהרוס  
 3 להשיב שאפשר שיהיה מה שהבינו מדברי חילוף מה שרציתיו כלומ' אפשר שלא ירד לסוף דעתי ...  
 4 ויקשה קשיות על מה שלא הבין ולא השכיל, ויזיקני תחת רצותי להועילו.

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10 אחרים רבים] ד רבים אחרים | 12 ודיי] ד ודי | 13 [והמחצה] בהות והמחלה ד והמחיצה ז חסר | 17 שלזה/שלוה] בנר של זה/של זה | לא] ב אלא | מלה] ט חסר | 18 ועינינה] | בגדהחטט או עינינה | 23 בדיבורו ד בדברו | 24 יבקש] ד יקשה לפירוש] בגדהחטט לפרוש לגלותן] ז לגלותו

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125 The use of the notion of “widening the apertures” to mean a gradual revelation of the “inner meaning in accordance with the scientific progress of the community” was introduced by Samuel ibn Tibbon, and became part of the vocabulary of commentaries on the *Guide*. Robinson, “Ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary*,” ¶22, p.233 n118.

[46] The generation which shortly preceded the present one did not observe all this, nor did it even occur to them, for they *harmed* him [Maimonides] *in return for his having wanted to benefit, and they repayed evil for good*. They did not pay attention to his saying the passage *if he finds nothing in this Treatise that might be of use to him in any respect, he should think of it as not having been composed at all. If anything in it, according to his way of thinking, appears to be in some way harmful, he should interpret it ... in order to pass a favorable judgment*. Rather, they did not judge him with a “favorable judgment,” condemned his books and despised his pleasant statements, all of which are correct and upright for every learned individual. Undoubtedly, therefore, they will have to “answer for it at the time of the divine judgment.”<sup>126</sup> *For as we are enjoined to act toward our vulgar ones in this way – to judge all with a “favorable judgment” – all the more should this be so with respect to our erudite ones and Sages of the Mishnah and Talmud. I know that, from among men generally, every beginner, etc. A perfect man, on the other hand, etc. But those who are confused and whose brains have been polluted by opinions that are not true,*<sup>127</sup> meaning their brain has become impure and mixed with false opinions. The meaning is that they have conceived opinions that are the opposite of the truth.<sup>128</sup>

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**126** b. *Shabbat* 96b. A possible reference to Maimonidean controversies; see last footnote for this paragraph.

**127** Pines: *false opinions*. However, ibn Tibbon’s text has “opinions that are not true.”

**128** Salerno’s aim may have been the anti-Maimonideans who condemned the *Guide* at the time of the second Maimonidean controversy beginning in the 1230s. Unlike France and Spain, however, there was no real Maimonidean controversy in Italy. There, instead, we have intense philosophical and hermeneutical activity around Hebrew texts, at times in collaboration with Christian scholars, as well as translations to and from Latin, which accelerate in the 14th and 15th centuries. The literature on the controversy is extensive; for an introduction, see Bernard Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: the Career and Controversies of the Ramah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982),

5 [46] וכל זה לא שמרו אנשי הדור שקדמו לפנינו מעט, ולא עלה על לבם כיהזיקותחת רצות ולהועיל וישלמו  
 6 רעה תחת טובה. ולא שמו לב לדבריו באמרו ואם לא ימצא בו דבר שיועילהו בשום צד יחשבהו כאלו לא  
 7 חובר כלל. ואם יראה לו בו שום הפסד כפי מחשבתו יפרשהו וידין לכף זכות. אלא דנהו בזולת כף זכות  
 8 ויגנו את ספריו ויבזו את מאמריו הנעימים אשר כולם נכוחים וישרים לכל משכיל. אכן בלי ספק עתידיים  
 9 ליתן את הדין. כמו שחיוב עלינו בחוק המונינו לדון את הכל לכף זכות. וכל שכן בחוק ידועינו והם חכמי  
 10 המשנה והתלמוד. ואני יודע כי כל מתחיל וכו'. אמנם השלם מן האנש" וכו'. אמנם המבולבלים שמוחם  
 11 מזהם בדיעות שאינם אמתיות כלומ' שהמוח שלהם מטומא מעורב בדיעות שקריות. והטעם שעלו בידם  
 12 דיעות שהם הפך האמת.

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5 שקדמו לפנינו] ט חסר | 8 עתידיים] ז חסר | 10 אמנם השלם] ה אחד גם השלם

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61–74. Although the earliest Maimonideans in Italy (Jacob Anatoli, his son Anatolio, and Moses of Salerno) were defenders of the study of the *Guide*, by the next generation there was a public dispute concerning its interpretation between Zeraḥiah Ḥen and Hillel of Verona. On the background of the spread of Maimonideanism in Italy in relation to Anatoli and Moses of Salerno, see *Glossary*, 31–55; Moritz Güdemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der Juden in Italie während des Mittelalters* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1884), 2:167–170. Güdemann translates two further passages from Moses of Salerno's commentary that are directed against the opponents of the *Guide* (pp. 319–320); for the original, see ms. Munich cod. heb 370, ff. 64r, 214v. See also Isaac Barzilai, *Between Reason and Faith: Anti-Rationalism in Italian Jewish Thought, 1250–1650* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 19–27, and on Zeraḥiah Ḥen and Hillel of Verona, see Ravitzky, 269–292.

[47] [They] *hold themselves*, in their own regard, *to be men of speculation* [and] they *will flee from many of its chapters*, just as they have fled from all that has been mentioned here. *Indeed these chapters will be very difficult for them to bear because they cannot apprehend their meaning and also because they would be led by the chapters of this Treatise to recognize the falseness of the counterfeit money in their hands.* In other words, by means of this Treatise one can examine the errors and counterfeit money that they have, *which is their treasure and fortune held ready for future calamities*, that is, according to their opinion. *God knows*, etc. *None of them has been set down in any book*<sup>129</sup> *in our religious community in these times of Exile*, for it is widely known that since the time of the closing of the Talmud none in Israel has come to compose **acceptable words** [Eccl 12:10]<sup>130</sup> with respect to these things and to proclaim to us something about them which will enlighten the eyes of our religious community.<sup>131</sup> Therefore Israel has forgotten all science; and had the holy Fathers not written the Oral Torah and set it down in writing, we would lack it as well.<sup>132</sup>

[48] *To sum up: I am the man*, etc. and *could find no other device by which to teach a truth* for which we can demonstrate, meaning I cannot find a way to teach *other than befits an address to a single virtuous man* and give him satisfaction *while it will not be appropriate to ten thousand ignoramuses* who would not be any more satisfied with it. *I am he who prefers to address that same virtuous individual and I do not heed the blame of those many creatures.* That is, should they blame his words he will not feel their spite. *For I claim to liberate the virtuous man from that into which he has sunken* meaning from the doubts that he has and which perplex him. *And I shall guide him ... until he becomes perfect and finds rest.* For as long as his knowledge is enmeshed with doubt and perplexed he is sick of a strong illness and needs a doctor who will heal him. Their [sic] healer is the sage who heals the illness of opinions.

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**129** Ibn Tibbon adds here “other than the present [book]” (*zulati zeh*). It is found neither in Moses of Salerno’s quotation nor in Pines.

**130** In the Epistle Dedicatory, Maimonides writes to Joseph ben Judah that *your noble soul demanded of you to find out acceptable words* [Eccl 12:10], Pines 4.

**131** This notion is embryonic in the *Guide* but more fully developed in the introduction to Samuel ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*: “After the sages of the Talmud ... only very few were moved to compose a book or write a word about these sciences ... then God saw the poverty of knowledge in His nation, its great ignorance in everything with respect to wisdom, and He raised up a redeemer, a wise and knowing man ... Moses, the Servant of God, the son of the great sage Rabbi Maimon.” Robinson, “Ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary*,” ¶20, p. 230 [English section].

13 [47] ויחשבו בעצמם שהם בעלי עיון המה יברחו מפרקים רבים ממנו כאשר ברחו מכולו אלו הנכזרים  
 14 {הנכזרים}. ומה מאד יקשו עליהם מפני שלא ישיגו להם עניין גם בעבור שמתבאר מהם מפרקי זה  
 15 המאמר פסלות הזיופים אשר בידיהם כלומ' יבחן מכח המאמר הזה הטעיות והזיוף אשר אתם, אשר  
 16 הוא סגולותם וממונם המוכן לצרותיהם כלומ' לדעתם. והשם יתבר' ידוע וכו'. לא חובר בהם כלל ספר...  
 17 באומתינו בזמן הגלות הזה. כי ידוע כי מימי חתימת התלמוד לא קם איש בישראל לחבר דברי חפץ  
 18 [קהלת יב, י]. ר"ל מדברים הללו להגידנו דבר מהם שיאיר עיני אומתינו. לפיכך נשתכחה מישראל כל  
 19 חכמה ואילולי שאבות הקדושים כתבו תורה שבעל פה ושמוה בכתב גם ממנה היינו חסירין.

20 [48] סוף דבר אני האיש וכו'. ולא אמצא תחבולה ללמד אמת שבא עלינו מופת כלומ' שאיני יכול למצוא דרך  
 21 איך אלמד אלא כשיאות לאחר מעולה ויהנה בו ולא יאות לעשרת אלפים סכלים שלא יהנו ממנו יותר.  
 22 אני בוחר לאמרו לאותו יחיד המעולה ולא ארגיש בגנות העם הרב ההוא. כלומ' אם יגנו דבריו לא ירגיש  
 23 בגנותם. וארצה להציל המעולה האחד ממה שנשקע בו רוצה המספיקות [מהספיקות] שיש בידו והוא  
 24 נבוך בהם. ואורה אותו עד שישלם וירפא. כי כל זמן שדעתו מסופק ונבוך הוא חולה חלי כבד וצריך  
 25 לרופא שירפאהו. והרופא שלהם[!] הוא החכם שמרפא חולי הדיעות.

13 מכולו | ג מכולם ז מכולן | הנכזרים | גד הנכזרים | 15 יבחן | ז יבחו | 18 להגידנו | ז להגדנו | 19 ממנה | ז ממנו | היינו | ז היו  
 21 אלמד | ז אלמדו | 23 בו | ז חסר | המספיקות | בגדהוזה מהספיקות

132 It is significant that Salerno mentions that Israel has forgotten all science (rather than never having learned it). There was, indeed, a notion that all the sciences had originated with the Jews and were subsequently borrowed by other peoples (Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, etc). According to this view, then, philosophy or any other science cannot be called a "foreign science" since it was Jewish from its inception, and it was the exile that caused the Jews to forget it. Among the commentators, versions of this myth can be found in ibn Falaquera, ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne. Cf. *'Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶2; Moses of Narbonne, Prologue, ¶3, and Abraham Melamed, *The Myth of the Jewish Origins of Science and Philosophy* (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 2010) [Hebrew].

## Introduction

[49] *Causes that account for the contradictory or contrary statements to be found in any book, etc.* The meaning of *contradiction* is two things that contradict each other. The *first and the second* [causes] had been explained by the Rabbi the teacher, and they are to be found in the Mishnah and the Talmud. The explanation lies before us and it is well known, and does not need a long explanation.<sup>133</sup>

[50] *The third cause. Not all the statements in question are to be taken in their external sense; some are to be taken in their external sense while others are parables.* For example **there shall no man see me, and live** [Exod 33:20] and **I saw also the Lord** [Isa 6:1]. The first is clearly to be taken in its simple sense since God is not apprehended with the eyes.<sup>134</sup> The second is a *mashal* from the parables of prophecy, for what [Isaiah] saw and apprehended in a vision of prophecy was actually seen.<sup>135</sup> In other words, he saw a created form to which God was likened; he did not see the true essence of God, **there shall no man see me, and live**. Thus one might think that there is a contradiction between them, but there is no contradiction. *Alternatively, two .... propositions may both be parables and if they are taken in their external sense may contradict one another.* For example, **We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts and I am a wall, and my breasts like towers** [Song 8:8,10]. According to their external sense they contradict one another, but according to their inner meaning they are neither contradictory nor contrary. For **she hath no breasts** means, according to its inner meaning, that the end of her youth has not yet come and she has yet to reach her adulthood, such as the meaning of **your time was the time of love ... thy breasts are fashioned** [Ezek. 16:8,7]. But the verse **I am a wall, and my breasts like towers** means that she has precious possessions and they are the two Torahs – the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.<sup>136</sup>

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**133** On the subject of contradictions, see Yair Lorberbaum, “On Contradictions, Rationality, Dialectics, and Esotericism in Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 55:4 (2002), 711–750.

**134** In I:54, the verse is interpreted as God’s reply to Moses’ request to apprehend the divine essence, and in a similar manner in I:64. Pines 123–128, 156–157.

**135** In II:45 the verse occurs in the description of the seventh degree of prophecy, which corresponds to the dream of prophecy where the prophet sees God addressing him. In III:6 Maimonides compares

## 1 הקדמה

2 [49] סבות הסתירה או ההפך הנמצא בספר מן הספרים וכו'. פי' [רוש] הסתיר [ה] דבר שסותר זה את זה.  
3 וכבר הסבה הראשונה והשנית בארם הרב המורה ז"ל והם נמצאים במשנה ובתלמוד והביאור לפנינו  
4 והוא ידוע ואינו צריך לפירוש ארוך.

5 [50] והסבה השלישית היות המאמרים ההם אינם כולם כפי פשוטם. אבל יהיה קצתם על פשוטם וקצתם  
6 משל. כמו כי לא יראני האדם וחי [שמות לג, ב] עם ואראה את ה' [ישעיה ו, א]. שהראשון בלי ספק הוא  
7 כפשוטו שהרי יתב' לא ישיגוהו עינים. והשני משל ממשלי הנבואה כי מה שהשיג וראה במראה הנבואה  
8 ראה. ור"ל שראה צורה ברואה שהומשל הבורא יתב' אליה ולא ראה את אמתת השם ממש, כי לא יראני  
9 האדם וחי. הרי שיחשב שיש ביניהם סתירה ואין שם סתירה. או יהיו שתי הגזירות יחד ... לפי הנראה  
10 משלים. וכשינשאו על פשוטיהם יהיו סותרות זה את זה. כגון אחות לנו קטנה ושדיים אין לה עם אני  
11 חומה ושדי כמגדלות [שיר השירים ח, י]. שכפי פשוטיהם סותרות זו את זו. אמנם כפי התוך שבהם  
12 אין שם סתירה ולא הפך. כי ושדיים אין לה בא לומ' כפי התוך שבו שעדיין לא הגיע הקץ שלה בקטנה  
13 שלא הגיעה לפירקה, כענין והנה עתך עת דורים שדיים נבנו [יחזקאל טז, ח-ז]. ופסוק אני חומה ושדי  
14 כמגדלות בא לומ' שיש זכויות גדולות בידה והם שתי תורות—תורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל פה.

5 ההם ז חסר | 7 כפשוטו | בגדהוחס בפשוטו | 11 זו את זו | בגדהוחס זה את זה | 12 התוך | בגדהוחס התוך | בקטנה | ד  
בקטנה | 14 זכיות | ד זכות

Isaiah's summary vision to Ezekiel's detailed vision. The verse is taken as possible evidence that "the contemporaries of Isaiah had no need of his expounding those details to them, it being sufficient for them that he said: And I saw the Lord" (Pines 427).

136 See b. *Pesaḥim* 87a; *Seder Eliyahu Rabba* ch. 20; *Shir ha-shirim Rabba* 4:12. Ezra ben Solomon of Gerona interprets the breasts as the two Torahs, written and oral, in *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, ed. and trans. Seth Brody (Kalamazoo, Mich: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), 141.

[51] *The fourth cause. There is a single proviso that, because of a ... necessity has not been explicitly stated in its proper place.* There seems to be contradiction between them because the proviso has not been explained in the passage. Once the proviso has been made explicit it will then be known that there is no contradiction. An example is the verse **for the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation** [Psalms 132:13] while another verse says **this house hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it** [Jer 32:31].<sup>137</sup>

[52] *Thereupon they explain that a proviso is lacking in the statement of the subject,*<sup>138</sup> as in the passage “the first occurred before [Solomon] married Pharaoh’s daughter and the second occurred after he married Pharaoh’s daughter.”<sup>139</sup> *Or the two subjects may differ.* This notion was also explained by the Rabbi before us: the subjects of statements differ from one another; they are distinct from one another and their topics are different, and one says the opposite of the other as it was said: *Solomon ...is it not enough for you that your words contradict the words of your father, but that they contradict one another [as well]? Cases of [these two things] are frequent in the sayings of the Sages, etc.*<sup>140</sup>

[53] *The fifth cause arises from the need of teaching and making someone understand. For there may be a certain obscure matter that is difficult to conceive. One has to mention it or to take it as a premise in explaining something that is easy to conceive.* The interpretation is that this regards a very obscure subject that is difficult for a teacher to explain and for a student to learn, due to the trouble in conceiving it and the obscurity of its explanation. The teacher must speak of it at first superficially, not in depth, or he must introduce a premise in order to facilitate its learning. *One always begins with what is easier and short ... using any means that occur to him or gross speculation. He will not undertake at the beginning to state the matter as it truly is in exact terms, but rather will leave it so in accord to the listener’s imagination.* This means that his only intention in the beginning is only to put his words in sequence so that his students may understand some of the matter.

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<sup>137</sup> The verse actually reads “this city.” The contradiction between the two verses is apparent but not factual. It seems that the provisos are Ps 132:12: “If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore,” and Jer 32:30: “For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord.”

<sup>138</sup> Pines 19, line 23–24.

15 [51] והסבה הרביעית שיהיה שם בעינין תנאי אחד שלא פורש במקומו להכרח. ויראה ביניהם סתירה מפני  
 16 שלא נתפרש שם התנאי במקומו. ובהיגלות התנאי יודע שאין שם סתירה כגון זה שאמרו כת' אחד אומ'  
 17 כי בחר ה' בציון איזה למושב לו [תהלים קלב, יג] וכתב אחר אומר כי על אפי ועל חמתי היה הבית הזה  
 18 למיזם אשר בנו אותה [ירמיה לב, לא].

19 [52] ואחר כן בארו שהענין חסר תנאי ואמרו כאן קודם שנשא בת פרעה וכאן לאחר שנשא בת פרעה. או  
 20 יהיו שני הנושאים מתחלפים. גם זה בארו הרב לפנינו והנוש [אים] הם נושאי המאמרים מתחלפים, כלומ'  
 21 שזה אחר מזה ודיעותם מתחלפות שזה אומ' חילוף דברי זה כמו שאמרו שלמה, לא דיך שדבריד סותרין  
 22 דברי אביך אלא שהן סותרין זה את זה? ומשני דברים הללו יש הרבה בדברי רבותינו ז"ל וכו'.

1 [53] והסבה החמישית הכרח הלימוד וההבנה. והוא שיהיה ענין סתום קשה לציירו, יצטרך לזכרו או ללקחו  
 2 הקדמה בביאור ענין קל הציור. פי[רוש] כשיבוא ענין עמוק מאוד שקשה על המלמד לבארו ועל  
 3 התלמיד ללמדו מפני כובד ציורו וסתימת ביאורו. צריך למלמד ההוא שידבר בו בראשונה בקלות לא  
 4 בעומק או יביאנו הקדמה כדי שיקל בציורו. תהיה ההתחלה לעולם קלה וקצרה ועל אי זה דרך שיזדמן  
 5 ובעיון גס. ולא ידקדק מתחילה באמתת הענין אבל יונח כפי דמיון השומע רוצה לומר שכוונתו לא תהיה  
 6 בתחילה רק להסדיר אמריו שיבינו תלמידיו קצת.

15 בעינין] **בדהחוט** בעינינים 16 [יודע] ד יודע [כת' ז כתוב 19 תנאי] ד חסר 20 גם ... מתחלפים] **נח** חסר  
 [זה] ב +גמ' (?) [הרב] ז הר"ר [לפנינו] ב לענינו [והנוש] **בדהוט** והנושאים 22 דברים] **בד** ענינים

**139** b. *Sanhedrin* 21b. The context of the passage is a discussion on the apparent contradiction between 2 Chr 9:20 ("Silver counted for nothing in Solomon's days") and 1 Kgs 10:27 ("The king made silver plentiful in Jerusalem as stones"). The former precedes Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter and the latter follows it.

**140** b. *Shabbat* 30a; Pines 19:25–27.

[54] In another place he will then elaborate on the explanation of *that obscure matter*, *state it* and *explain it as it truly is* and expose its true depth. Those things that he obfuscated at first he will reveal now, and explain the truth [of the matter] through them. If they are contrary to how they were [presented] at first or if there is a contradiction between them – it is not truly so.<sup>141</sup> What he wrote at first was done to enable him to introduce his words and make them understood, and it was necessary to abbreviate and facilitate. But now he has widened the apertures of *that obscure* filigree [of the apple of gold] *and stated it in exact terms*, and made known that the matter is not as described at first. The requirements of teaching led him to speak in this way.

[55] The Christian scholar told me that Aristotle did something similar in many passages of his books. In his logical works he said one thing and in his other books, meaning his books on natural science, he explained the opposite of what he wrote in logical works.<sup>142</sup> I found the same to be true with regards to the books of our Master the Rabbi. For instance, in the *Book of Knowledge* he stated that the holy *ḥayiot* are the separate forms. He counted them as forming the ten rows of ministering angels and called them the “separate intellects” in that book. They are separate from matter, that is, they are not corporeal. But in the beginning of the third part of the *Guide*, in the chapters dealing with *ma’aseh merkavah*, he wrote that the holy *ḥayiot* are the stars and their spheres, as anyone who searches it will find. The spheres and their stars are undoubtedly material, even though their matter is not [identical to] ours.<sup>143</sup>

[56] The Rabbi our Rabbi likewise counted the *’ofanim* in the ten rows of angels.<sup>144</sup> But it is known that the *’ofanim* are the four elements; rather, he certainly spoke there in a general way.<sup>145</sup> I noticed it further in the words the Rabbi our Rabbi. In the first part [of *Guide*], chapter 70, he wrote that God moves the most superior sphere, but in chapter four of the second part he said that the First Intellect moves the most superior sphere.<sup>146</sup> The truth of the matter is that in the first part he wrote in a general way and in the second part he widened the apertures of the filigree [of the apple of gold].<sup>147</sup> He explained the subject and its meaning and [made] it clearer.

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**141** That is, a contradiction between the first and the second explanations of the same matter is only apparent and not factual.

**142** A well-known example are the differing accounts of substance in *Categories* and *Metaphysics*. The presentation in *Categories* is relatively brief and in straightforward language, while in *Metaphysics* it is more complex. For a recent attempt at harmonization, see Michael V. Wedin, *Aristotle’s Theory of Substance: the “Categories” and “Metaphysics Zeta”* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

**143** This paragraph quotes *Sefer ha-madda’*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah* 2:¶3, ¶7; for the description of the *ḥayiot*, see III:2–4, Pines 417–425. The matter and disposition of the spheres is described in I:72, II:2 (Pines 184–194, 252–254); see also I:76 (Pines 228): “matter” is an equivocal term when applied to sublunar existents and heavenly spheres.

**144** *Sefer ha-madda’*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah* 2: ¶7.

7 [54] ובמקום אחר יאריך בביאור הדבר הסתום הוא וידקדק בו ויבאר אמתתו ויגלה את עומקו כאשר  
 8 הוא על האמת. והדברים שסתם בראשונה יגלה שם בזו האחרונה שבהם יבאר האמת. ואם הם הפך  
 9 הראשונה או יש ביניהם סתירה ואיננה כי מה שכתב בראשונה עשה כן כדי שיוכלו להכנס ולהבין דבריו  
 10 והוצרך לקצר להקל. ובאחרונה הרחיב נקבי המשכית הסתום הוא ודיקדק באמתתו והודיע שאין העניין  
 11 כאשר אמר תחלה, כי הכרח הלימוד הביאו לומר ככה.

12 [55] והחכם הנוצרי אמ' לי שכיוצא בזה עשה ארסטוטליס בספריו פעמים רבות, כי במלאכת ההיגיון אמ'  
 13 עניין אחד ובשאר ספריו ר"ל ספרי הטבע באר הפך מה שכתב שם בהגיון. וכן מצא[תי] גם אני בספרי  
 14 אדונינו הרב כי הנה בספר המדע אמ' שחיות הקודש הם צורות נבדלות ומנה אותם במניין עשר שורות  
 15 שלמלאכי השרת שבספר זה קראם שכלים נפרדים. והם נבדלים מהחומר ר"ל אינם גשמים. ובחלק  
 16 שלישי שלמורה בתחילתו בפרקי מעשה מרכבה כתב שחיות הקודש הם הכוכבים וגלגליהם, כאשר  
 17 ימצאו המחפש בו. והגלגלים וככביהם הם מחומר בלי ספק, ואם איננו חומר שלנו.

18 [56] וכן מנה הרב רבינו את האופנים מהעשר שורות שלמלאכים. וידוע שהאופנים הם הארבע יסודות אלא  
 19 בוודאי שם דיבר דרך כללי. וכן ראיתי עוד בדברי הרב רבינו שבחלק הראשון [זן] פרק ע' כתב שהאל  
 20 יתברך הוא מניע הגלגל העליון. ובפרק ד' מהחלק השיני אמר שהשכל הראשון הוא מניע הגלגל העליון.  
 21 והאמת ששם בחלק הראשון כתב דרך כלל ובחלק השני הרחיב נקבי המשכית. ובאר הדבר והעניין  
 22 יותר מבוואר.

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8 על האמת] ד על העומקו | 9 ביניהם סתירה] ז סתירה ביניהם | 15 שלמלאכי] ד של מלאכי | והם ... גשמים] ד חסר  
 [ובחלק] ד ובפרק | 16 שלמורה] ג של מורה | 17 ימצאון] ד ימצאנו | 18–19 וכן ... כללי] ב חסר | 18 מהעשר... שהאופנים]  
 ז חסר

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145 The 'ofanim are identified as the four elements within Maimonides' description of the *ma'aseh merkavah*, III:2–4, but he also mentions the interpretation by Jonathan b. Uziel of the 'ofanim as corresponding to the spheres (III:4). As for a description of the four elements, see I:72, II:19, Pines 184–194, 302–312. The contradictions between the *Guide of the Perplexed* and the *Mishneh Torah* that Moses of Salerno mentions here are discussed by Gad Freudenthal, "Four Observations on Maimonides' Four Celestial Globes (*Guide* 2:9–10)," in *Maimonides: Conservatism, Originality, Revolution*, ed. Aviezer Ravitzky, vol. 2: *Thought and Innovation* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2008), 499–527 [Hebrew].  
 146 Cf. I:70 (Pines 172), and II:4 (Pines 258).

147 Alternatively, it might be said that in I:70 Maimonides was speaking of the distant cause and in II:4 of the proximate cause.

[57] *The sixth cause. The contradiction is concealed and becomes evident only after many premises. The greater the number of premises needed to make the contradiction evident, the more concealed it is.* The Rabbi our Rabbi means that at first no contradiction can be seen between the two propositions; it is neither indicated nor explained. He means that you can see the contradiction only when the [propositions] are presented with premises. That is, we place a premise with every single proposition, and *if each proposition is considered separately – a true premise being joined to it and the necessary conclusion drawn – and this is done to every conclusion – a true premise being joined to it and the necessary conclusion drawn* from them.

[58] *After many syllogisms the outcome of the matter will be that the two final conclusions are contradictory or contrary to each other. That is the kind of thing that escapes the attention of the author.* I asked the Christian scholar regarding this and he gave me a *mashal* involving first matter and the material intellect, which are the two propositions. It is clear that on first thought there is no contradiction between the two, as first matter is prepared to receive all the forms appropriate to the creature,<sup>148</sup> and the material intellect is also prepared to receive all the forms according to the intellect [of that creature].<sup>149</sup> However, if we should build a proposition {propizio}<sup>150</sup> concerning that matter: it is under contradiction and contrariness but not prepared {sojjetto}<sup>151</sup> for contradiction and contrariness. Let us then join to this proposition a valid premise. It is that no {none} contradiction and contrary can be received together.<sup>152</sup> It follows from them that first matter will not receive two contraries together.<sup>153</sup>

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**148** Cf. I:28: “Now a transparent body receives all the colors in succession just because it lacks a color of its own. In this it resembles first matter, which in respect of its true reality lacks all forms and on this account is capable of receiving all forms in succession.” Pines 59–61.

**149** The material intellect was said to be a disposition analogous to matter in its potentiality and readiness to receive forms. There was disagreement on whether it was a natural, innate “capacity of receiving forms and thoughts” (Alexander of Aphrodisias, early ibn Rushd), or whether it was, combined with the intellect *in actu*, “separate from the body, imperishable, and not coming into existence” (Themistius, late ibn Rushd). Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Commentary on “De Intellectu,”* 106.19–107.15 (pp.46–47); Themistius, *Paraphrase of “De Anima”* 108.28 (p.116, and n175), in *Two Greek Aristotelian Commentators on the Intellect*, trans. Frederic M. Schroeder and Robert B. Todd (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990).

23 [57] והסבה הששית התעלמות הסתירה והיותה בלתי מתבארת אלא אחר הקדמות רבות. וכל מה שיצטרך  
 24 להראותה אל הקדמות יותר היא יותר נעלמת. רוצה לומר הרב רבינו שבתחילת שני הגורות אין סתירה  
 25 נראית בהם ולא נכרת ולא יתבאר. ר"ל שתראה סתירה רק אחר שישימו לשתיהן הקדמות, כלומר  
 26 לכל גזרה וגזרה ישימו הקדמה: וכשתלקח כל גזירה מהן ותחובר אליה הקדמה צודקת ויולד מהן מה  
 27 שיתחייב וכן יעשה בכל תולדה תחובר אליה הקדמה צודקת ויולד מהן מה שיתחייב.

1 [58] יגיע העניין אחר הקשות רבות אל סתירה בין שתי התולדות האחרונות או הפך ויעלם זה מן המחבר.  
 2 ועל זה שאלתי אל החכם הנוצרי והביא לי משל מהחומר הראשון [ן] עם השכל החמרי שהם שתי גזרות.  
 3 ויראה בתחלת מחשבה שאין ביניהם סתירה. וזה כי החומר הראשון מוכן לקבל כל הצורות כפי ההוייה.  
 4 והשכל החמרי גם כן מוכן לקבל כל הצורות כפי השקילה. אמנם אם נבוא לעשות גזרה {פרופיציאו} והיא  
 5 מחמר הזה הוא תחת הסתירה וההפך לא {סוייטו} מוכן לסתירה ולהפך. ונחבר אליה הקדמה צודקת  
 6 והיא כלום {שום} סתירה והפך אינו מקבל יחד; יולד מהם שהחומר הראשון לא יקבל שני הפכים יחד.

25 [אחר] גדהחוט אחד

5 מחמר ד החמר ד + {פורפישיו סוייטו} | תחת ז {פורפציאו סוייטא} | לא ... ולהפך ב {לא ... ולהפך} | 6 הפכים | בגדהחוט  
 הפנים ד + {ריגטיבו} ז + {ריגיטיבו}

150 The marginal note is in a different hand. Cf. *Glossary*, 192 (#91).

151 nose'.

152 In *Metaphysics* 4.4 we read that the one and same thing cannot hold contrary properties at the same time. This is also the basis for Gersonides' criticism of ibn Rushd's thesis that the material intellect is identical to the Agent Intellect. *Wars of the Lord*, 1:77–80.

153 Cf. Aristotle, *On generation and corruption*, Book II:1–3.

[59] We might also form a proposition concerning the intellect. It is that the intellect is prepared {ricettivo}<sup>154</sup> to receive two notions from two contraries together. Let us then join to this proposition a correct premise. It is that knowledge of contraries is one [single idea]. It will then result {sale oi bene la conlcusione[sic]}<sup>155</sup> that the intellect receives two contraries in the same instance of reception, since it receives both within the same idea. Therefore, the intellect receives two contraries together. This is a proof that the second [proposition] contradicts the first or that it is contrary to it, since after the syllogisms the matter came to an explicit and clear contradiction. It is well known that first matter and the material intellect are not the same, as they seemed to be in their two initial propositions.<sup>156</sup> Rather, they are quite different in this area.

[60] *The seventh cause, concerning the constraint of very deep subjects where it is necessary to conceal some parts and to disclose others*, etc. Examples of this cause are concealed from me; I mean an adequate *mashal* so that you<sup>157</sup> will be able to learn from it, that is, from the power of the *mashal*. It was also concealed from my teachers. For this reason, I set this part aside until God will enlighten the eyes of his servant.

[61]<sup>158</sup> And I, Isaiah his son, asked a scholar concerning this cause, and he revealed to me a few of its secrets. He told me the following: You know that this *seventh cause* is mentioned by the Rabbi as sharing with the *fifth* in the contradictions and the divergences in his book; that is its meaning.<sup>159</sup> You know that every scholar never ignores the pedagogical method in every instance, and its principle is to begin with what is easy, since every introduction is difficult, as it is mentioned in the fifth cause and according to the explanation by our honorable teacher and Rabbi your father earlier in this passage. There is no distinction between this seventh cause and the fifth cause, except for one single point; it is a great and awesome secret. It is forbidden to explain this face to face except to *the remnant whom the Lord calls* [Joel 3:5].<sup>160</sup> A fortiori [it is forbidden] to expound it in writing, and all the more so to cite a *mashal* from Scripture.

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<sup>154</sup> Translating *mukhan*, also translated in an anonymous glossary as “apprettato” (=apprestato, ready/prepared). *Glossary*, 446, 461.

<sup>155</sup> i.e. “the conclusion will then come into being.” Cf. Rigo, “Per un’identificazione,” 114 n237. “Conlcusione” is a metathesis (=“conclusion”).

<sup>156</sup> The two propositions to which Salerno refers are that first matter and the material intellect are both ready to receive all forms, and hence are seemingly identical in that respect; following the proof it emerges that they are indeed not identical. First matter is not able to receive two contraries simultaneously (e.g. it cannot be simultaneously hot and cold), but that is not the case of the material intellect, since one can hold in his mind two contraries at the same time because they may be contained within the same item or instance of knowing (e.g. knowledge of “temperature” encompasses both hot and cold).

7 [59] וכשנעשה גזרה מצד השכל והוא שהשכל מוכן {ריגיטיבו} לקבל שתי דיעות משני הפכים יחד. ונחבר  
 8 אליה הקדמה צודקת והיא ידיעת ההפכים אחת היא. יעלה {סלי אני ביני לקוסיאוני} בידינו לבסוף  
 9 שהשכל מקבל שני הפכים בקבלה אחת בעבור כי בדיעה אחת מקבל זו וזו, אם כן השכל מקבל שני  
 10 הפכים יחד. הרי ראית שזו האחרונה סותרת לראשונה או היא הפך ממנה. שהרי הגיע העניין אחרי  
 11 ההקשות אל סתירה גלוייה מבוראת. ונודע כי החומר הראשון והשכל החמרי אינם שווים כאשר יראה  
 12 תחילה משתי הגזרות שלהם. אבל רחוקים זה מזה בעניין.

13 [60] והסיבה השביעית הכרח הדברי' בעניין עמוקים ... יצטרך להעלים קצת ענייניהם וגלות קצתם וכו'.  
 14 הסיבה הזו נעלמו משליה ממנה ר"ל להביא משל נאות עליה כדי שתבוננו ממנו ר"ל מכח המשל. גם מעיני  
 15 מלמדיי נעלמה ולזה הנחתי חלק הנה עד שיאיר השם את עיני עבדו.  
 16 [ביאור על פי ישעיה בן משה מסלרנו]

17 [61] ואני ישעיה בנו שאלתי על הסיבה הזו השביעית לחכם אחד. והוא גילה לי מעט מנסתריה. וכך אמ' לי  
 18 כבר ידעת שזו הסיבה השביעית היא אשר זכר הרב שתופה עם החמישית לפי סתירות ספרו וחלופי  
 19 הדברים בו, וזה ענינה. ידעת שכל משכיל לא יעלם ממנו דרך הלמוד בכל דבר ושראשיתו הוא להתחיל  
 20 בקלות, כי כל התחלות קשות כמו שזכר בסיבה החמישית וכפי מה שבאר בה כבוד מוריני ורבינו אביך  
 21 זלה"ה במקום הזה למעלה. ואין הפרש בין זו הסיבה השביעית ובין הסיבה ההיא החמישית, כי אם בעניין  
 22 אחד לבד. והעניין ההוא הוא סוד נשגב ונורא ולפרשו פה אל פה נאסר כי אם לשרידיים אשר ה' קורא  
 23 [יזאג, גה], קל וחומר לפרשו בכתב וקל וחומר להביא עליו משל מהכתובים.

7 וכשנעשה [בגדהחחט וכשעושה | 8 יעלה] גהוחט יפלה | 9 הפכים] ד + {סלי או ביני ל"א קונקלוסיא} ז + {סלי אור ביני ל"א קונל(?)קוסייוני} | 10 ראית] בגדהחחט ראה | 14 ממנה] בגדהחחט ממנו | שתבונן] ד שתבונן | 15 ולזה ... עבדו] ד חסר | 17 ואני...גילה לי] ב חסר | 21 הפרש] דהוחט מפרש | 22 נאסר] ד חסר | 23 קל וחומר/קל וחומר] ט ק"ו/ק"י

157 In the plural.

158 From ¶61 to ¶68 Moses of Salerno's son Isaiah, who edited the commentary, inserts an excursus regarding the seventh cause.

159 Preface to *Guide*, end: "Divergences that are to be found in this Treatise are due to the fifth cause and the seventh." Pines 20.

160 What Isaiah b. Moses of Salerno means by this verse is most likely Maimonides' interpretation in I:34: "As for the few solitary individuals that are 'the remnant whom the Lord calls,' the perfection, which constitutes the end to be aimed at, is realized for them only after the above-mentioned preliminary studies" (Pines 75). In the King James version of the Bible the prooftext is Joel 2:32.

[62] Nevertheless, because I found myself compelled by the power of love to reveal a *mashal* of [this cause], I will do so in a purposefully allusive manner.<sup>161</sup> Prepare yourself and do not make it understood to others, except those who are like you from among all those who see it. Take this modest portion **and keep her lest we become a laughingstock** [Gen. 38:23]. Should something be lacking, I will give you further explanations face to face.

[63] The hint for a *mashal* of this cause lies in the subject of the creation of man in the beginning, as it is mentioned that **male and female He created them** [Gen 1:27]. He called their names **Adam** on the day he created them. These matters are obscure: to know the form of the creation of man, and how he was formed “in the image of God and after his likeness” [cf. Gen 1:26–27].<sup>162</sup> There is no great secret like it in the Torah. Only a few of the sages of our Torah who received from the mouth of him who received from Moses understood this secret. A fortiori the philosophers did not understand it, and all the more so no other sage understands any of it.<sup>163</sup> Since it was necessary to hide the depth of this matter Moses needed to conceal some of its meaning. But because its external meaning was also necessary, from another perspective, he found it necessary to reveal some of it.

[64] He then introduced a premise concerning the creation [of man]. It is that he and his wife were created from dust together; the creation of Adam is identical to the creation of Eve. One is from dust as much as the other is from dust. It is thus written **male and female He created them** [Gen 1:27], which follows after **and God created man in his image** [Gen 1:27], and which comes after **in the image of God He created the man** [ha-'adam] [Gen 1:27]. Creation is indicated with the definite article – in which there is a secret – as mentioned by Abraham ibn Ezra in his commentary on the Torah, when he says “the definite article in ‘the man’ involves a secret.”<sup>164</sup> The discerning individual understands that this is the name of the species. A fool, although he believes everything, does not believe in this since he lacks the scales of the intellect to weigh with his mind and to discern; with respect to this subject he is an apostate and a heretic. His deficiency is counteracted by the scholars among his people who know the secret of man and the secret of the name of man.

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**161** On the expression “power of love,” see 'Imrei shefer (Jerusalem: Amnon Gros, 1999), 54. The idea of a connection to Abulafia is intriguing, since he taught the *Guide* in Southern Italy around the same time as Isaiah ben Moses of Salerno (his father passed away in 1279, and Abulafia taught in Messina from 1281 on).

**162** As Sara Klein-Braslavy points out, Maimonides' formulation “in the image of God and after his likeness” is a composite of Gen 1:26 and 1:27, which he devises for philosophical and theological purposes. Sara Klein-Braslavy, *Maimonides' Interpretation of the Adam Stories in Genesis: A Study in Maimonides' Anthropology* (Tel Aviv: Reuven Mas, 1987), 28–36 [Hebrew].

24 [62] ואמנם מפני שהכרחתני בכח האהבה לגלות עליה משל אעשה אותו ברצון ברמו. מוכן לך ולא יובן  
 25 לזולתך כי אם לדומה לך מכל מי שיראהו. וזה המעט **תקח לה פן נהיה לבו** [בראשית לח, כג]. ואם יחסר  
 26 אוסיף לך ביאור עליה פנים אל פנים בע"ה.

1 [63] ורמוז המשל עליה בעניין בריאת אדם כי בתחלה זכר אשר **זכר ונקבה בראם** [בראשית א, כז]. ויקרא את  
 2 שם **אדם** ביום הבראם. ואלה ענינים עמוקים להכיר צורת בריאת האדם ואיך נעשה בצלם ה' ובדמותו  
 3 [ע"פ בראשית א, כז-כז]. ואין סוד גדול כמוהו בתורה. ומעט מחכמי תורתנו המקובלים מפי מי שקבל  
 4 ממשה רע"ה יבינוהו. קל וחומר שלא יבינוהו הפילוסופים ועל אחת כמה וכמה שלא יבין ממנו דבר שום  
 5 חכם אחר. ומפני היות הסתר עומק העניין הכרחי הוצרך משה להעלים קצת עניינו ומפני שהיה גלוי  
 6 הכרחי גם כן מצד אחר הוצרך עוד לגלות קצתו.

7 [64] ושם על זה הקדמה מעתה על ברייתו ושנבראו הוא ואשתו מן העפר יחד בריית אדם שוה לבריית חוה.  
 8 מה זה מן העפר אף זו מן העפר. וזהו אמרו **זכר ונקבה ברא אותם** [בראשית א, כז]. אחר אמרו **בצלם ה'**  
 9 **ברא אותו** [שם] ואחר אמרו **ויברא ה' את האדם בצלמו** [שם]. בה"א היצירה היא שנקראת ה"א הידיעה  
 10 אשר יש לה סוד, כמו שזכר אבן עזרא ז"ל בפירוש חומש, באמרו ה"א האדם יש לו סוד והמבין יבין כי  
 11 זה שם המין. והפתי אם לכל דבר מאמין בא בזה לא מאמין כי אין לו מאזני שכל לשקול בדעתו ויבחין  
 12 והוא בזה אפיקורוס ומין ויהפוך מומו במשכילי עמו היודעים סוד אדם וסוד שמו.

2 ובדמותו] ה + {הגהה (?) סוד מעשה בראשית הוא סוד (?)} 41 קל וחומר] ט ק"ו 91 שנקראת] ד הנקראת 10 כמו ... סוד] ט חסר | חומש ד החומש 11 מאמין/מאמין] בד יאמין/יאמין

163 The three classes of sages (*hakhamim*) are then, the sages of the Torah, the philosophers, and all other sages (perhaps a reference to Jewish philosophers of his day). In his commentary on I:71, Moses of Salerno distinguishes between "they, the philosophers," and "us, people of religion" (*dat*). Cf. ms Munich cod. heb 370, f. 128a, and *Glossary* 149 n52 (#57).

164 Cf. Abraham ibn Ezra, *Commentary on the Torah* on Gen 1:27: "The meaning of the man – there is a secret in it, since it is not syntactical to place a definite article before 'man'." *Miqra'ot gedolot haketer: Genesis*, ed. Menachem Cohen, volume 1 (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2001).

[65] Moses then subsequently introduced a premise that contradicts this first one. He states it with the greatness of his wisdom and understanding so that those of little faith might not recognize the contradiction between the two premises, that is, between the former and the latter. He began to organize the matter quite later, saying ***the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul*** [Gen. 2:7].

[66] It had been previously said of this living soul that it is the soul of the first man in the meaning of the passage **let the earth bring forth every kind of living soul** [Gen. 1:24].<sup>165</sup> Thus his soul was in this case equivalent to the souls of the wild beasts and cattle of the earth and to the soul of creeping things, that is, he was equivalent to every living creature from the earth. At that point separations were drawn and one was no longer living soul and the other was living soul.<sup>166</sup> He went on at length in order to hide the secret that was concealed within the length of the narrative. Following this he suggested another allusion in the creation of Eve from the rib of man and there he mentions certain things. He employed the stratagem in order to hide the secret in every way.<sup>167</sup>

[67] The Rabbi had himself directed us to this secret in II:30 by mentioning it within a discussion of this matter. Search it there and understand the secret, which he too designated as a great secret. An allusion to his interpretation is in the notion of [Adam and Eve] *having their backs joined*, and in what precedes it and what follows it. He begins with *withal they have mentioned things* and completes it with the notion of *how great is the ignorance of him who does not understand that all this is necessary with a view to a certain notion. This then has become clear*.<sup>168</sup> Since this was Moses's method, it is not surprising that the second Moses [Maimonides] should have proceeded in the same way.

[68] I, too, believe that the third Moses [of Salerno] had this in mind for himself: he knew the secret but did not wish to write a *mashal* of it so that he would not reveal it. The passages where the Rabbi acted similarly abound in his book; among them are the issues of the [*ma'aseh*] *merkavah*, [*ma'aseh*] *bereshit*, the [equivocal, derivative, amphibolous] terms and others that are too numerous to count. I am certain that they will not be concealed from you after this remark. It was said about this *know this, grasp its true meaning, remember it always very well so as not to become perplexed by some of its chapters*.<sup>169</sup> This hint suffices for the subject and for your intellect. I am certain that through investigation on the words of the Rabbi who wrote this book and the comments therein, nothing will be hidden from you with the help of God.

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<sup>165</sup> Both Gen 1:24 and 2:7 mention the expression "living soul" (*nefesh ḥayyah*). The translation for 1:24 is usually "living creature."

<sup>166</sup> Isaiah means that the second "creation," signaled by the term "formed," was no creation *ex nihilo* but merely giving shape to what had already been created. Cf. II:30: "everything was created simultaneously; then gradually all things became differentiated," Pines 350.

13 [65] והנה בא משה אחר כן והקדים הקדמה סותרת לראשונה. והזכיר העניין ברוב חכמה ובינה כדי שלא  
 14 ירגיש קטני אמנה מה סתירה שאיך בין שתי ההקדמות, ר"ל בין הראשונה והאחרונה. והוא שהתחיל  
 15 לסדר זה מרחוק ואמ' **וייצר ה' אלהים את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים ויהי האדם**  
 16 **לנפש חייה** [בראשית ב, ז].

17 [66] וכבר נאמ' **נפש חיה** זו נפשו שלאדם הראשון בעניין **תוצא הארץ נפש חיה למינה** [בראשית א, כד].  
 18 והיתה נפשו אם כן שוה לנפש החיות והבהמות מן הארץ ונפש לנפש הר[ו]מש. כלומ' לכל בעל חיים  
 19 ארצי היתה שוה. ועתה הובדלה במה הובדלה והלא זו **נפש חיה** וזו **נפש חיה**. והמשיך העניין להסתיר  
 20 הסוד הנעלם בהמשכת דברים, ואחר כן פתח פתח אחר לברוא את חוה מצלע אדם וזכר בו מה שזכר.  
 21 ועשה התחבולה להעלים הסוד מכל צד.

22 [67] וכבר העירנו הרב על זה הסוד בעצמו בחלק שני בפרק ל' במה שזכר בו מזה העניין ועיין בו ותבין סוד  
 23 שגם הוא שמהו לסוד גדול. ורמז באורו בעניין **מתאחדים גב לגב** ובמה שבא לפניו ואחריו. ומתחיל מן  
 24 **ועם זה ומשלים בעניין ומה גדול סכלות מי שלא יבין שזה כלו לענין בהכרח; הנה כבר התבאר זה**. ואם  
 25 משה עשה זה אינו פלא שיעשה כמוהו משה השני.

1 [68] וגם אני מאמין שלזה כוון משה השלישי בעצמו שידע הסוד ולא רצה לכתוב משליו שלא יהיה מגלה סוד.  
 2 והמקומות אשר עשה הרב בזה הם רבים מאד בספרו מהם בעניין המרכבה, מהם בעניין בראשית מהם  
 3 בעניין השמות ובשאר דברים רבו מלספור. ואני בטוח שלא יעלמו ממך אחר זאת ההערה ועל זה אמ'  
 4 **ודע זה והבן אמתו וזכרהו תמיד מאד שלא תתערב בקצת פרקיו**. ודי ברמז זה לפי העניין ולפי שכלך.  
 5 שאני בטוח בד שיעם עיין[!] דברי הרב שכתב בזה הספר בפירושי הספר הוא לא יעלם ממך דבר בע"ה.  
 6 [עד כאן ביאור ישעיה בן משה מסלרנו]

14 שאיך | ב שאין | 18 הרמש | ז הרומש | 20 פתח | ז חסר | לברוא | ד ליברוא | 23 ואחריו | ד ולאחריו  
 2 מאד | ב = | 5 עיין | ד עיין

167 On "stratagem" (*taḥbulah*), see Glossary 340–342 (#196), and Amira Eran, "The 'Taḥbulah' as a Tool in the Introductory Study of Metaphysics in Maimonides and Ibn Rushd," *Pe'amim* 61 (1994), 109–131 [Hebrew].

168 See II:30, Pines 355, line 20–356, line 9.

169 Pines 20, lines 8–9.

[End of excursus]<sup>170</sup>

[69] *The contradictions that are to be found in the Mishnah and the Baraitot are due to the first cause. Thus, you will find that they constantly ask: does not the beginning [of the passage] constitute an objection against its end? In such cases the answer is: the beginning is the opinion of a certain rabbi and at the end that of another rabbi. You likewise will find, etc.*<sup>171</sup> *That some passages in every prophetic book, when taken in their external sense, etc. Cases of this are frequent in the sayings of the Sages; however, most of the prophetic statements they refer to concern commandments or precepts regarding conduct*<sup>172</sup> or with respect to what is prohibited and what is permissible.

[70] *We, on the other hand, propose to draw attention to verses that are apparently contradictory with regard to opinions and beliefs, etc. Whether contradictions due to the seventh cause are to be found in the books of the prophets, etc. As for the divergences, etc. Divergences that are to be found in this Treatise are due to the fifth cause and the seventh. Know this, grasp its true meaning, and remember it very well so as not to become perplexed by some of its chapters. And after these introductory remarks, I shall begin to mention the terms whose true meaning, as intended in every passage according to its context, must be indicated. This, then, will be a key permitting one to enter places the gates to which were locked. And when these gates are opened and these places are entered into, the souls will find rest therein, the eyes will be delighted, and the bodies will be eased of their toil and of their labor.*<sup>173</sup>

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**170** Following Isaiah ben Moses of Salerno's remarks, the remainder of Moses of Salerno's commentary on the Introduction is made up of literal quotations from the *Guide*, with only one addition (see end of ¶69), and additions of "etc" to abbreviate quotations. It is not quite clear what purpose they may have served. It can be speculated that they functioned as mnemonic devices for a teacher (perhaps Moses of Salerno himself or his son) to remember the text of the *Guide* when teaching with the commentary.

**171** Pines 18, lines 32–36.

**172** Pines 18, lines 32–19, line 29.

**173** Pines 19, line 29–20, line 15 (end of Preface).

7 [69] אמנם הסתירה הנמצאת במשנה ובבריתות היא כפי הסבה הראשונה כמו שתמצאם אומ' תמיד 'קשיא  
 8 רישא אסיפא', ובתשובה רישא ר' פל [וני] וסיפא ר' פל [וני]. וכן תמצאם אומ' וכו'. ואמנם הסתירה או  
 9 החילוף הנמצא בתלמוד לפי הראשונה והשינית וכו'. ואמנם הסתירה או ההפך הנראת בפשוטו שלענין  
 10 וכו'. וזה הרבה בדברי רבותינו אבל רוב מה שדיברו בו הוא במאמרי הנבואה הנתלים בדינים או במוסר  
 11 דרך ארץ או באיסור והתר.

12 [70] ואנחנו אמנם דעתינו להעיר על פסוקים יש בהם סתירה בנראת בדיעות ואמונות וכו'. ואמנם אם תמצא  
 13 בספרי הנביאים סתירה לפי הסיבה השביעית וכו'. ואמנם החילוף וכו'. ואמנם אם ימצא במאמר הזה  
 14 מן החילוף הוא לפי הסיבה החמישית והשביעית ודע זה והבן אמתתו וזכרהו מאד שלא תתערב בקצת  
 15 פרקיו. ואחר אלו ההקדמות אתחיל בזכרון השמות אשר צריך להעיר על אמתת עניינם המכוון בכל  
 16 מקום כפי עניינו. והיה זה מפתח להכנס במקומות סוגרו עליהם השערים וכשיפתחו השערים ההם ויכנס  
 17 במקומות ההם ינחו בהם הנפשות ויהנו העינים וינפשו הגופות מעמלם ויגיעם.

8 ובתשובה [ד והתשובה 10-9 ואמנם ... וכו'] **החחס** חסר | 10 רבותינו | ג רז"ל | 13 אס | ב אשר ד כאשר | 15 המכוון | ב יכון | 16 והיה | ד ויהיה | 17 ויגיעם | ב +ומשם ועד סוף הפתיחה הם דברי ביאור שביאר הרב רבינו בעצמו לשבע הסבות אשר הביא וכבר כתבנו מהם ר"ל מדברי הביאור לכל אחת מהסבות במקומות לפי עניות דעתינו ואין צורך להאריך יותר בהן

## 4 Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera: English Text

### 4.1 Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*: the Text

The English translation below is based on the critical edition of the Hebrew text of the commentary, edited by Yair Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001). The commentator's prologue is on pages 111–117; the commentary on the Preface to the *Guide* is on pages 121–123. For each paragraph in the English translation, I indicate page and line number in Shiffman's edition. Shiffman's edition appeared as one of the volumes for the now dormant series "Early Commentaries on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*" (edited by Aviezer Ravitzky). The English translation, annotation, and paragraph divisions are my own; information culled from Shiffman's notes is duly attributed. In the Hebrew commentary, Ibn Falaquera translates entire portions of the *Guide* and the differences from Ibn Tibbon's version are indicated in the English translation where possible. I provide page and line numbers from Shiffman's edition at the beginning of each paragraph.

Ibn Falaquera opens the *Moreh ha-moreh* with a brief poem in praise of the *Guide* and of Maimonides. The text is multi-layered, replete with biblical borrowings and linguistic puns that would be difficult if not impossible to reproduce in translation, and I have therefore chosen not to translate it (the original Hebrew can be found in Shiffman's edition of the *Moreh ha-moreh*).

Conventions for English translation:

Normal font:	text of commentary
<i>Italic font</i> :	quotations from <i>Guide</i> within the text
<b>Bold font</b> :	biblical prooftexts
<b>Bold italic font</b> :	biblical prooftexts also found in the <i>Guide</i>
...	omission by commentator in quotation from <i>Guide</i>

### 4.2 Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*: Reception

The modern study of commentaries on the *Guide* can be considered to have begun with the *Moreh ha-moreh*. It was the first of the medieval commentaries to receive a stand-alone edition without the text of the *Guide*, edited by Mordekhai Bisliches in 1837.<sup>1</sup> That edition did not contain Ibn Falaquera's three appendices that follow the commentary, but it included a short commentary titled *Be'ur nifla'* as an appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> Mordekhai Leib Bisliches ed., *Sefer Moreh ha-moreh* (Pressburg: Anton Edlen von Schmid, 1837).

The precise identity of the author of the *Be'ur nifla'* is unknown.<sup>2</sup> The third appendix was edited separately by F. Delitsch in 1840, who studied it in light of the Arabic text of the *Guide*.<sup>3</sup> The 1837 edition was reproduced in the trilogy *Sheloshah qadmonei mefarshei ha-moreh* (*Three Early Commentators on the Guide*, Jerusalem, 1961), with Ibn Falaquera's three appendices, and along with the first editions of the twin commentaries by Ibn Kaspi (1848), and the commentary by Moses of Narbonne (1852). In addition to the editions, scholarly study of the *Moreh ha-moreh* began with S. Munk in the mid-19th century.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Yair Shiffman has produced a modern critical edition of the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, which is the source for the translation in this chapter.<sup>5</sup> Shiffman and other scholars have continued to examine different aspects of the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, especially Ibn Falaquera's translation of the lemmata from the *Guide* contained in the commentary.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On this commentary, see Abraham Nuriel, "Was Shem Tov ibn Falaquera the Author of the *Be'ur nifla'?*" *Qiryat sefer* 62 (1988), 915–916 [Hebrew], and Carlos Fraenkel, *From Maimonides to Samuel ibn Tibbon: the Transformation of the "Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn" into the "Moreh ha-Nevukhim"* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007), 375 [Hebrew].

<sup>3</sup> Franz Delitsch, "Shem-Thob Palkeira's Berichtigungen der Übersetzung des Delalet el-Hairin von Samuel ibn Tibbon," pt. 1, *Litteraturblatt des Orients* 12 (1840), 177–180, pt. 2, 15 (1840), 225–227, pt. 3, 17 (1840), 257–259.

<sup>4</sup> Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Paris: A. Franck, 1859), 274 and passim. Munk also quotes the *Moreh ha-Moreh* at length in his notes to the French translation of the *Guide*, trans. Munk, *Le guide des égarés* (Paris: A. Franck, 1856–1866).

<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001. The edition by Shiffman is the text of the *Moreh ha-Moreh* used in this study and as the Hebrew basis for the English translation in Chapter Five.

<sup>6</sup> Yair Shiffman, "Shem Tov Falaquera's Method of Translation," *Leshonenu* 56:3 (1993), 223–240 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "On Different Methods of Translating the *Guide of the Perplexed* into Hebrew and their Philosophical Implications," *Tarbiš* 65:2 (1996), 263–275 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Shem Tov Falaquera as a Commentator on the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides," in *Encounters in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Culture*, ed. Joshua Blau (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1998), 193–204 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Shem Tov Falaquera as a Commentator of the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides—Outlines of His Thought," *Maimonidean Studies* 3 (1995), 1–29 [Hebrew section]; Yair Shiffman, "Falaquera on Maimonides and Ibn Rushd," *Pe'amim* 61 (1994), 132–143 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Ibn Bajja as a Source for Rabbi Shem Tov Falaquera's Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* III:51,54," *Tarbiš* 60:2 (1991), 225–235 [Hebrew]; Yair Shiffman, "Further Information Regarding the Arabic Sources of the *Guide of the Perplexed*," in *The Intertwined World of Islam: Essays in Memory of Hava Lazarus-Yafeh*, ed. Naḥem Ilan (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Institute Ben-Švi and Bialik Foundation, 2002), 566–585 [Hebrew]; Steven Harvey, "The Sources of the Quotations from Aristotle's *Ethics* in the *Guide of the Perplexed* and the *Guide to the Guide*," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 14 (1998), 87–102 [Hebrew]; Ḥayim Kreisel, "Between Religion and Science: Three Medieval Hebrew Encyclopaedias," in *Jewish Thought and Jewish Faith*, ed. Daniel Lasker (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2012), 71–87 [Hebrew].

Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Falaquera

*Moreh ha-moreh* (Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*)

[Preface to Commentary]<sup>7</sup>

[Prefatory poem]

Behold God exalteth by his power: **who teacheth** [*moreh*] **like him** [Job 36:22]? **Blessed be the name of the Lord** [Job 1:21], **exalted above all blessing and praise** [Neh 9:5], who creates all and revives all, **who keeps truth forever** [Ps 146:6]; who **grants knowledge to man and teaches understanding to humans**.<sup>8</sup>

[1]<sup>9</sup> After His praises, I say that the first purpose of this book is to speak on some of the subjects that are mentioned in the book *Guide of the Perplexed* and the opinions of the philosophers written therein: to inform of those things on which they agreed, those on which they disagreed, and their ambiguities whose true [meaning] they could not determine.<sup>10</sup> Many of the scholars of our Torah – who have not engaged in any science other than the doctrines of the Torah – see that it is not proper to engage in the words of the philosophers at all,<sup>11</sup> since they deny most of the tradition that has been received from the prophets. For the truth is in what we have received from the prophets and from our Sages, who are scholars of the truth. Others from among scholars of the Torah, who have engaged in both Torah and science, see that it is proper to accept from among the notions of the philosophers all that stands rational proofs that do not deny anything found in tradition [*qabbalah*].<sup>12</sup>

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7 The Hebrew text of the preface and the commentary translated below is in Yair Shiffman's critical edition, *Moreh ha-moreh* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2001), 111–123 [henceforth *Moreh ha-moreh*].

8 Cf. the fourth blessing of the *Amidah* prayer: “You grant knowledge to man, and teach understanding to humans. Grant us wisdom (*hokhmah*), understanding, and knowledge. Blessed are you God, who grants knowledge.” See ibn Falaquera's reference to this blessing in ibn Falaquera's *Epistle of the Debate*: “God, may He be blessed, gives to him whom He loves a discerning mind to investigate by means of these intelligibles the true reality of the beings. Therefore, the Sages, may their memory be blessed, arranged that man ask for them in the beginning of the petition for his needs in prayer.” Steven Harvey trans., *Falaquera's “Epistle of the Debate:” An Introduction to Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 30, n44 (henceforth *Epistle*).

9 *Moreh ha-moreh* 112, line 17–27.

10 The expression “opinions of the philosophers” recalls Falaquera's own *Opinions of the Philosophers* (*De'ot ha-filosofim*).

11 Cf. the “pietist” in the *Epistle of the Debate*: “Since [the philosophers] deny the Law, it is improper to engage in the study of their books or to look into their words at all” (*Epistle*, 18).

12 Throughout his writings, ibn Falaquera insists upon acceptance of demonstrated philosophical truth, but ostensibly only to the extent that it does not contradict the teachings of Judaism. See also Prologue, ¶4; Rafael Jospe, *Torah and Sophia: the Life and Thought of Shem Tov ibn Falaquera* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press 1988), 83–86; *Epistle*, 18, 41.

[2]<sup>13</sup> This is correct, for there are individuals who are [called] *elohim* and *sons of the most high* [Ps 82:6].<sup>14</sup> They know the truth by divine assistance, beholding it **face to face** [Num 14:14], and not through human inquiry.<sup>15</sup> Rather, God instructs and *guides them in the way wherein* they walk [Ps 143:8].<sup>16</sup> They are **the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent** [Ps 16:3]; the Lord is **always before** them [Ps 16:8],<sup>17</sup> and they do not turn Him away from their minds. Some rightly say that this is the meaning of **I neither learned wisdom, nor have knowledge of the holy** [Prov 30:3] and of [the prophet] David's request to **lead me in thy truth, and teach me** [Ps 25:5]. In evidence of this wisdom, it is said **for the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding** [Prov 2:6]. It is a divine gift only given to those who exercise human powers of apprehension.<sup>18</sup> This grace is granted and this glory is given—of which it is said **the Lord will give grace and glory** [Ps 84:12] — only to those whom God favors and who love Him [or: whom God loves].<sup>19</sup>

[3]<sup>20</sup> There are others who are beneath those [individuals]. All of their opinions are derived from human inquiry, with the assistance of the intellect that is given to them by nature. They are scholars of human science, and that which they can apprehend of things comes from their investigation of existents.<sup>21</sup> Their perfections are according

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13 *Moreh ha-moreh* 112, line 28–35.

14 In the *Guide* these two terms describe individuals who consider matter as a deficiency “imposed by necessity” and who dedicate themselves to the “mental representation of the intelligibles, the most certain and noblest of which being the apprehension, in as far as this is possible, of the deity, of the angels, and of His other works. These individuals are those who are permanently with God. They are those to whom it has been said: ‘ye are gods (*’elohim*), and all of you children of the Most High.’” Pines III:8 (433).

15 Ibn Falaquera makes here a distinction between a superior form of knowledge, which one attains through divine assistance and characterizes the prophet, and natural knowledge, described in the next paragraph, and which characterizes the philosophers.

16 Maimonides cites this prooftext in the poem that follows the Epistle Dedicatory and precedes the Introduction to the *Guide* (Pines 5).

17 In III:51 Maimonides uses this prooftext as an illustration of “excellent men” who “begrudge the times they are turned away from [God] by other occupations” (Pines 621).

18 In Shiffman's edition a variant reading is given (*hishtadelut ’enoshit*, “human” or “natural effort”).

19 The “divine gift” may be understood in light of a parallel passage in *Epistle*, 30: “God, may He be blessed, gives to him whom He loves [or: who loves Him] a discerning mind to investigate by means of these intelligibles the true reality of the beings [*nimsa’im*].”

20 *Moreh ha-moreh* 112–113, line 35–44.

21 In *Moreh ha-moreh* III:51, ibn Falaquera writes that the allegory at the beginning of III:51, on different classes of people who try to gain entrance to a palace to see a king, corresponds to “people who acquire perfection through their investigation and study of existents. But the ‘saints that are in the earth’ [Ps 16:3; cf. ¶2 above] acquire perfection and truth and do not learn the sciences of the philosophers, for the Creator directs those whom He wishes towards His truth and instructs [them how to] to be among those who are close to him, and divine perfection can be apprehended by means of divine assistance.” (318).

to the perfection of their knowledge of existents.<sup>22</sup> They are obligated by necessity to learn the science of philosophers regarding the nature of existents by means of investigation. An educated [*maskil*] individual listens to their words and accepts whatever they speak of the truth. As the Sages have said: “how did R. Meir learn Torah at the mouth of ‘Aḥer? Behold Rabbah b. Bar Ḥana said that R. Joḥanan said: What is the meaning of the verse, **for the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts** [Mal 2:7]? [The meaning is that] if the teacher is like an angel of the Lord of hosts, they should seek the Law at his mouth, but if not, they should not seek the Law at his mouth! – Resh Laqish answered: R. Meir found a verse and expounded it [as follows]: **Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thy heart unto my knowledge** [Prov 22:17]. It does not say, ‘unto their knowledge’, but ‘unto my knowledge’.”<sup>23</sup>

[4]<sup>24</sup> This method was sought by important and eminent scholars of Torah who were pious of the Most High: to listen to all matters of science that they apprehended by intellectual investigation, and which were not contrary to tradition. It is said further: “R. Meir found a pomegranate; he ate [the fruit] within it, and the peel he threw away.”<sup>25</sup> In this manner the [Sages] likened worthy subjects to the core of a pomegranate, which is nourishment for the soul and from which the soul derives enjoyment. Intellectual matters were likened to the nectar of a pomegranate, as it is said: **I would cause thee to drink from spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate** [Song 8:2]. They likened matters that are worthless and that should not be accepted to the peel of a pomegranate, which is fit only to be thrown away. However, it is imperative to warn an individual and make known to him that not everyone is suitable for [learning] matters through investigation. Rather, [they are meant] for those whose nature is pure, who have **sense** and **understand** [cf. Neh 8:8] the written Torah and the words of the Sages – who received its interpretation – and thereafter learned the sciences that are a preparation for the ultimate science.<sup>26</sup>

[5]<sup>27</sup> But it is necessarily obligatory to precede [learning] by good traits from the Torah, as the Sages said: “anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will

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22 Cf. ibn Rushd: “For the thing known is the perfection of the knower according to the philosophers,” *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, trans. Simon van den Bergh (Cambridge: The Trustees of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, 1987), 1:122 [henceforth *Incoherence*].

23 b. *Ḥagigah* 15b (cf. *Moreh ha-moreh* 113 n40).

24 *Moreh ha-moreh* 113, line 44–54.

25 b. *Ḥagigah* 15b. Ibn Falaquera repeats this metaphor in several other works. It was echoed by Jacob Anatoli, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and even by Abba Mari, the adversary of philosophical study during the controversy over the study of philosophy in 1303–1306. See *Epistle*, 18 n11.

26 That is, metaphysics or divine science, the *telos* of all other learning.

27 *Moreh ha-moreh* 113, line 54–60.

endure.”<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, they are indispensable for an individual’s existence – and not merely existence qua human, but for existence as a wise individual [*hakham*]. Therefore, the philosophers said that it is necessary for all to accept the principles of religion, since denying them and disputes around them destroy human existence. Therefore, heretics must be killed, and one must believe that the principles of a true religion are divine notions that are above the human intellect. One must acknowledge them even though their causes are hidden.<sup>29</sup>

[6]<sup>30</sup> Thus you will not find any philosopher who disputed the occurrence of miracles that are well known around the world. For they are the principles that preserve religion, and religion is the principle of good traits.<sup>31</sup> One of the philosophers said that the principle of belief of the philosophers is the unity of God; that he is Lord above all; to do what the prophets have commanded, for they are his emissaries; to pursue truth and uprightness.<sup>32</sup> A pious scholar<sup>33</sup> has said that there is no distinction between God himself and his words, or distinction [between God himself] and his actions.<sup>34</sup> Given that [the miracle] was in speech, that scholar would have assented to the reality of miracles. Look at what our Teacher, peace upon him, wrote in chapter fifty of the third part [of the *Guide*] and what I have written on it.<sup>35</sup> **Behold, how good and pleasant**

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28 Mishnah, *Pirquei 'avot* 3:11.

29 The entire paragraph, excluding the first sentence, is a nearly verbatim quotation from *Incoherence* (315). The rabbinical quotation at the beginning of the paragraph is a good example of what ibn Falaquera describes later on as the convergence between the Rabbis and ibn Rushd (below, Prologue, ¶13).

30 *Moreh ha-moreh* 113–114, line 61–69.

31 Cf. *Incoherence*: “the ancient philosophers did not discuss the problem of miracles, since according to them such things must not be examined and questioned; for they are the principles of the religions... these are the principles of the acts through which man becomes virtuous” (315). Ibn Falaquera transforms the tenor of ibn Rushd’s passage: For ibn Rushd here, philosophers did not discuss miracles at all, while for ibn Falaquera they may have discussed miracles without disputing their validity.

32 Cf. Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-fauz al-aṣghar* (*The Shorter Work on Salvation*), ch.1, part 2, in which he writes that the ancient philosophers agree that a Maker exists; they also share with the prophets the belief in divine unity and justice. Khwaja Abdul Hamid, *Ibn Maskawaih* [sic]: *A Study of His “Al-Fauz Al-Asghar”* (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1946), 13–14. For parallels between ibn Miskawayh and ibn Falaquera, see Steven Harvey, “A New Islamic Source of the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” *Maimonidean Studies* 2 (1991), 47–55.

33 *hakham ḥasid*. In the *Epistle of the Debate* it refers to scholar who is both Jewish and philosophically educated.

34 In other words, divine speech and action do not call into question the notion of divine unity (literally: “there is no contradiction between God Himself and His words”).

35 Ibn Falaquera’s commentary on the *Guide* does not cover III:50. However, he connects the notion of miracles to that of divine providence in “Chapter Two” of his appendix to *Moreh ha-moreh*, writing that divine providence preserves individuals “by way of miracle and sign” (*al derekh ha-nes ve-ha’ot*). *Moreh ha-moreh*, 114 n67.

[Ps 133:1] is the statement that concludes the book of Ecclesiastes: **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man** [Eccl 12:13]. Therefore **he that keepeth the law, happy is he** [Prov 29:18].

[7]<sup>36</sup> I say further: since it is not proper to reveal deep scientific matters to every individual, the discourse of ancient scholars takes the form of abbreviation, allusion and allegory.<sup>37</sup> Just as it is not proper to reveal those matters to every individual, it is not proper to commingle them with notions from the Torah, which are meant to be taught to all people. Rather, the correct way is to write each in its own place, since for every thing to be in its own place [it is said] **behold, how good** [Ps 133:1]. Most errors and doubts come from statements by those who commingle the two, for they wish to instruct the multitude in deep subjects that cannot be borne by the minds of most intellectuals, let alone by those of the multitude. Their intention is to instruct the multitude that there is no contradiction between Torah and science. Due to the confusion that ensues from writing on such matters in inappropriate places, our Teacher [Maimonides] apologizes and says that he is apprehensive about writing on those matters, while pointing to the necessity that obligated him to set them into writing.<sup>38</sup> For he found himself genuinely obligated to write them down, and compelled to do so by something, namely, the intellectual faculty. When [that faculty] is strong in a scholar, it compels him to expose to another that which he knows of the truth, as [Maimonides] writes on it in chapter thirty-nine of the second part [of the *Guide*].<sup>39</sup> The Word of God<sup>40</sup> inevitably compels whoever has apprehended a certain perfection to reflect it upon another.<sup>41</sup> That being the case, an individual who has acquired knowledge of something of these secrets, either from his study [alone] or from someone [else] who has righted his path, cannot but express [it]. However, it is impossible to explain it, and that individual must allegorize [it].

<sup>36</sup> *Moreh ha-moreh* 114, line 70–83.

<sup>37</sup> See *Guide*, Preface; I:17 (Pines, 42–43), and Zeraḥiah Ḥen, Commentary, Long Version, ¶7.

<sup>38</sup> Pines 16.

<sup>39</sup> Rather II:37, Pines 373–375.

<sup>40</sup> *davar ha-'elohi*. Ibn Falaquera seems to use the term to mean something like *logos*; cf. also below, Prologue, ¶14. In *Fons Vitae* V.56, ibn Gabirol identifies the divine word with the divine will, and compares Creation to divine utterance. It is certain that ibn Falaquera was acquainted with ibn Gabirol's view, since it appears in his Hebrew translation of excerpts of the *Fons Vitae*. See Munk, *Mélanges*, 121 n2, 131. On the identification of divine utterance with will, see also I:65 (Pines 158–160). It is also possible that ibn Falaquera's source for this concept is Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*, where *davar ha-'elohi* ('amr ilāhi) is often translated as divine "power," "influence," or "order." See Diana Lobel, *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of Religious Experience in Judah Ha-Levi's Kuzari* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 7–9, 29–30. My thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting this connection.

<sup>41</sup> The verb for "reflect" (*yashpi'a*) shares the same linguistic root as the prophetic overflow (*shefa'*). Cf. II:11, *Pines* 275–276; *PMZ*, s.v. "shefa'," 89.

[8]<sup>42</sup> I say further that the subjects of the [*Guide*] are beneficial for those who have engaged in Torah and science and who are perplexed; it will rescue them from their perplexity. In similar fashion, [the *Guide*] may harm those who have not engaged in the sciences and who are not perplexed, to the extent that they may fall into perplexity and not be rescued from it. As it is said: **a people that doth not understand shall fall** [Hos 4:14]. In my view, this is parallel to medicinal drugs: they benefit the sick but harm the healthy.<sup>43</sup> Those who are not perplexed have no need of a teacher who can guide them through perplexity, since they do not have any. For perplexity and doubt come about when two given opinions contradict each other and are equivalent in the mind. The individual does not know on which of the two his opinion should lean, and he stands in need of a criterion of preponderance [between the two].<sup>44</sup> Therefore someone who is not in doubt does not need to have doubts removed because that individual has no doubts.

[9]<sup>45</sup> Speaking of these matters to everyone is similar to one who feeds the same feed to all animals. The same feed might turn out to be a deadly drug to one and nourishment to another.<sup>46</sup> The same is true when speaking on opinions [*de'ot*]. An opinion may harm an individual while benefitting another. Those who hold all ideas to be appropriate to all people are like those who hold that all species of feed constitute nourishment to all animals [indiscriminately].<sup>47</sup>

[10]<sup>48</sup> I say further that one should not be astonished if some error should ensue from reading this book if the reader is not suitable for it. The same occurs to those who read books in the sciences and are not suitable for them. Likewise, one should not be astonished if someone who does not understand its words and gathers from them the opposite of the book's intention, and explains them with interpretations that are not correct. For this has happened to the words of the living God, as the Sages have pointed to the biblical passages where the heretics find support for heresy.<sup>49</sup> The same

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42 *Moreh ha-moreh* 114, line 84–91.

43 See Maimonides' introduction to the commentary on *Pirquei 'avot*, in *Ethical Writings of Maimonides*, eds Raymond L. Weiss and Charles Butterworth (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 70.

44 The term for "criterion of preponderance" (*makhria'*) is related to Maimonides' use of *hakhra'ah* or "giving of preponderance," which in Maimonides' view applies "with respect to a particular existent that is equally receptive of two contraries or of two different things," I:74, Pines 221–220, 'Even-Shemu'el 191–192.

45 *Moreh ha-moreh* 114–115, line 91–95.

46 Cf. ibn Rushd, *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' 'Exposition of Religious Arguments'*, trans. Ibrahim Y. Najjar (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 66.

47 Cf. I:33, where Maimonides argues that exposing deep truths openly and non-esoterically is analogous to "feeding a suckling with wheat bread and meat and giving him wine to drink" (Pines 71).

48 *Moreh ha-moreh* 115, line 96–102.

49 Cf. b. *Megillah* 25b, b. *Sanhedrin* 38b.

occurs with respect to God's deeds, who made them in wisdom and righteousness: the just approach them in righteousness, and they benefit him; the wicked approach them in wickedness, and they harm him. The prophet [Hosea] has said that **for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein** [Hos 14:10]. Solomon said **the way of the Lord is a stronghold for the blameless, but a ruin for evildoers** [Prov 10:29].

[11]<sup>50</sup> Therefore I say that there is a necessary duty to restrain oneself from reading this book [i.e. the *Guide*] if one has only engaged in the study of Torah, and not to teach it someone who is not suitable even if that individual has engaged in the study of science.<sup>51</sup> All the more so with respect to simpletons who have learned neither Torah nor science, as is the case with many simpletons in our times who learned neither Torah nor science but read this book. As it is clear from the words of our Teacher, those who are suitable for reading it must have fulfilled three conditions.<sup>52</sup> The first is to have reached the age of forty, as the Sages said: “forty is for wisdom”<sup>53</sup> since by then flame of youth has been extinguished,<sup>54</sup> and most of the subjects in this book involve wisdom.<sup>55</sup> The second is to have engaged in the Torah and preserved it in the heart, and not deviate from it by means of someone's objections. The third is to have engaged in science for a long period of time.<sup>56</sup> Whoever lacks any of these conditions and reads many of the chapters in this book is like someone who has come into deep waters, but does not know how to swim and drowns.<sup>57</sup> Since one of the purposes of this book that I have composed is to warn against that, I have called it *Moreh ha-moreh*. The meaning of the first *moreh* derives from [the verse] **and the Lord shewed him a tree** [Exod

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<sup>50</sup> *Moreh ha-moreh* 115, line 103–116.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Introduction to the *Guide*: “it is not the purpose of this Treatise to make its totality understandable to the vulgar... nor to teach those who have not engaged in any study other than the science of the Law—I mean the legalistic study (*talmud*) of the Law” (Pines 5).

<sup>52</sup> Joseph ibn Kaspi, who seems to have read ibn Falaquera's commentary, also schematizes prerequisites for reading the *Guide*; see *'Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶3–¶4. However, ibn Kaspi's list differs in content, and it was borrowed by both Profiat Duran and Shem Tov ben Joseph ben Shem Tov. See *The Guide of the Perplexed of Maimonides in the Translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon with Four Commentaries* (Warsaw: Y Goldman, 1872, reprinted Jerusalem 1960), 4a-b [Hebrew].

<sup>53</sup> Mishnah, *Pirqei 'avot* 5:21

<sup>54</sup> Cf. III:51, Pines 627.

<sup>55</sup> However, in *Reshit hokhmah* ibn Falaquera states that one should seek wisdom (*hokhmah*) beginning at twenty. Moritz David ed, *Shemtob ben Josef ibn Falaquera's Propaedeutik der Wissenschaften* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1902), 16–17 [Hebrew].

<sup>56</sup> In I:34 Maimonides writes on the “length of the preliminaries” to study of metaphysics; see Pines 73–76.

<sup>57</sup> For the analogy of knowledge to water and the danger of drowning, see I:34 (Pines 73) and below, Prologue, ¶16.

15:25], and the meaning of the second *moreh* derives from [the verse] **for I have rebelled against His commandment** [Lam 1:18].<sup>58</sup>

[12]<sup>59</sup> And I, Shem Tov bar Joseph ben Falaquera, the author of this book, present my apologies and say that had it not been for what our Teacher wrote of these matters, along with other sages of the Torah, I would not have permitted myself to do so, on two counts.<sup>60</sup> The first is the insufficiency of my knowledge; the second is the warning and obligation **be not rash with one's mouth** [cf. Eccl 5:1]<sup>61</sup> and not to bring forth anything of these subjects; and all the more so to write them down in a book. For there is great danger, in relation to the majority of the people who are not suitable for [those subjects], to discuss them even through hints [*remez*].<sup>62</sup> All that I have written on this book concerns subjects that can be apprehended through scientific investigation. I will not write on anything else, save in limited measure and as necessary for my purpose, since I have written on it all in my commentary on the Torah and on other sacred texts.<sup>63</sup> It is fitting to write on each subject in its proper place, and to establish a separation between the holy, which are the books of the prophets and of our Sages, and the profane, which are texts by philosophers.<sup>64</sup>

[13]<sup>65</sup> I have written about the texts of philosophers who speak on these matters, and on ibn Rushd's opinion, because it appears from his words that he tends towards the opinion of our Sages. Ibn Rushd said: "nobody doubts that among the Israelites there

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**58** In Exod 15:25, "showed" is *yorehu*, which shares a linguistic root with the name of the *Guide* (*Moreh nevukhim*). The verbal root in medieval philosophical Hebrew was used in the sense of "teach, instruct," or "indicate." In Lam 1:18, "rebelled against" is *maryti*, from which ibn Falaquera derives the second *moreh* in the title. However, a reader who merely glances at the title would intuitively read it as "A Guide to the Guide" [of the Perplexed]. It may be that despite ibn Falaquera's explanation, he wished the title of the commentary to carry this double meaning.

**59** *Moreh ha-moreh* 115–116, line 117–126.

**60** The "apology" (*hitnaṣelut*) is a common fixture of the classical preface (philosophical and otherwise). Here ibn Falaquera may be referring to Maimonides' prohibition on writing commentary and explaining the *Guide* to others. See Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 51–54.

**61** In III:52 Maimonides mentions this prooftext as an admonition against speaking too much (Pines 629 n7).

**62** In Prologue, ¶7 above ibn Falaquera expressed the idea that *mashal* must be employed when teaching someone with the appropriate intellect and background, but here he seemingly dismisses the value of *mashal* as a pedagogical technique with respect to the multitude.

**63** Only fragments of ibn Falaquera's *Commentary on the Torah* have survived, all in citations within later works. In addition to a commentary on the Torah, he also wrote what seems to be a commentary on the Aggadah (*Sefer ha-derash*). See Rafael Jospe and Dov Schwarz, "Shem Tov ibn Falaquera's Lost Bible Commentary," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 64 (1993), 167–200.

**64** This sentence recalls the blessing of the ritual of *havdalah*, which blesses God for "establishing a separation between the holy and the profane."

**65** *Moreh ha-moreh* 116, line 126–137.

were many learned men, and this is apparent from the books which are found among the Israelites, and which are attributed to Solomon. And never has wisdom ceased among the inspired, i.e. the prophets, and it is therefore the truest of all sayings that every prophet is a sage, but not every sage is a prophet.”<sup>66</sup> According to ibn Rushd, Plato said: “one of the Jews who engages in metaphysics came to me, and as soon as he began to speak [I realized] I had never seen anything greater. As we entered into divine science and the subject of union with the Active Intellect, I saw something that summoned me; my ultimate goal was to understand some of what he spoke, and I knew that this was above the level of humans.”<sup>67</sup> It is clear that our Sages and all the more so the prophets, who grasp the secret of God, apprehended from among the divine secrets how God brought into existence created things and how he governs of the universe, which no scholar can apprehend through investigation.<sup>68</sup>

[14]<sup>69</sup> For our Sages received the truth from the [biblical] patriarchs, peace upon them, who saw it **face to face** [Num 14:14], and from Moses, who was “father in Torah, a father in science, a father in prophecy.”<sup>70</sup> Thus generation after generation received the truth from the prophets, who were the precious [*segullat benei ’adam*] and chosen ones from among all humankind.<sup>71</sup> The skilled philosophers who believe they have apprehended the truth – if they saw our Sages, and all the more so our prophets, and merited to speak with them on these matters – they would hear such things that would astonish them, as it occurred to that scholar [i.e. Plato]. Their objective would be to understand the words of our Sages, but would then say that the Sages **have inherited lies, vanity** in

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**66** *Incoherence*, 360–361, and *Moreh ha-moreh* 116, n128–130. Ibn Falaquera omits the end of the sentence as it appears in the *Incoherence*: “the learned, however, are those of whom it is said that they are the heirs of the prophets.” On the notion of “heirs of prophets” (*benei ha-nevi'im*), see Hannah Kasher, “Disciples of the Philosophers as ‘Sons of Prophets’ (Prophecy Manuals Among Maimonides’ Followers),” in *From Rome to Jerusalem: Yosef Baruch Sermoneta Memorial Volume*, ed. Aviezer Ravitzky (Jerusalem: Department of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University, 1998), 73–85 [Hebrew].

**67** The second quotation attributed to ibn Rushd does not seem to occur in his writings. Mauro Zonta has pointed out that the *Moreh ha-moreh* quotes texts by ibn Rushd that appear not to have survived in the original Arabic; see his “A Note About Two Newly-Discovered Hebrew Quotations of Averroes’ Works Lost in their Original Arabic Texts,” in *Studies in Hebrew Language and Jewish Culture*, ed. Martin F.J. Baasten and Reinier Munk (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 243.

**68** By “grasp the secret of God” (*sod ha-’eloha*) ibn Falaquera may have in mind knowledge of metaphysics that is not meant for a general audience; see also Moses of Narbonne, Commentary, ¶2. The passage implies that ibn Falaquera counts Creation and divine governance among the “secrets” of the Torah. Cf. *Epistle* 116–117.

**69** Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 116–117, line 138–153.

**70** b. *Megillah* 13a.

**71** Cf. Bahya ibn Paquda’s *Duties of the Heart*: “In every generation we see the precious of mankind [*ha-segullah mi-vene’i ’adam*] who walked in the light of wisdom and who turned away from the darkness of lust” (Venice, 1548), 4a. The phrase is of biblical origin and more commonly spoken of Israel vis-à-vis other nations; cf. *Kuzari* 1.27.

their words, **and things wherein there is no profit** [Jer 16:19]. The [philosophers] were astonished to see a small change in the course of nature, as they were astonished to see a horn sprouting from the leg of a sheep, and declared it a wonder of nature.<sup>72</sup> All the more so had they had seen or recognized the truth of the miracles done for the prophets, their visions of prophecy, and the visions of Daniel and his peers which astonished Nebuchadnezzar, who was a great scholar in every science, along with other scholars of his time.<sup>73</sup> As the Greeks remarked, science was common among them.<sup>74</sup> The [philosophers] would be shocked and not believe many things in which they would otherwise believe if proven scientifically. It seems to me that Plato's opinion that the world is created [*mehudash*] but is eternal *a parte post* was adopted from our Sages, and not discovered scientifically.<sup>75</sup> There are some notions in his discourse that tend to agree with theirs, such as that prior to the Word of the Lord, there was a chaotic [*mebulbelet*] motion, and His Word became Creation; in Arabic, this is called "ibdā'."<sup>76</sup>

[15] That chaotic motion within which Creation occurred consisted in a combination of the creation of the Intellect, creation of Soul, and creation of Nature.<sup>77</sup> Because

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72 In *Epistle 47*, ibn Falaquera claims that [the philosophers] "disagree [with us] about miracles in that they believe that is impossible that nature change, but it is not fitting to blame them for this since they did not receive this tradition as we did." See also above, ¶6 ("you will not find any philosopher who disputed the occurrence of miracles").

73 This relatively positive view of Nebuchadnezzar is unusual in Jewish texts. Greek sources tend to describe him with admiration in light of his architectonic achievements, but Hebrew sources condemn him for having carried the ancient Israelites into exile. See Ronald Sack, *Nebuchadnezzar: the Emergence of a Legend* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 97–108.

74 That is, among the Chaldeans. In Arabic philosophical sources we find several versions of the notion that the ancient Chaldeans had knowledge of science. See *Incoherence 299*; *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect by Ibn Rushd with the Commentary of Moses of Narbonne*, trans. Kalman P. Bland (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982), 105, n11 (English section), 141 (Hebrew section); *Alfarabi: Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi, rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969, reprinted 2001), 43.

75 Maimonides describes Plato's position on creation in II:13, Pines 282–284. "Created" means the universe is not eternal *a parte ante* (in contrast to Aristotle). Ibn Falaquera does not elaborate here on whether Plato believed in creation *ex nihilo* or from some pre-existent matter.

76 The notion of creation out of chaotic motion goes back to *Timaeus* 30a-b, 52d. On *mevulbelet* as "chaotic motion" see Jospe and Schwartz, "Lost Bible Commentary," 172–173. In a fragment of his commentary on the Torah he writes that prior to creation, motion was "continuous and chaotic (*tamidit 'einah mesuderet*), which God turned into orderly motion, and lastly he brought forth Soul along with the heavens;" in Jospe and Schwartz, "Lost Bible Commentary," 186. Ibn Falaquera defines *ibdā'* as creation *ex nihilo* (*yesh me-'ayin*) in *Moreh ha-moreh* on III:15, *Moreh ha-moreh* 306, line 51–55, where he labels it the "religious" view.

77 The hierarchy of hypostases of Creation as One, Intellect, Soul and Nature can be found in Plotinus' *Enneads*. The long recension of the *Theology of Aristotle* interpolates the *Logos* or Word between the One and the Intellect. See the several pertinent entries in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The "Theology" and Other Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye, W.F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986). Ibn Falaquera translated the long recension of the *Theology* into Hebrew. Extracts of

the motion was not according to any particular order [*seder*] and it was not one single action [*pe'ulah*], he called it chaotic.<sup>78</sup> The Sages said something similar: all the species were intermingled, and when God said **yielding fruit after his kind** [Gen 1:11], each [species] immediately came into its own.<sup>79</sup> Thus some of Plato's doctrines tend towards agreement with doctrines of the scholars of Torah, as I describe them in chapter twenty-six of the second part [of the *Guide*].<sup>80</sup>

[16]<sup>81</sup> To indicate the scholar I have mentioned [ibn Rushd], I will call him the "the aforementioned scholar."<sup>82</sup> There is no doubt he relied upon the words of our Teacher.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps what he saw of [Maimonides'] discussion of the Mutakallimūn stimulated him to write about their opinions; he drew up wisdom and found the pearl.<sup>84</sup> I thought it opportune to compose [this commentary] in Hebrew so that its

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the translation in his *Sefer ha-ma'alot* were identified by Paul Fenton, "Shem Tov ibn Falaquera and the *Theology* of Aristotle," *Da'at* 29 (1992), 27–39 [Hebrew]. More recently still a fragment of the direct translation was identified by Tzvi Langermann, "A Hebrew Passage from the *Theology* of Aristotle and Its Significance," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), 247–259.

**78** Elsewhere in *Moreh ha-moreh* (on II:13) Ibn Falaquera writes that Plato "says that the world was came into being as it changed from lack of order [*seder*] into order. For it is possible to understand the meaning of verses [in Genesis] as in the beginning everything was chaotic [*mevulbal*] and lacking in order, and afterwards things became separated from one another and returned to order... it seems to me that since Plato's opinion that the world is created and is eternal *a parte post*, it is said that the opinion of our Torah and his are the same." *Moreh ha-moreh* 259, line 64–65, 70–71; see also *Epistle* 117–119.

**79** Cf. b. *Hullin* 60a, *Moreh ha-moreh* on II:13 (259, line 67–68): "The Sages said in Midrash that because the created things were separated from each other and did not come forth intermingled, [God] said 'after his kind'." Maimonides writes of a similar view in II:30, Pines 350.

**80** In *Moreh ha-moreh* on II:26 (286–288) ibn Falaquera cites several concurring opinions (by Plato, Solomon ibn Gabirol, rabbinical sages, and a second-hand report by Aristotle) to the effect that all existents with the exception of God are fashioned from the same matter.

**81** *Moreh ha-moreh* 117, line 158–169.

**82** Throughout the commentary, ibn Falaquera indicates quotations from Ibn Rushd by attributing them to the "aforementioned scholar" (*he-ḥakham ha-nizkar*).

**83** See Yair Shiffman, "Falaquera on Maimonides and Ibn Rushd," *Pe'amim* 61 (1995), 132–143 [Hebrew]. See also Alfred Ivry, "Maimonides' Relationship to Ibn Rushd's Thought," *Sefunot* n.s. 8 (2003), 61–74 [Hebrew].

**84** In the *Guide* Maimonides quotes a midrash that compares the words of Torah to a well of water. In another instance, Maimonides compares the hidden meaning of Scripture and of rabbinic literature to a pearl that was lost and has been found with the aid of a cheap candle (=the explicit meaning). Here ibn Falaquera combines those two allegories by describing Ibn Rushd as having searched the "waters" of the *Guide* and found the "pearl," something of great value, that is, Maimonides' discussion of the Mutakallimūn. See Pines, 11, 64, Pines 194–231. On ibn Rushd's critique of the Mutakallimūn, see Harry A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 424–425, 428–429, 552–558; *Incoherence*, 61–62, 318–319, 324–325, 332–333 (=theologians).

benefit may be broader.<sup>85</sup> My purpose in writing it has been described above, and also so that it can serve as a reminder in old age.<sup>86</sup> In order to arrange [subjects] according to all general [aspects] of his thought, I compiled excerpts from certain chapters [only].<sup>87</sup> It is also possible that I will write [on] most or the whole of a given chapter, to the extent that I consider it beneficial according to my purposes. At the conclusion of this book I wrote a chapter [as an appendix], regarding terms whose translation is not correct.<sup>88</sup> That chapter has likewise some benefit for those who read the *Guide* in Arabic, since the meaning of many of the terms in the book are explained there.<sup>89</sup>

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**85** Shiffman suggests that Ibn Falaquera's decision to write in Hebrew is due to changing historical circumstances: in 13th-century Christian Europe (except Spain), Jewish philosophers tended to live in communities where knowledge of Arabic was rare or inexistent, while until the end of the 12th century, those who studied philosophy tended to live in Muslim lands (Muslim Spain) and could read Arabic in addition to Hebrew (*Moreh ha-moreh*, 16). Nonetheless, knowledge of Arabic continued to be cultivated among Jewish intellectuals in Western Europe throughout the 13th and as late as the 15th century, not only for purposes of philosophical study and translation, but also in the study of medicine and science in general. A commentary on the *Guide* in Arabic could have found readers, though mostly among the elite, while a commentary in Hebrew could also be read by those who learned philosophy exclusively in Hebrew translation. As ibn Falaquera's ensuing remarks show, he had Arabic readers in mind as well as Hebrew readers.

**86** Ibn Falaquera also intended his *Book of the Soul* and *Opinions of the Philosophers* to be a reminder (*sefer zikharon*) for old age. In a letter to Joseph ben Judah, to whom the *Guide* was addressed, Maimonides designates one of the purposes of the *Mishneh Torah* as an instrument for use in old age. See Jospe, *Torah and Sophia*, 275 line 6; Twersky, *Code of Maimonides*, 42, and the relevant passage from *Opinions of the Philosophers* in Roberto Gatti, *Ermeneutica e filosofia: introduzione al pensiero ebraico medioevale (secoli XII-XIV)*, (Genoa: Il Melangolo, 2003), 165.

**87** There seems to be no clear criterion for ibn Falaquera's selection of chapters. As Yair Shiffman observes, Munk's view that ibn Falaquera comments only on the philosophical chapters of the *Guide* ought to be revisited, since there are many such "philosophical" chapters in the *Guide* on which he is silent. In light of Ibn Falaquera's objectives in the prologue, one possible line of inquiry is that ibn Falaquera might only comment on chapters for which he can find parallels in Ibn Rushd's writings. Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 1n6; Munk, *Mélanges* 495.

**88** Ibn Falaquera wrote three appended chapters to the *Moreh ha-moreh*. The first discusses the nature of the acquired intellect and its relation to true felicity, quoting several sources, among which are Solomon ibn Gabirol, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Rushd, and Maimonides (*Moreh ha-moreh* 329–337). The second chapter is on divine providence (*Moreh ha-moreh* 337–341). The third chapter critiques Samuel ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of the *Guide*. In the latter, Ibn Falaquera quotes the Judeo-Arabic word or sentence and gives his own translation, following with a discussion of ibn Tibbon's text that points out mistranslations and added or missing words (*Moreh ha-moreh* 341–365).

**89** This is a potential indication that there were readers of the Judeo-Arabic *Guide* in Christian Spain towards the end of the 13th century. We know of readers of Arabic in the 13th century through the existence of Arabic-Hebrew glossaries and Arabic glosses in Hebrew works written in Europe. See Mauro Zonta, "Arabic and Latin Glosses in Medieval Hebrew Translations of Philosophical Texts and Their Relation to Hebrew Philosophical Dictionaries," in *Lexiques bilingues dans les domaines philosophique et scientifique (Moyen-Âge et Renaissance)*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse and Danielle Jacquart (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 31–48.

I ask God, who is God of truth, to direct me on the path of truth for the sake of His benevolence. Amen.

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]<sup>90</sup>

[1]<sup>91</sup> Our Teacher [Maimonides] says in the Introduction to the book *The Guide of the Perplexed*: *You should not think that these great secrets are fully and exhaustively known by anyone among us. It is not so; rather sometimes truth appears to us that we think it is as day, and then matter<sup>92</sup> and habits conceal it so that we find ourselves again in a dark night, almost as we were at first. We are like someone over whom lightning appears only once in a deep and dark night. Among us there is one for whom the lightning flashes time and time again,<sup>93</sup> so that he is always, as it were, in constant light. Thus night is to him as day. That is the degree of the great one among the prophets, to whom it was said: **But as for thee, stand thou here by Me** [Deut 5:28], and of whom it was said: **that the skin of his face sent forth beams** [Exod 34:29].<sup>94</sup> Among them there is one to whom the lightning flashes only once in the whole of his night; that is the rank of those of whom it is said: **they prophesied, but they did so no more** [Num 11:25]. There are others between whose lightning flashes there are longer or shorter intervals. Thereafter comes he who does not attain a degree of light even of any lightning flash. He is illumined, rather, by a polished and glowing object, stones or something similar that give light in the darkness of the night.*

[2]<sup>95</sup> I say that [Maimonides] divides prophetic apprehension into three categories. He says there is another degree of apprehension: that of perfect individuals who are not

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<sup>90</sup> *Moreh ha-moreh* 121–123.

<sup>91</sup> *Moreh ha-moreh* 121, line 1–13. The paragraph is Ibn Falaquera's own Hebrew translation of the *Guide*. Throughout the *Moreh ha-moreh* he translates passages of the *Guide* directly from Arabic. In the English translation that follows, words in italics are identical in both ibn Falaquera and Ibn Tibbon; those in normal type are ibn Falaquera's additions and/or modifications. Ibn Falaquera's translation is at times closer to al-Ḥarizi's version (cf. for example Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 63 n12, 121 n3–13). On these three translations, see Yair Shiffman, "The Differences Between the Translations of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* by Falaquera, Ibn Tibbon and Al-Ḥarizi, and Their Textual and Philosophical Implications," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 44:1 (1999), 47–61.

<sup>92</sup> Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi have "nature" (respectively, *ha-tivi'im/teva'*) rather than "matter" (ibn Falaquera: *homerim*). Cf. Munk 10 n4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibn Tibbon adds here: "with little interval in between" (*bi-me'at hefresh beineihem*). It is not found in the Judeo-Arabic text, nor in al-Ḥarizi or Ibn Falaquera's translations. Cf. Munk 11 n1.

<sup>94</sup> Ibn Tibbon adds here: "There is one for whom there are great intervals from one lightning flash to the next—this is the rank of most prophets" ('Even-Shemu'el 6, line 20–21). The phrase is found neither in the Judeo-Arabic text, in al-Ḥarizi, and ibn Falaquera's Hebrew translations, nor in Pines' English translation. Cf. Munk, 11 n2.

<sup>95</sup> Shiffman, *Moreh ha-moreh* 121, line 14–20.

prophets. Their apprehension of deep matters is limited.<sup>96</sup> They can be likened to a burnished and pure object such as a pearl, which casts light into the depth of night.<sup>97</sup> This *mashal* is quite fitting, for all those who apprehend while still living in this world are in the dark, on account of matter and custom;<sup>98</sup> but the divine overflow, which is the clear light that emanates to the prophets, is like lightning that illuminates the darkness of night, and the distinction between the light of lightning and the light [reflected] from a pearl is evident.<sup>99</sup>

[3]<sup>100</sup> [Maimonides] concludes the matter by saying: *and even this faint light that appears over us is not constant but is visible and concealed as if it were the flaming sword which turned every way* [Gen 3:24]. *It is in accord with these states that the degrees of the perfect vary. As for those who never see the light but thrash around in the night, of them it is said: they know not, neither do they understand; they go about in darkness* [Ps 82:5].<sup>101</sup> *The truth, in spite of the strength of its manifestation, is entirely hidden from them, as is said of them: And now men see not the*

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**96** There seems to be something of an ambiguity here. Ibn Falaquera may be saying that the apprehension of any non-prophet is always limited; or he may be saying that Maimonides creates a category of non-prophets who have limited apprehension (e.g. an individual who is morally though not intellectually perfect). In either case, there are at least two competing medieval philosophical views on the distinction between prophetic and non-prophetic knowledge (that is, philosophic or scientific). One holds that the difference between how a prophet and a non-prophet acquire knowledge lies in their methods (analytical in the case of the philosopher, imaginative or intuitive in the case of the prophet), but not in content—the philosopher is able to achieve the same knowledge as the prophet, though only with great difficulty. Another view holds that the content of prophetic knowledge is a priori inaccessible to a non-prophet. Al-Kindi is an exponent of the first view; cf. Peter Adamson, “Al-Kindi and the Reception of Greek Philosophy,” in Adamson and Taylor eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46–47. Ibn Falaquera’s Scholar expresses the second view in *Epistle* *ibid.*, 35–36, and n60. Maimonides mentions yet a third view, namely, that there is something biological about prophecy as requiring a “perfection for the imaginative faculty” (II:36, Pines 369). However, as he says elsewhere, the divine will may prevent even such a perfect individual from becoming a prophet (cf. II:32, Pines 361–362).

**97** Cf. Pines 7.

**98** Maimonides describes how matter hinders one from apprehending the nature of the deity in III:9 (Pines 436–437).

**99** On the concept of “overflow,” see II:12 (Pines 279–280), and II:36–37 (Pines 369–375). There are, therefore, two categories of apprehension: those who receive the light of lightning, or directly, which corresponds to the prophets; and those who receive the light reflected from a pearl, or indirectly, which corresponds to perfect individuals who are not prophets.

**100** *Moreh ha-moreh* 121 line 21–122 line 28.

**101** Cf. *Moreh ha-moreh* III:51 (Shiffman 318–319): “Consider the dictum of the Sages that [the patriarch] Jacob is the sun. Maimonides hints at this notion in the Introduction to the [*Guide*] by saying “as for those who never once see a light but grope about in their night... they are the vulgar among the people” (Pines 7). For the analogy of intellectual apprehension to light from without, see also ibn Bajja, *Letter of Farewell*, trans. Miguel Asin Palacios, “La ‘Carta de Adiós’ de Avempace,” *Al-Andalus* 8:1 (1943) ¶25 (79).

**light which is bright in the skies** [Job 37.21]. *They are the vulgar among the people. There is in this no occasion for them in this Treatise.* Consider what I write in III:51 and you will then realize what “light” our Teacher [Maimonides] hints at.<sup>102</sup> Ibn Sina says that this notion is not given to conceptualization, but is rather [like] a blink of an eye.<sup>103</sup>

[4]<sup>104</sup> One of the commentators has said those who cleave to God<sup>105</sup> can see some of those things that appear to prophets, and what appears to them is perhaps like a strike of lightning that overpowers the sense of sight, and which disappears, reappears and possibly then remains [visible].<sup>106</sup> Or it might overpower [the sense of sight] and appear for long or short periods, or it appears concerning a subject or several distinct matters. It seems to me that these expressions hint at all this: “looking at them is ‘as the appearance of a flash of lightning’ [...] and his word is in them as though **they ran and returned** [Ezek 1:14].”<sup>107</sup> Let me now return to [Maimonides’] text.

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**102** In his commentary on III:51, Ibn Falaquera quotes from Ibn Bajja, *Letter on Conjunction of the Intellect with Man* (*Moreh ha-moreh* 318, line 14–32). The quotation is faithful to ibn Bajja’s text, but Ibn Falaquera omits the sentence where ibn Bajja directly states that the Active Intellect is like light. Readers of the *Moreh ha-moreh* who knew the original passage in Ibn Bajja would realize ibn Falaquera’s hidden view, which is that ibn Falaquera interprets Maimonides’ “light” to correspond to the Active Intellect. In other words, ibn Falaquera edited the quotation for esoteric purposes, to hide this interpretation from unprepared readers (who may not have known ibn Bajja). For the passage in ibn Bajja, see Joaquín Fuentes Lomba, “Avempace: Tratado de la unión del intelecto con el hombre,” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 11 (2000), 384–385. Ibn Falaquera omits the passage “reflexiona ahora... es lo que más se parece a la luz” (385).

**103** This observation recalls Ibn Sina’s notion of “intuitive prophecy,” which includes “the ability to arrive at a conclusion or truth with no external aid and without prior learning,” and the “ability to arrive at a conclusion [of a syllogism] instantaneously.” Amira Eran, “Intuition and Inspiration—the Causes of Jewish Thinkers’ Objection to Avicenna’s Intellectual Prophecy (*Ḥads*),” *JSQ* 14 (2007), 39–40.

**104** *Moreh ha-moreh* 122, line 29–34.

**105** “Cleaving to God” (*devequt*) is a biblical term and central concept in Abraham ibn Ezra and Bahya ibn Paquda, where it takes the connotation of union with God. See Abraham ibn Ezra, *The Secret of the Torah: A Translation of Abraham ibn Ezra’s “Sefer Yesod Mora Ve-Sod Ha-Torah,”* trans. H. Norman Strickman (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995), 107; Aaron Hughes, “Two Approaches to the Love of God in Medieval Jewish Thought: The Concept of ‘Devequt’ in the Works of ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi,” *Studies in Religion* 28:2 (1999), 139–151.

**106** The distinction, then, between lightning that appears to prophets and to non-prophets seems to be that which appears to non-prophets is too strong for the individual who receives it, and occurs arbitrarily. Cf. also II:45 (Pines 395–396).

**107** A quotation from *Sefer Yeširah*, ¶8, see A. Peter Hayman, *Sefer Yešira* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). See also III:2: the motion of the “living creatures” (*ḥayiot*) “consisted in running and retracing their way ... accordingly he [Ezekiel] says that it is like lightning, whose motion appears to be the swiftest of motions and which stretches out rapidly and at a rush from a certain place and then with

[5]<sup>108</sup> He said: *Know that whenever one of the perfect wishes to mention either orally or in writing, something he understands of these secrets, according to the level of his perfection, he is unable to explain with complete clarity and coherence even the portion that he has apprehended, as he could do with the other sciences whose teaching is generally recognized.* Instead, it will occur to him,<sup>109</sup> when teaching another, that which had occurred when teaching his own soul. *I mean to say that the notion will appear, come out, and then be concealed again as though* with respect to this matter, much of it is not different from a little. Only the sage who has apprehended this deep matter knows its true meaning, but he is unable to explain it to someone else. By virtue of habit in studying the sciences and great diligence in investigating them, the faculty of understanding and apprehension assists one with respect to deep subjects, but he will not be able to explain to another individual that which he has learned. That other individual will likewise not be able to understand the former, even if he is taught with every kind of explanation, unless they both have the same degree of [knowledge of] science. It seems to me that this subject is like trying to teach someone who was born blind [how] to distinguish among colors.<sup>110</sup> Just as [the blind person] lacks the faculty of sight to distinguish among colors, so does that other individual lack the faculty of understanding to apprehend such matters.<sup>111</sup>

[6]<sup>112</sup> For this reason, he who habituates his soul in [learning] the sciences will acquire, by means of judgment and inquiry, many concepts that he will not be able to explain by demonstration, and which he will not be able to share with someone else by teaching, but rather he only indicates [to another] the method that he himself undertook. If [the student] attempts to employ the same method, he might possibly acquire the same concept, if he is perfect in judgment and of as collected and clear

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the same rapidity contracts and returns time after time to the place whence it moved” (Pines 419). Maimonides’ statement clarifies the meaning of this paragraph, which is that the intellectual overflow is not constant, but rather frequently interrupted.

**108** *Moreh ha-moreh* 122, line 35–46.

**109** The ibn Tibbon translation has “he will apprehend”; the Pines translation reflects the Judeo-Arabic text and accords with Falaquera’s version.

**110** Cf. *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, Preface, where Ibn Tufayl writes that the blind can never come to know colors except through “descriptive explanations and ostensive definitions.” Thus those “who merely think and have not reached the level of love are like the blind. The colors, at that stage, are known only by accounts of their names... but to those who reach love, God grants what I purely metaphorically call another faculty. This corresponds to the restoration of sight.” *Ibn Tufayl’s ‘Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān’: a Philosophical Tale*, trans. Lenn E. Goodman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 97.

**111** Ibn Falaquera describes the faculty of apprehension as analogous to sense perception, an analogy that also appears in Ibn Sina. See Dag Nikolaus Hasse, “Avicenna on Abstraction,” in *Aspects of Avicenna*, ed. Robert Wisnovsky (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 46.

**112** *Moreh ha-moreh* 122, line 46–123, line 52.

intellect as [the teacher].<sup>113</sup> If he is not like the teacher in intellect, judgment, and habit, [the student] will not be able to acquire what the teacher acquired; he will deem as false that which [the teacher] says to him and reject it. The knowledgeable sage is obliged to distance himself from such a [student] and not reveal him *the secrets* that he knows, for that is for the benefit [of the student]; and the hearts of the sages are the graves of secrets. Let me now return to [Maimonides'] text.

[7]<sup>114</sup> [Maimonides] said: *the causes that account for the contradictory and contrary statements found in books are seven*, and he explains them. It seems to me that he gives a hint in what he says about the *fifth cause*, concerning the explanation of terms that he clarifies in the beginning of the book, since their analysis [at the beginning] is unpolished compared to what he explains later.<sup>115</sup> This is what is called a “preface” [*petiḥah*]: a sage writes things in the beginning of his book in order to facilitate their comprehension and he subsequently analyzes them. It is called in Arabic “muṣādara.”<sup>116</sup>

[8]<sup>117</sup> He said that *divergences found in this Treatise* are due to the *fifth cause and the seventh cause*. He said: *know this, search its true meaning, and reflect on it very well so as not to become confused by some of its chapters*. It was necessary to issue such a warning because he [Maimonides] knew that many of those who study his book, but who did not grasp his ideas to the fullest extent, would be quick to condemn it.<sup>118</sup> An example of this are the following chapters: I:9, 11, 13, 14, 54, 67, 71; and II:13–14,19,

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**113** On the ethical virtues required for the study of philosophy, and the necessity of acquiring a suitable study partner, see David, *Shemtob ben Joseph ibn Falaquera*, 10–20, esp. 17.

**114** *Moreh ha-moreh* 123, line 53–57.

**115** The “fifth cause” of contradictions arises from pedagogical constraints (Pines 18). By “terms” ibn Falaquera may have in mind the categories of “equivocal,” “derivative,” and “amphibolous” terms mentioned at the beginning of the Introduction to the *Guide* (Pines 5).

**116** In Judeo-Arabic in the text: מִצְאָדָרָה.

**117** *Moreh ha-moreh* 123, line 58–63.

**118** A likely reference to controversies that raged in the 13th century over the *Guide*. Ibn Falaquera was too young to have taken an active part in the controversies of the 1230s surrounding the *Guide*. It may be, therefore, that controversies around the *Guide* did not completely fizzle out after the 1230s, but dragged on into the late 13th century. Evidence for this notion can be found in the *Letter Regarding the Guide*, where ibn Falaquera writes that rabbis from France arose against the *Guide* and their opposition reached Damascus, Palestine and Akko, “where all those who speak out misunderstand Maimonides and his books, and they wrote letters to Barcelona, whence the letters reached us” (Lemler, 40). Thus even at this late date (1290) they continued on in the East and in Spain. See *Epistle*, 75–76, and David Lemler, “Shem Tov ibn Falaquera’s *Letter Regarding the Guide* – Critical Edition,” *Zutot* 9 (2012), 27–50.

etc.<sup>119</sup> Even more so, some sages have already composed books that negate the opinions of philosophers. They did so in order that the multitude would not think that they believe in the opinions of the philosophers.<sup>120</sup>

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**119** It is unclear why ibn Falaquera writes that the chapters in part I have attracted condemnation. Of these chapters, the *Moreh ha-moreh* covers only I:9 and I:71 (128–131, 173–175). There is no indication there that these two chapters are especially problematic. II:13–14, 19 deal with Creation (*Moreh ha-moreh* 256–264, 266–271).

**120** One such attack on philosophy, which ibn Falaquera may have plausibly known, is Jacob bar Sheshet's *Meshiv devarim nekhoḥim*, a critique of *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim* by Samuel ibn Tibbon and in defense of kabbalah. Yet other rabbinical authorities such as Menachem Ha-Me'iri defended the study of philosophy and of Maimonides' writings. See Georges Vajda ed., *Sefer meshiv devarim nekhoḥim* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1969) [Hebrew]; Moshe Halbertal, *Between Torah and Wisdom: Rabbi Menachem Ha-Me'iri and the Maimonidean Halakhists in Provence* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001) [Hebrew]; Gregg Stern, *Philosophy and Rabbinic Culture: Jewish Interpretation and Controversy in Medieval Languedoc* (New York: Routledge, 2009). Ibn Falaquera's final suggestion here is not that rabbis who criticize philosophy had an objection to philosophy per se, but merely that they did not wish to give the masses the impression that they believed in it.

## 5 Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen: Hebrew-English Text

### 5.1 Zeraḥiah Ḥen's Commentary: the Manuscripts

Zeraḥiah's commentary on the *Guide* survives in two different versions. This chapter presents both versions. For the long version, the manuscripts are:

Cambridge, Add. 1235 (Spanish, 1497/F17096 / ff. 1r-63r)<sup>1</sup> [base ms]

St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy B 102 (Byzantine, 15th century/F53040 / ff.50b-152r)

St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Evr. I 484 (Byzantine, 1348/F50993 / 107 ff.) (begins near the end of the Preface to *Guide*).

Paris, BN héb. 985 (Byzantine, 15th century/F30351 / ff. 80b-104r) (covers I:68–70, 72)<sup>2</sup>

The manuscripts of the shorter version are:

Cambridge, Add. 1527.3 (Spanish, 15th–16th century/F17464 / ff. 144r-158b)<sup>3</sup> [base ms]

Cambridge, Add. 377.1 (Byzantine, 15th century/F15907 / ff. 49r-55b)<sup>4</sup>

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek B.H. fol. 13 (Byzantine, 1329/F15679 / ff. 18b-25b)<sup>5</sup>

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 405 (Byzantine, 15th century/F481 / ff. 50r-84v)<sup>6</sup>

For the long version, ms Paris 985 was not consulted for this edition because it does not cover the Preface to *Guide*, and ms St. Petersburg I 484 was of limited use because it begins at the end of the commentary on the Preface, at ¶13. For the short version, ms Cambridge, Add. 377.1 was not consulted because it does not cover the Preface to the *Guide*.

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**1** S.C. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), SCR 705 (391).

**2** =Paris Oratoire 100; Salomon Munk, "Manuscrits hébreux de l'Oratoire à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris," *Hebräische Bibliographie* 13:2 (1909), 60; H. Zotenberg, *Manuscrits orientaux: catalogues des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque impériale* (Paris: Impr. Impériale, 1866).

**3** Reif, *Hebrew manuscripts*, SCR 706 (392).

**4** Reif, *Hebrew manuscripts*, SCR 128 (101–102). Scattered excerpts; does not cover the Preface to *Guide* and hence not used for this edition.

**5** = Leipzig UBL XXXIX; Franz Delitzsch, *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca Senatoria Civitatis Lipsiensis Asservantur* (Grimma: J.M. Gebhardt, 1838), XXXIX (301–303, 322–323). In this ms the commentary ends at I:70.

**6** Benjamin Richler ed., *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library Catalogue* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2008), 352.

The two versions of Zeraḥiah's commentary were identified by Aviezer Ravitzky as a "long" comprehensive version and an abridgement, called the "short" version. The abridgment contains most of the chapters found in the longer version but with numerous omissions. It is not yet known whether Zeraḥiah first wrote the shorter version and then expanded it or vice-versa. Both versions are reproduced below. In addition, I also reproduce the text of Zeraḥiah's preface for each version as found in the base mss.

The commentary seems to have originally covered all of the *Guide*.<sup>7</sup> In the correspondence with his cousin Judah ben Solomon, living in Barcelona, Zeraḥiah refers to chapters of the commentary that have not survived. Zeraḥiah twice responded to Judah ben Solomon's questions concerning the *Guide* (the responses partially survive in ms Cambridge 1235 and excerpts appear in ms. Bodleian 2360 and ms. Cambridge Add. 1527).<sup>8</sup> The second response to Judah ben Shlomo covers the following topics: Jacob's ladder; the status of the category of "instant" (*ma'amar ha'atah*) mentioned in I:73, 3rd *haqdamah*<sup>9</sup>; the natural possibility of the reality of giants; and the book of Job.<sup>10</sup> In that letter, he also discusses the composition of the commentary (see below). It has been stated that the entire commentary was preserved in an ms in Amsterdam, but it may have been lost when the Ets Haim library was relocated during World War II.<sup>11</sup>

It seems that Zeraḥiah composed the commentary around his lessons on the *Guide*. In his response to Judah ben Solomon's query on the book of Job, he writes that the book of Job is a concealed matter (*nistar*) and all the more so from beginners (perhaps it was this assertion that led Ravitzky to conclude that the commentary was intended for two classes, one advanced and one introductory<sup>12</sup>). If the meaning of Job is clear to him, he writes, it is only because he taught the *Guide* many times, comparing it to Aristotle and translating the latter from Arabic into Hebrew. He continues that he finally put together a large book, possibly for his own use (*ḥibarti li sefer gadol*) that gathered the results of his comparison between Aristotle and Maimonides, along with discussions on every point (of the *Guide*) that demanded explanation, including its secrets.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben Shealtiel Ḥen and the Maimonidean-Tibbonian Philosophy in the 13th Century," Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977 [Hebrew] (henceforth *Ravitzky*), 75.

<sup>8</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 78.

<sup>9</sup> Pines, 196–198; 'Even-Shmu'el, 170–172.

<sup>10</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 79.

<sup>11</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 77 n5. The ms may or may not be identical to ms Montesenos (no further indication), mentioned by Steinschneider as a manuscript "of which nothing further is known." *HÜB* 113 n35 (§48).

<sup>12</sup> Ravitzky, "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah," 75.

<sup>13</sup> ms Cambridge Add. 1235, ff. 91r-91v.

The extant sections of the commentary that can be attributed to Zeraḥiah with certainty cover most of part I up to I:72, and scattered notes on II:10, II:30, and on *ma'aseh merkavah*. The mss of the “short version” contain a digression on the faculties of the soul at the end of I:72 which is not found in the longer version.<sup>14</sup> There is also a commentary on the *haqdamot* (propositions) of part II of the *Guide* that is attributed to Zeraḥiah, but Ravitzky has argued against this attribution.<sup>15</sup>

Cambridge Add. 1235, ff. 1r-4r, is the base manuscript for the edition of the long version. It is in Spanish script, completed in Tirya (Turkey) and finished in 1497, according to the colophon. Zeraḥiah's commentary occupies the first 63 folios, and the rest of the manuscript contains other non-commentary material related to the *Guide* (among which is Zeraḥiah's correspondence with Judah ben Solomon, Hillel of Verona, and others).<sup>16</sup> In the section of the ms edited below there are numerous corrections in the form of crossed-out text, and occasional marginal notes. The base manuscript for the short version is Cambridge Add. 15273, f. 144r-145r; it is Spanish, with one or possibly more hands, and dates to the 15th–16th century. It is in a codex together with mss of some of Zeraḥia's other works and correspondence, stemming from the Carmoly collection. The codex contains the commentary on the *haqdamot* of part II whose attribution to Zeraḥia was disputed by Ravitzky; Samuel ibn Tibbon's exegesis of Ezekiel 1; a discussion on the meaning of the term *temunah* (cf. I:3); and a letter from Zeraḥia to Hillel of Verona.<sup>17</sup>

Zeraḥiah opens the commentary with a brief poem in praise of the *Guide*, alluding to its “obscurities” (*nistarim*), “secrets” (*sodotav*), and “mysteries” (*ta'alumotav*). The text is multi-layered, replete with biblical borrowings and linguistic puns that would be difficult if not impossible to reproduce in translation. Moreover, the manuscript transmission contains several uncertain readings. I have therefore chosen not to translate it, but the original Hebrew is given in this chapter.

The Hebrew text is based on the following manuscripts:

Long Version - הנוסח הארוך

א Cambridge Add. 1235 (base)

ב St. Petersburg 102

ג St. Petersburg Evr I.484 (ms begins at ¶13, line 57)

Short Version - הנוסח הקצר

א Cambridge Add. 15273 (base)

<sup>14</sup> Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah,” 77.

<sup>15</sup> He argues that it may be a paraphrase of the anonymous translation of al-Tabrisi's commentary. For an edition and translation, cf. Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, “Moses Maimonides und Muhammad al-Tabrisi” *Trumah* 5 (1996), 201–245.

<sup>16</sup> Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, SCR 705 (391).

<sup>17</sup> Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, SCR 706 (392). Reif has “Hillel of Ferrara,” who is better known as Hillel of Verona.

- ⌌ Leipzig 13
- ⌋ Vatican 405

Conventions and sigla for Hebrew text and apparatus:

+	addition
=	repetition
{ }	marginal note
?	uncertain reading
strikethrough	word stricken through in ms
...	omission by commentator in quotation from <i>Guide</i>
< >	written above line

Conventions for English translation:

Normal font:	text of commentary
<i>Italic font:</i>	quotations from <i>Guide</i> within the text
<b>Bold font:</b>	biblical prooftexts
<b>Bold italic font:</b>	biblical prooftexts also found in the <i>Guide</i>
...	omission by the commentator in quotation from <i>Guide</i>

## 5.2 Zeraḥiah Ḥen's Commentary: Reception

Zeraḥiah's commentary seems not to have been particularly popular, to judge from the number of extant manuscripts, and the absence of quotations in later works. A likely reason is that in his philosophical works and translations, Zeraḥiah employs a style of writing that reads as obtuse. In his activity as a translator from Arabic into Hebrew, Zeraḥiah followed a literalist method that rendered texts into a heavily Arabized Hebrew. This is one of the reasons his translations were not widely copied. In some cases, they became so unclear that new translations had to be produced.<sup>18</sup> The Hebrew of the commentary is likewise difficult, and certain passages are unclear in all the manuscripts.

Portions of the Prologue to the commentary were edited by Raphael Kirchheim and Jacob Fridman, who authored a descriptive article on the work.<sup>19</sup> Steinschneider,

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Mauro Zonta, "Le traduzioni di Zeraḥyah Gracian e la versione ebraica del *De Generatione et Corruptione*," in *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*, eds Cristina D'Ancona and Giuseppe Serra (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2002), 303. On the other hand, the language he uses in his biblical commentaries is more accessible.

<sup>19</sup> Raphael Kirchheim, "Schreiben der Herrn R. Kirchheim an Herrn Ignaz Blumenfeld in Wien," *'Oṣar neḥmad* 2 (1857), 117–124 [Hebrew]; Jacob Fridman, "The Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen," in *Jacob Fridman Memorial Volume*, ed Shlomo Pines (Jerusalem: Institute of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University, 1974), 3–14 [Hebrew]. The Prologue has also been edited by Eliakim Carmoly, "The Life of R. Yosef Al-Ashkar," *'Oṣar neḥmad* 3 (1860), 111.

too, mentions the commentary in *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, and was the first to delve into the details of Zeraḥiah Ḥen's biography.<sup>20</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky has studied different aspects of the commentary in his magisterial study "The Thought of R. Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen & the Maimonidean-Tibbonian Philosophy in the 13th Century," which contains much information concerning the commentary and Zeraḥiah's philosophical background. Ravitzky also identified quotations from lost Arabic recensions of *Parva naturalia* and *De sensu and sensibilia* within the commentary.<sup>21</sup>

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**20** *HÜB* §48 (112–113); Moritz Steinschneider, "Aspects of the Life of R. Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen," *Oṣar neḥmad* 2 (1857), 229–245 [Hebrew]. See also Hermann Vogelstein and Paul Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom* (Berlin: Mayer und Müller, 1896), 1:410–411.

**21** Aviezer Ravitzky, "Hebrew Quotations from the Lost Arabic Recension of *Parva Naturalia*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 3 (1982), 191–202 [Hebrew]; Aviezer Ravitzky, "A Hidden Commentary on the Guide of the Perplexed and the Lost Recension of Aristotle's *De sensu et sensibilia*," in *Maimonidean Essays: Society, Philosophy and Nature in Maimonides and His Disciples* (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 2006), 239–247 [Hebrew].



Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen  
 Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*  
 Long Version

[Preface to Commentary]

[Prefatory Poem]

[1] **Who is as the wise man, and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing** [Eccl 8:1]? Who is like the discerning individual who associates with those of the great assembly of science?<sup>22</sup> The speech of a man betrays whether he is **afflicted**<sup>23</sup> or has **high looks** [cf. Ps 18.27]<sup>24</sup> and yet **the righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart** [Isa 57:1]. The scholar of science is eager to know, to guide, and to make others understand. Therefore I arose and **I have put my life in my hand** [I Sam 28:22], and came to explain hidden things; I **exercise myself in great matters** and expound on **things too high** [Ps 131:1]. Herein I ask from God **the answer of the tongue** [Prov 16:1],<sup>25</sup> which is that he is one without unity; eternal of all eternal and first of all firsts.<sup>26</sup> After our praises and thanksgivings for his kingdom and his unity, let us say that what I have composed in this book that **giveth goodly words** [Gen 49:21] is for two purposes.

[2] The first one is that it should benefit all those who desire to know and to seek after the book of the *Guide of the Perplexed*. [Such a person] has learned by himself or from others many of its notions, but he has not examined all the places where there are hints and the depth of subjects that [require] further explanation. When he examines what I have explained, he will be **joyful and with gladness of heart** [cf. Deut 28:47] as he will recognize that which has already explained to him, or find something that had been unnoticed, or he will find something to rescue him from doubt concerning something on which he was previously doubtful.

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<sup>22</sup> Mishnah, *Pirquei 'avot* 1:2.

<sup>23</sup> 'Iqqesh. In his commentary on Proverbs, Zeraḥiah writes that the term indicates the class of the ignorant who are neither sages nor of average intellect. Cf. *'Imrei da'at*, ed. Israel Schwarz (Vienna, 1871), 2, citing Prov 17:20.

[זרחיה בן יצחק בן שאלתיאל חן]  
 [מבוא לפירוש מורה הנבוכים]  
 [נוסח ארוך]

זהו פי'רוש] מורה הנבוכים להרב הגדול רבי זרחיה הלוי זצ"ל

ונסתרם ואל על מעמידו	זרוע שכלך גלה והודו
וסודותיו ותחזק על כבודו	רכב וצלח במורה הנבוכים
ומ[ח?ג]נה שכלך עליו תיעדו	{חנה} חנה עליו כטל וכמן בשכבו
תהי חוקר וגם תשאל [ל]נגידו	ירא מתעל[ו?מ]מיו עד לזקן
הרהו קוממו מעל פרוזו	המונו אל יפחידך כשילד(?)
ותתן על זרועך צמידו	בחר שכלך באופנו וסודו
זוכר טוב אלהים לך זכרו(?)	ואז תשכיל ותצליח בכל עת
אלהיך ותהיה שר פקידו	ותמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני

הקדמה

[1] **מי כהחכם יודע פשר דבר?** [קה' ח,א], ומי כמב[י] אשר לאנשי כנסת החכמה הגדולה התחבר? ומדבורו של אדם ניכר אם **עקש** הוא או **נבר** [ע"פ שמ"ב כב,כז] ואם **אנשי חסד נאספים אין מבין** [יש' נז,א]. בעל המדע יכסוף לדעת להורות ולהבין. על כן קמתי אני **ושמתי נפשי בכפי** [שמ"א כח,כב], ובאתי לבאר תעלומות, והלכתי **בגדולות** ודרשתי **בנפלאות** [תה' קלא,א]. והנני שואל מהאל יתברך **מענה לשון** [מש' טז,א] אשר הוא אחד בלי אחדות, קדמון לכל קדמון וראשון לכל ראשון. אחרי שבחינו והודאתינו <שבחינו והודאתינו> במלכותו ואחדותו נאמר כי מה שחברתי בזה הספר הנותן **אמרי שפר** [בר' מט.כא] הוא לשתי כוונות.

[2] הכוונה הראשונה היא להועיל <להועיל> בו לכל מי שהוא חפץ לדעת ולתור אחר ספר מורה הנבוכים. וקבל מעצמו או מאחרים הרבה מענייניו, אבל לא השקיף על כל המקומות אשר בהם רמזים <רמזים> ועומק עניינים לביאורים נוספים. ובהשקיפו על מה שביארתי יהיה שמח **וטוב לבב** [ע"פ דב' כח,מז] אם שהוא מצא מה שכבר הבינהו, או מצא מה שהיה נעדר כן, או מצא מה שהוציאו מספק במה שחשב בו ספק קודם זה.

24 That is, whether he is humble or haughty.

25 In his commentary on Proverbs Zeraḥiah interprets the "answer of the tongue" as the end and goal of an action (*sof ha-davar ve-takhlito*), that is, to bring it into actualization; Schwartz, *Imrei da'at*, 66.

26 Cf. Solomon ibn Gabirol, "Keter malkhut," in *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon ibn Gabirol*, ed. Israel Davidson (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1924), 87 (¶8–¶9).

[3] The second purpose is to grant the request of a beginner who **desireth** wisdom [cf. Ps 34:13]<sup>27</sup>, but who has not grasped the meaning of this book [i.e. the *Guide*], nor has he understood its secrets, and **the comings out thereof and the comings in thereof** [Ezek 43:11].<sup>28</sup> He has not received knowledge about it from others, but only from himself.<sup>29</sup> For his appetites<sup>30</sup> have aroused him to follow after people who inclined their ear and investigated this book and other books.

[4] But one must not think, despite what rumor he may hear or what sight he may see, that I came to explain every detail of a premise or subject which the Gaon my Rabbi the author has brought forward for proof or demonstration, concerning notions or concepts from the books of the philosophers on the basis of the same well-known twenty-six *haqdamot*. For even if I were to explain all these premises together with their demonstrations, as they require per the *Physics* and other books of natural science, I would not [thereby] explain the subjects of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, but would [then] write other books instead, and I would stray away from what the Gaon the author intended [in the *Guide*].<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, in spite of it we will interpret from these premises that which we can interpret in abridged form, **only this once** [Judg 16:28] in keeping with the needs at hand, and in the appropriate time. Rather, my entire purpose is directed to the two subjects that I mentioned to you.

[5] That purpose is to grant the request of every beginner who lacks practice in the *Guide*, to remove what they learned from tradition and what is ambiguous in their doubts, and to remedy their deficiencies if they are not perfect, even though “I have seen people of merit and they are but few.”<sup>32</sup> In any case, this our commentary will **show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is**, as it is said **and that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is** [Job 11:6].<sup>33</sup> Henceforth I begin to explain with the help of “he who teaches knowledge to man;”<sup>34</sup> and from him is the **answer of the tongue** [Prov 16:1].

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<sup>27</sup> The verse reads “who desireth life.” In his Preface, Maimonides, too, shows some concern for beginning students and an awareness that they are part of the audience of the *Guide*: “I know that, among men generally, every beginner will derive benefit from some of the chapters of this Treatise, though he lacks an inkling of what is involved in speculation” (Pines 16); and the “fifth cause” of contradiction, which is present in the *Guide*, derives from the necessity of teaching beginners as well (cf. Pines 17–18, and *Maskiyot kesef*, Commentary, ¶8). Nonetheless, the first paragraph of the Preface states “it is not the purpose of this Treatise to make its totality understandable to the vulgar or to beginners in speculation” (Pines 5). Evidently Zerahiah does not interpret this last passage literally nor does he understand it as a prohibition on teaching of the *Guide* to beginners.

<sup>28</sup> The object of the verse is the Temple in Jerusalem; by using it to describe the *Guide*, Zerahiah is implicitly, if not explicitly connecting the two.

<sup>29</sup> That is, such a beginner is an autodidact.

<sup>30</sup> Or: lust.

[3] והכוונה השנית היא למלאת שאלת המתחיל **החפץ** בחכמה [ע"פ תה' לד, יג] ועדין לא עלתה בידו <בידו> כוונת זה הספר, ולא הכין <הבין> סודותיו ולא **מוצאיו ומובאיו** [יח' מג, יא] ולא לו בו קבלה מאחרים רק מעצמו. כי התעוררו בו תאוותיו ללכת בדרכי האנשים אשר אזנו וחקרו בו ובספרים אחרים.

[4] ואל יחשוב החושב בשמעו השמועה ובראותו את המראה כי אני באתי לבאר כל דבר ודבר מהקדמה או מענין שהביא הגאון רבי המחבר ז"ל לראיה או למופת על דבר מהדברים או על ענין מהעניינים מספרי הפילוסופים באותם הכ"ו הקדמות הידועות. כי אם הייתי מבאר כל אותן ההקדמות עם מופתיהם כמו שחייב בהם ספר השמע <השמע> הטבעי ושאר ספרי הטבעיים, לא הייתי מבאר ענייני ספר מורה הנבוכים, רק הייתי מחבר ספרים אחרים והייתי מרחיק ממה שכיוון בו המחבר הגאון ז"ל. אבל עכ"ז נבאר באותן ההקדמות מה שנוכל לבאר בדרך קצרה, **אך הפעם** [שו' טו, כח] לצורך השעה וכפי העת והעונה. רק כוונתי כולה היתה לשני העניינים שספרתי לך.

[5] והוא ב[א] ה למלאות שאלת חפץ המתחיל אשר לא הרגיל בו, ולהוציא המקובל והמסופק מידי <מידי> ספקם. ולמלאות חסרונם אם אינם שלמים. ואם ידעתי כי מועטים הם בני עלייה. מכל מקום פירושנו זה יגלה לך תעלומות חכמה כי **כפלים לתושייה** [איוב יא, ו] כמו שכתו' **ויגלה לך תעלומות חכמה כי כפלים <כפלים> לתושייה** [שם]. ומהנה אחל לבאר בעזרת המלמד לאדם דעת ומאתו **מענה לשון** [משלי טז, א].

31 In other words, those are scientific matters that are not main subject(s) of the Guide. See also the commentary on I:72, where Zerahiah writes that nearly every book of natural science contains lengthy explanations of the haqdamot (ms. Cambridge Add. 1235, f. 58r); Fridman, "The Commentary on the Guide of the Perplexed," 8.

32 b. *Sukkah* 45b. The sentence is found in Maimonides' Introduction to the *Commentary on the Mishnah* within the context of an illustration for people who are devoid of knowledge. See *Maimonides' Introduction to His Commentary on the Mishnah*, trans. Fred Rosner (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995), 130.

33 Zerahiah interprets "double to that which is" (*kiflayim le-toshiah*) as "science and Torah," in his commentary on Job. See *Sefer tiqvat 'enosh*, ed. Israel Schwartz (Berlin, 1868), 221.

34 Cf. the 4th blessing of the *Shemonah 'esreh*.

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]

[1] He says in the Preface<sup>35</sup>: *The ignorant attribute to them only one or some of the meanings in which the term in question is used; others are derivative.*<sup>36</sup> End of quote. The commentator says<sup>37</sup>: the ignorant *take* all or most of [meanings of] *the equivocal terms* as if [they were] a few.<sup>38</sup> A *meshal* of this is the word “hand.” It is said of a human hand as well as of other notions that are not “living.” The term in question is one single term whether per se or per all those entities that can be spoken of as hand, according to the definition of equivocal terms. But the ignorant believe that all of its usage refers to its first meaning as I have just explained, which is the human hand.<sup>39</sup>

[2] These terms that [Maimonides] mentions, such as *equivocal* and *derivative* and the term called *univocal*, are explained in books of Logic. Aristotle defined equivocal term or equivocal terms by saying that such a term refers to “things which have nothing general and common, except for the name alone.” Rather, “the definition of each, which states its essence in consideration of the meaning of the equivocal name, differs from the definition of the other one and is peculiar to its own definiendum.”<sup>40</sup>

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35 haqdamah, meaning the Preface as a whole.

36 Pines, 5.

37 The abridged version has instead, *perush* (“interpretation”). But ibn Falaquera uses a similar formula to indicate sources and divisions within the commentary: *'amar morenu*, “as our teacher [Maimonides] says”; *'amar he-ḥakham ha-nizkar*, ibn Rushd; *'amar 'Aristo*. It is, of course, also parallel to ibn Rushd's longer commentaries, where formulas such as “Aristotle says” are common. The formula “the commentator says” (cf. also below, Commentary, ¶4) may have been inserted by a later scribe, but its presence could be due to Zeraḥiah's knowledge of Greco-Arabic philosophical models. The same formula, *'amar ha-meva'er*, appears in the Arabic and Hebrew versions of Maimonides' *Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates*. See Carsten Schliwski, “Moses Ben Maimon: Šarḥ fuṣūl Abuqrāt: Der Kommentar des Maimonides zu den Aphorismen des Hippokrates. Kritische Edition des arabischen Textes mit Einführung und Übersetzung,” Ph.D. diss. Cologne, 2004. See also Maimonides' *Pirqei Moshe* (translated into Hebrew by Zeraḥiah), where the formula is “Moses [Maimonides] says.” *HÜB* 765–766 (§481).

38 Here Zeraḥiah seems to be using the term *meshuttafīm* as a general term for names that refer to more than one meaning (homonyms), as it is used in *MH* ch. 13.

[זרחיה בן יצחק בן שאלתיאל חן]  
[פירוש מורה הנבוכים - פירוש על פתיחת הספר]

1 [1] אמר בהקדמה--ויקחום הפתיים על קצת העניינים אשר יאמר עליהם השם ההוא המשותף. ומהם  
2 מושאלים ע"כ לשונו. אמ' המבאר--כי הפתאים יקחו... השמות המשותפים כלם או רובם כמו  
3 קצתם. המשל בזה מלת יד <בזה מלת יד> נאמרת על יד האדם ועל ענינים אחרים שאינם חי, והשם הזה  
4 הוא שם אחד בעצמו ובכל העצמים ההם אשר יאמר בהם שם יד, כמו שנאמ[ר] בגדר השם המשותף.  
5 והפתי יחשוב שהכל יהיה נאמר על הענין הראשון ממנו כמו שביארתי, והוא יד האדם.

6 [2] ואלה שמות שזכר כמושם המשותף והשם המושאל והשם הנאמר בהסכמה <בהסכמה> הם מבוארים  
7 בספרי ההגיון. ארסטו גדר השם המשותף או השמות המשותפים ואמר שהם אין להם דבר אחד כולל  
8 ומשותף אלא השם בלבד. אבל גדר כל אחד מהם המובן גדרו לפי מה שיוורה עליו אותו השם המשותף  
9 הוא חלף האחר ומיוחד במוגדרו.

2 לשונו] ב פירוש | אמר המבאר] ב חסר | הפתאים] ב הפתיים | 3 חי] ב יד | 4 העצמים] ב הענינים | יאמר] ב נאמר | כמו  
-ש] ב כפי שהוא | 5 כמו] ב כפי שביארתי] ב שביארתי | 7 שהם] ב +אשר

**39** It is unclear here whether “first meaning” (*inyan rishon*) refers to the order in which Zerahiah presented the subject, that is, he first mentions the meaning of “human hand” and then other meanings; or whether he thinks “first meaning” refers to the primary meaning of a term as opposed to “derived” meanings, following the paradigm of a metaphorical term. In *MH* ch. 13 such a “primary meaning” is described as “a name which in the original usage of the language came to denote, and to be fixed permanently in, and afterwards it was given but not permanently to another object” (60). Though this seems to fit the example of “hand” as human hand and inanimate “hands,” with the human hand as the “first meaning,” he writes that this is according to the definition of equivocal rather than metaphorical terms. An analogous example of equivocal can be found in *Categories* 1, 1a-5a, where the term “man” is equivocal with respect to a living man and a picture of a man, but there is nothing in that passage that hints that one or the other is the “primary” meaning. Moreover, the example of metaphorical terms given in *Categories* is completely different from the example of a living vs. an inanimate hand. If we consider that by “first meaning” Zerahiah merely means his order of presentation, however, he may be thinking of equivocal in the sense in which it is presented in *Categories*, that is, a single term referring to many things, each of which has a distinct definition.

**40** Ibn Rushd’s Middle Commentary on the *Categories* 1, 1a-5a, trans. Herbert A. Davidson, *Averroes’ Middle Commentary on Porphyry’s “Isagoge” and on Aristotle’s “Categoriae,”* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1969), 32. Ibn Rushd’s Epitome does not address the subject of equivocal terms, but see his commentary on Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, in *Kol meleket higgayon* (Riva di Trento, 1559), f. 2v.

[3] An example is a lion made of stone and a lion that walks. They have nothing in common or shared but the term alone, since the definition of one differs from the definition of the other. The definition of the lion that walks corresponds to the definition of “living,” and the definition of the one that is engraved in stone corresponds to the definition of “inanimate.”<sup>41</sup> Some equivocal terms comprise a distant resemblance,<sup>42</sup> such as the term “dog” referring to a star,<sup>43</sup> due to the resemblance to warmth and dryness that occurs {in the days} when the sun is present more than in other days of the year.<sup>44</sup> This is the kind of similitude that is indicated by derivative terms. The univocal term is the one that expresses one single notion but encompasses more than one individual, for example “living” and “rational.”<sup>45</sup> The *amphibolous* term is said of two things between which there is a resemblance concerning one of their aspects, as in the beginning of a path and the beginning of life that is in the heart.<sup>46</sup>

[4] He said further in the Preface: *The exposition of one who wishes to teach without recourse to parables and riddles is so obscure and brief as to make obscurity and brevity serve in place of parables and riddles. The men of knowledge and the sages are drawn, as it were, toward this purpose by the divine will just as they are drawn by their same natural circumstances.* End of quote. The commentator says: this passage is not easily understood, but its interpretation is that one who wishes to teach another matters of natural or divine science will not be able to do so appropriately without *mesalim* and riddles. If one were to teach these matters without them, his idea will be difficult and obscure to understand, to the extent that this results in *the sages and men of knowledge* being drawn ... toward this purpose, meaning the purpose of divine science.

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<sup>41</sup> On its face, this would seem to be an example of an amphibolous term rather than equivocal, since both the living and the inanimate lion have the accident of “shape” in common. This is the argument given in *MH* ch. 13 for the example of “man” applied to a living man and to a corpse, or an effigy or statue of a man: they all have shape and configuration in common. Zeraḥiah seems to be following instead the example of equivocality from the *Categories*: “When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different, they are called *homonymous*. Thus, for example, both a man and a picture are animals. These have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different; for if one is to say what being an animal is for each of them, one will give two distinct definitions,” 1, 1a-5a (emphasis added).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Shalom Rosenberg, “The Doctrine of Terms in Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” *Iyun* 27 (1976–1977), 111 [Hebrew]. In *Kol melekhet higgayon* the same example given here is described as “equivocality by indirect accident” (*shittuf be-miqreh raḥoq*), f. 2v.

<sup>43</sup> Sirius, in the Canis Major constellation.

<sup>44</sup> Sirius, the “dog star,” has its first heliacal rising (rises just before sunrise) around the warmest part of the year, a fact known to ancient Egyptians and Romans, and hence its association with summer heat and the expression “dog days.” The term “dog” is used equivocally to refer to both the star and the period of the year; but it so happens that the first rising of the star coincides with a particular time of the year. There is thus some tenuous resemblance (in the sense of a relation) between the two uses of the term, which Zeraḥiah describes as “distant” (indirect). His point is that such an instance

10 [3] כמו האריה מאבן והאריה ההולך, שאין בהם שום דבר כולל ומשתתף אלא השם בלבד, כי גדר זה אינו  
 11 כגדר זה. כי האריה ההולך הוא בגדר החי והאריה החקוק באבן הוא בגדר הדומם <בגדר הדומם>. ויש  
 12 מהשמות המשותפים שיש בהם דימוי רחוק, כמו שם כלב לכוכב לדמיון החמימות והיובש שיהיה {בימי}  
 13 היות השמש בו יותר <יותר> משאר הימים, וזו היא ההשאלה הנאמרת בשם המושאל. והשם הנאמר  
 14 בהם הוא השם המורה על ענין אחד ויכלול <ויכלול> דברים הרבה כמו החי והמדבר <והמדבר>. והשם  
 15 המסופק הוא הנאמר על שני עניינים יש ביניהם דמיון באחד מן העניינים כמו תחלת <תחלת> הדרך  
 16 ותחלת החי בלב.

17 [4] ועוד אמר בהקדמה כי אשר ירצה ללמד מבלתי המשל וחידות יבא בדברו מן העומק וההעברה  
 18 {וההעברה} מה שיעמוד במקום המשל והדיבור בחידות, כאלו החכמים והידועים נמשכים אחר הענין  
 19 הזה ברצון האלוהי כמו שימשכו אותם ענייניהם הטבעיים עד כאן אמר המבאר זה המקום לפי  
 20 הלשון אינו מובן בנקלה, אבל ביאורו הוא שמי שירצה ללמד לזולתו עניינים טבעיים או עניינים אלהיים לא  
 21 יתכן ללמד <למדם> כראוי מבלתי המשל וחידות. ואם למד בלתי זה יהיה עניינו קשה ועמוק להבינו,  
 22 עד שיגיע <שיגיע> מזה שהחכמים והידועים יהיו נמשכים אחר...הכוונה הזאת, כלומר' כוננת החכמה  
 23 האלהית {האלהית}.

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10 האריה] ב+ החקוק | מאבן] ב באבן | 11 כגדר] ב כגדר | 12 {בימי}] ב בימי | 13 [וזן] ב וזאת | 14 בהם] ב בהסכמה |  
 והמדבר] ב והאדם | 15 באחד] ב בא' | 19 אמר המבאר] ב פירוש

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of equivocality as this one is clearly different from the equivocality of a term such as 'ayin, which can mean either "eye" or "well," with no relation whatsoever between the two meanings. The example of "dog" as an equivocal term is also given by Maimonides, in MH ch. 13 (59) and by ibn Rushd in *Kol melekhet higgayon*, f. 2v. See also *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, eds Isadore Twersky and George H. Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1:472.

45 MH, ch. 13: "a term is used univocally when there is something which constitutes the essence of two or more things, and that term refers to each one of these things that share in that constitutive essence" (59). In *Kol melekhet higgayon* the univocal terms are those that indicate one meaning (i.e. definition) and contain many entities, whether many species or many individuals (f. 3r). See also the analysis by Rosenberg, "Doctrine of Terms," 110–111.

46 Cf. MH, ch. 13: the amphibolous term applies to two or more objects on account of a trait that is common to them both, which trait does not constitute the quiddity (essence) of either (60). In the example of "man," where a living man, a statue and a corpse are all described by the same term, the trait that is common to all is the shape and configuration, which is merely an accident. The definition of amphiboly with the example of "beginning" appears also in *Kol melekhet higgayon*, f. 2v, where the different kinds of amphiboly are mentioned and this example illustrates amphiboly by analogy. For a treatment of the three types of amphiboly (by resemblance, by *prius et posterius* and by analogy), see Rosenberg, "Doctrine of Terms," 112–116, 133.

[5] Their words will then bring forth of matters of prophecy, which come from God, in a manner similar to how they are drawn to all other matters of prophecy like those that are not according to the divine purpose.<sup>47</sup> This is prerequisite for those sages if the teacher teaches them these subjects without *meshalim* and riddles. The proof is in what was mentioned previously: due to the obscure nature [of the matter] it appears and is then concealed.<sup>48</sup> Thus every great{great} sage will aim not to speak of this matter except through parables and riddles. As he says at the end of his passage: *do you not see the following fact?*<sup>49</sup> The rest of the passage<sup>50</sup> {of the passage} covers the subject fully.

[6] Among the principles of his Treatise is also that our holy Torah begins with *ma'aseh bereshit*, which is natural science, in the form of riddles and *meshalim*. They are constructed by our Sages the scholars of truth as it is said thereof: *it is impossible to teach to ... mortals of the power of the Account of the Beginning, for this reason Scripture tells you obscurely: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* [Gen 1:1]. It is also said concerning this matter alone: *the importance of the subject and that our capacity falls short of apprehending those obscure matters*. That is, those matters of divine science. Thus Scripture was compelled {Scripture was compelled} to relate them in *parables and riddles and in very obscure words*.

[7] Let it not be difficult for you [to comprehend] what I will explain to you: that one must teach natural science through parables and riddles. You will then say: if so, as for the philosophers who wrote natural science – why did they not discuss it in *meshalim* and riddles? The reply to this is that the Gaon our Rabbi meant rather by this kind of concealment that which he interpreted of these natural matters within prophetic discourse alone, even though the philosophers explained natural matters in parables and riddles as well.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, the ancients would conceal natural subjects to such an extent that Plato termed form “male” and matter “female.”<sup>52</sup> This secret is thus mentioned in the Preface to this book as being concealed.<sup>53</sup> He meant rather that which he interpreted of these natural matters within prophetic discourse alone, even though the philosophers explained natural matters in parables and riddles as well. Nonetheless the ancients would conceal natural subjects to such an extent that Plato termed form male, and matter female. This secret is thus mentioned in the Preface to this book.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>47</sup> This sentence seems to have become truncated in the transmission; cf. Abridged Version.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. James T. Robinson, “Samuel ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*,” PhD diss., Harvard University, 2002, ¶352, p.359–360.

<sup>49</sup> Pines 8. The sentence that follows is “God, may His mention be exalted, wished us to be perfected and the states of our societies to be improved by His laws regarding actions.”

<sup>50</sup> or: treatise, speech, discourse (*ma'amar*).

<sup>51</sup> In the preface to his commentary on Job, Zeraḥiah writes that there is much in the words of the prophets and the Rabbis that concerns the natural and propaedeutic sciences. In order to write a commentary “in the scientific method” (*al derekh ha-ḥokhmah*), it is therefore imperative to have scientific knowledge. Schwartz, *Sefer tiqvah 'enosh*, 169

1 [5] ויביאו דבריהם בעניינים הנבואיים <הנבואיים> שהם מן <מן> אלוה כמו שהם נמשכים בשאר העניינים  
 2 הנבואיים כמו שהם שאינן כן לפי הכוונה האלהית. וכל זה יהיה קודם לאותם החכמים אם יהיה מלמדם  
 3 המלמד בלא משל וחידות. והראיה בזה מה שזכר לך קודם זה, כי מפני שמטבע העמוק שהוא מתראה  
 4 מקרי? ומתעלם יכין <יכוין> כל חכם גדול {גדול} שלא ידבר בו כי אם במשלים וחידות. ואמר בסוף  
 5 דבריו הלא תראה השם ית' וכו' ושאר המאמר {מאמר} עד סוף הענין.

6 [6] ובכלל מאמרו ג"כ שתורתנו הקדושה באת תחלה במעשה בראשית שהיא חכמת הטבע, בחידות  
 7 ומשלים המבונה {המבונה} אצל חכמי האמת רבותי <רבותי> עליהם השלום כמו שאמר ע"כ להגיד  
 8 לשנים במעשה בראשית לבשר ודם אי אפשר לפיכך סתם לך הכתוב {ב} **בראשית ברא אלהים את**  
 9 **השמים ואת הארץ** [בר' א, א]. וגם אמר לשם בענין זה בעצמו כי לעצם הענין והיות יכולתנו קצרה להשיג  
 10 העניינים העמוקים ההם כלומ' ענייני החכמה האלהית; היה מוכרח-הכתוב {מוכרח הכתוב} לספר אותם  
 11 במשלים וחידות ודברים {ובדברים} סתומים.

12 [7] ואל יקשה בעיניך מה שאבאר לך שצריך ללמד החכמה הטבעית במשלים וחידות. ותאמר א"כ הפלוסופים  
 13 שחברו ספרי הטבע—מדוע לא דברו בהם במשלים וחידות? כי התשובה על זה שהגאון רבי ז"ל לא כיון בזה  
 14 ההעלם שזכר אלא במה שביאר אלו העניינים הטבעיים מדברי הנביאים לבד אע"פ שהפלוסופים ג"כ  
 15 ביארו הדברים הטבעיים במשלים וחידות. ועם כל זה היו הקדמונים מכסים העניינים הטבעיים עד שאפלטון  
 16 היה מכנה הצורה זכר והחומר נקבה, כמו שזכר זה הסוד בהקדמת זה הספר בזה ההעלם <בזה העלם>  
 17 שזכר אלא במה שבאר מאלו העניינים הטבעיים {בדברי} הנביאים לבד, אע"פ שהפלוסופים ג"כ ביארו  
 18 הדברים הטבעיים <היו?> {הטבעיים} במשלים וחידות. ועם כל זה היו הקדמונים מכסים <מכסים> [ב?]  
 19 עניינים הטבעיים עד שאפלטון היה מכנה הצורה זכר והחומר נקבה, כמו שזכר בהקדמת זה הספר.

1 מן [ב רצון | אלוה] ב אלוהי | בשאר] ב + העניינים הטבעיים כלומ' שהולכים על המנהג הטבעי ולא יהיו מאמינים | 2 שהם  
 ב + על דרך | שאינן] ב שאינו | 3 שמטבע] ב + זה העניין | 4 {גדול} | ב גדול | 6 שתורתנו] ב + האמתית | הטבע] ב  
 הטבעית | 7 המבונה} | ב המבונה | השלום] ב + סתומות | 8 לשנים] ב חסר | 10 מוכרח] ב מוכרח | הכתוב} | ב הכתוב  
 | 12 יקשה] ב יהיה השק | שאבאר] ב שבאר | 13 זה] ב היא שהמחבר | רבי ז"ל] ב רבינו זצ"ל | 14 שביאר אלו  
 ב שבא מאלו | מדברי] ב בדברי | הנביאים] ב והחכמים | 15 שאפלטון] ב + רבו של ארסטוטאלס | 16 שזכר] ב שכבר  
 זכר | הסוד] ב עוד | הספר] ב + הנכבד | 17 שבאר] ב שבאו | {בדברי} | ג מדברי | 18 {הטבעיים} | ב הטבעיים

52 This should not be construed necessarily as an indication of a direct knowledge of Plato since a parallel formulation appears in *Guide I:17*: [The philosophers and learned men] “concealed what they said about the first principles and presented it in riddles. Thus Plato and his predecessors designated Matter as the female and Form as the male” (Pines 43).

53 In the commentary on Job, Zeraḥiah writes that it was the custom of the Jewish sages as well as the sages of other nations to conceal divine secrets from the vulgar, as well as matters of natural science such as *ma'aseh bereshit* (Schwartz, *Sefer tiqvat 'enosh*, 170).

54 The repetition reflects the manuscript text.

[8] It is said further in the Preface: *because a mashal is taken for the things represented or vice versa*. This means that a subject and its exoteric reading are taken {in place of} the subject being represented [in a *mashal*], and the subject being represented is taken, as well, as the only subject of the *mashal*. In other words, all the *meshalim* that are understood in their literal meaning, which does not correspond to any {known} natural [entity], and they {are [not] apprehended} in the way that they ought to be correctly apprehended.<sup>55</sup>

[9] In the *sixth cause* in the “Introduction” he mentions four concepts that originate from Logic. They are proposition, premise, conclusion and syllogism. I will now explain to you each of them according to their essence. The proposition and the premise are ~~closely related in meaning~~. The premise is mentioned by ibn Rushd in [the commentary on] *Prior Analytics*: the premise is a sentence affirming one thing of another or negates one thing of another.<sup>56</sup> Abu Nasr al-Farabi describes the proposition thus: It is a statement where one thing characterizes {is judged of} another and where one thing is predicated of another.<sup>57</sup> He also says in ~~the eighth type~~ {in the eighth category} of syllogism that what is entailed by the syllogism is called the consequential conclusion.<sup>58</sup>

[10] Every syllogism is composed of two premises.<sup>59</sup> [ibn Rushd] says the following in the fifth chapter of the [commentary on] *Prior Analytics*: a syllogism is a statement that presupposes more than one notion. When [those notions] are joined, it necessarily follows from them, per se and by accident, a composite other than they.<sup>60</sup> Likewise ibn Ridwan defined the syllogism by saying that it is a statement composed of propositions.<sup>61</sup> The commingling [of propositions] per se entails a conclusion, and that which is entailed from a syllogism is called the conclusion and the consequence.<sup>62</sup> The syllogism entails what is joined to that which is sought to be derived. It is initially considered in terms of its premises, and one weighs its truth value only afterwards.

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55 The last sentence is fairly mangled in the manuscripts. What Zeraḥiah apparently means is that reading a *mashal* literally implies belief in supernatural things. For example, reading the *mashal* of Jacob's ladder literally implies belief that God can stand atop a physical ladder.

56 Cf. ibn Rushd's *Middle Commentary on Prior Analytics*: *propositio quidem est oratio affirmativa alicuius de aliquo, aut negativa alicuius ab aliquo*. Cf. also *Epitome on Prior Analytics*: “that which is composed of predicate and subject is called, as part of a syllogism, the premise.” *Aristotelis Priorum Resolutoriorum Liber Primus Cum Averrois Cordubensis media Expositione*, trans. Giovanni Burana (Venice, 1562–1574, reprint Frankfurt: Minerva, 1962) 1:1m; the *Epitome* is in *Kol melekhet higgayon*, 14r (my translation).

57 Cf. *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics*, trans. Nicholas Rescher (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 52. See also Joep Lameer, *Al-Fārābī and Aristotelian Syllogistics: Greek Theory and Islamic Practice* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 75–78.

58 *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary*, 59.

59 *Epitome*, 14v.

- 20 [8] ועוד אמ' בהקדמה או מפני שאת המשל במקום הנמשל או שאת הנמשל במקום המשל, כלומ' שיקחו  
 21 הענין ונגלהו במקו {במקום} הענין הנמשל והנמשל ג"כ אצלם הוא ענין המשל לבד. ר"ל בזה כי כל  
 22 המשלים יקחום על פשוטיהם ולא יתנו ענין לשום טבע (? ) {בעולם} {ירגישו} (?)(?)(? ) בהם מה שהוא  
 23 ראוי להרגיש בו לפי הנכון.

- 1 [9] אמנם בסבה השישית בהקדמה זכר ד' מלות הנזכרות בהגיון והן גזרה, והקדמה, ותולדה והקש, ואני  
 2 אבאר לך כל אחת מהן לפי מהותן. הגזרה וההקדמה {בו (?) ענייניהן} קרובות בענייניהן. וההקדמה אמר  
 3 ׳ך רשד בספר ההיקש: וההקדמה היא מאמר מחייב דבר לדבר או שולל דבר מדבר. אמ[ר] אבונצר  
 4 אמר אבונצר <אלפארבי מה >אלפארבי מה <גזרה: היא מאמר יורו בו בדבר על {יודן בו בדבר}>  
 5 <דבר >דבר <ויוד בו בדבר בעבור דבר, ואמר ג"כ בשמיני-ממיני {בשמיני מאמר} ההיקש כי המחוייב  
 6 מההיקש נקרא התולדה הרדיפה.

- 7 [10] וכל הקש יתחבר משתי הקדמות. ואמ' בפרק שמיני מההיקש: וההיקש מאמר יונחו בו עניינים  
 8 יותר מאחד. כאשר יחברו יתחייב בעבורם בעצמותם במקרה ריבוי אחר זולתם בהכרח. ובן רצאן  
 9 גדר ההקש ואמ' <ואמר > שהוא מאמר יחבר מגזרות יתחייב מחיבורן בעצמן תולדה והמתחייב בעבור  
 10 ההיקש נקרא התולדה ונקרא ההרדפה. וההקש אמנם יתחייב יתחבר על מבוקש נגזר. יתקיים  
 11 ויחושב תחלה ואחר כן יבוקש אמתתו <?>.

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21 כי כל [ב חסר 22 {ירגישו} ב ולא ירגישו  
 2 קרובות בענייניהן] ב קרובות בענייניהן 3 ׳ך רשד] ב החכם הפילוסוף 4 אלפראבי] ב הפילוסוף 1 יורו] ב חסר 1 יודן בו  
 בדבר] [ב יודן בו בדבר 5 בשמיני-ממיני] ב בשמיני ממני 1 המחוייב] ב המחייב 7 שמיני] ב ח' 8 ריבוי] ב דבר 1 רצאן] ב  
 רצאן הפילוסוף 9 מחיבורן בעצמן] ב מחבורם בעצמם 10 יתחייב] ב יתחבר 1 יתקיים] ב יתקדם

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60 Cf. *Middle commentary on Prior Analytics*: “syllogismus autem est oratio, in qua cum ponunt res plures una, sequitur ex necessitate pp. haec posita, per se non per accidens aliud quid ab il lis.” *Epitome on Prior Analytics*: a syllogism is a statement where more than one thing is stated, and it necessarily follows from them – per se and not by accident – something other than those things [that are stated] (13v). Note that both the long and the abridged versions of Zeraḥiah’s commentary do have “by accident” rather than “not by accident.” The sentence is more intelligible as it is in the epitome and middle commentary by ibn Rushd, “not by accident.” “Composite” can also be read as “plurality” (*ribbui*).

61 Possibly a reference to ibn Ridwan’s commentary on Galen’s *Ars parva*, one of three treatises by ibn Ridwan that was translated into Hebrew (Zeraḥiah could have consulted any of his works in Arabic, however). It is extant only in manuscript under the title *Perush melakhah qetannah*. It was first translated into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon in 1199, and translated again by Zeraḥiah’s contemporary Hillel of Verona. See *HÜB* 734 (§471). The Abridged Version does not mention ibn Ridwan’s name.

62 See *MH* ch. 6 (“it is called a conclusion and also a consequent”), 40.

[11] Now that I have explained to you these logical terms, I will explain to you the concealed contradiction of this [logical] type that is in the *fifth cause*.<sup>63</sup> A *mashal* is the sage who wishes to explain a certain matter among obscure matters, such as the existence of the world *a parte ante* or creation *ex nihilo*.<sup>64</sup> He will bring forward several premises concerning one of them as a *mashal*, as you can see is mentioned concerning the sect of peripatetics and the sect of the Mutakallimūn, and all those who bring forward many premises with proofs and arguments.<sup>65</sup> With every question they pose, the matter becomes more concealed and obscure and it then seems to the author that he has brought forward those correct premises, and he then draws the necessary conclusion from them. [It is as if] you said that every body is a composite and every composite is created, and the conclusion is that every body is created.<sup>66</sup> As a *mashal*, this is what ought to be done for every conclusion. A {correct} premise is composed on the basis of it, and it is concluded what the nature of the matter entails.

[12] *After many syllogisms the outcome is a contradiction or contrary between the two final conclusions*.<sup>67</sup> This means the scholar who writes a book or treatise [of that nature] will not notice any contradictions anywhere in his treatise or in the final conclusions. He will think, instead, that the two initial propositions are correct. When each proposition is considered and joined to a correct premise, *after several syllogisms the outcome is a contradiction between the two final conclusions*. The author [Maimonides] says this is similar to what happens to scholars who write books.

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**63** Though Zeraḥiah writes “fifth cause” here (and in the Abridged Version below), the example he brings and its explanation correspond more closely to the sixth cause. It is possible (if not likely) that the mention of “fifth cause” here rather than “sixth” was an error in the copying and transmission of the text.

**64** On Zeraḥiah’s stance on Creation of the universe, see Aviezer Ravitzky, *‘Al da’at ha-maqom: Studies in the History of Jewish Philosophy* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1991), 236–243 [Hebrew].

**65** Cf. I:71, and I:73, where Maimonides examines the “common premises laid down by the Mutakallimūn” (Pines 175–184, 194–214).

**66** I:73, The First Premise (Pines 195); cf. also I:76 (Pines 228). Similar examples regarding Creation of the world are also given by ibn Rushd in the *Middle Commentary on Prior Analytics*. See Steven Harvey, “Averroes’ Use of Examples in his *Middle Commentary on the Prior Analytics*, and Some Remarks on His Role as Commentator,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 7 (1997), 91–113.

**67** Continuing the text of “sixth cause” begun in ¶9.

12 [11] ואחר שביארתי <שביארתי> לך <לך> אלו המלות ההגיוניות <ההגיוניות> אבאר לך איך תהיה הסתירה  
 13 הנעלמת {הנעלמת} מזה המין <המין> בהקדמה <בהקדמה> החמשית. והוא על דרך <דרך> משל  
 14 שהחכם שירצה <שירצה> לבאר ענין מן העניינים העמוקים כמו קדמות <קדמות> העולם או חרושו  
 15 <חדושו>. ויביא <ויביא> הקדמות הרבה <הרבה> על אחד מאלו על דרך משל <משל> כמו שאתה  
 16 רואה שזכר בדברי כת המשאים וכת המדברים ולכל אחר יתרבו <יתרבו> ההקדמות בראיות ובטענות.  
 17 על כל שאלה מהם יהיה הענין יותר נעלם ויותר עמוק ויהיה <ויהיה> נראה למחבר שהוא הביא באותן  
 18 <באותן> ההקדמות הצודקות <הצודקות> ויביא <ויביא> מהם מה שיתחייב מן התולדה. כאמרך  
 19 ככל גשם מחובר וכל מחובר מחודש; התולדה שכל גשם מחדש, וכן על דרך משל יעשה בכל תולדה  
 20 <תולדה>, יחובר ממנה הקדמה צודקת {צודקת} ויוליד מה שיחייב יכלה בענין.

21 [12] אחר הקשים רבם <רבים> [יגיע] לסתירה בין <בין> שתי התולדות האחרונות או הפך, כלומר שזה  
 22 החכם המחבר הספר או המאמר הוא לא ירגיש שתהיה סתירה בשום מקום ממאמרו <ממאמרו>  
 23 ותולדותיו האחרונות. אבל יחשוב <יחשוב> כי <כי> שתי <שתי> הגזרות <הגזרות> הראשונות יהיו  
 24 צודקות. וכשתוקח כל גזרה מהם ויחובר אליה הקדמה צודקת יעלה הענין אחר הקשים הרבה אל סתירה  
 25 <סתירה> בין <בין> שתי התולדות האחרונות. ואמר המחבר ז"ל כי כמו זה הוא אשר יקרה אל החכמים  
 26 מחברי הספרים.

12 ואחר שביארתי] ב אשר בארתי | 15 מאלו] ב מהם | משל] ב משלים | 16 ולכל אחר] ב ושכל אשר ג וכל אשר | 18 ויביא] ב ויוליד | מהם] ג מהן | שיתחייב] ב שמתחייב | מן התולדה] ב מהתולדות | 19-18 כאמרך ככל] ב כאמרך כל | 19 התולדה] ב +היא | 20 ממנה] ב אל | צודקת] ב צודקת | שיחייב] ב שיתחייב | 21 רבם] ב הרבה | 21-23 או הפך...ותולדותיו האחרונות] ב חסר | 22 ממאמרו] ג מאמריו

[13] In Logic, al-Farabi also speaks on the proposition in the first chapter of [the commentary on] *Prior Analytics*<sup>68</sup>: the proposition and its subject is a statement where one thing characterizes another and where one thing is predicated of another, as it was mentioned above. [For example] should you say, Reuven walks and man is living. We also mentioned above that the syllogism is composed of that which is sought in a definition.<sup>69</sup> [For example] should you ask whether “all bodies move or no body moves,”<sup>70</sup> the question entails the truth-value [of the syllogism] in the conclusion through the negative term, which is when you say that not every body moves and a few bodies move.<sup>71</sup> This truth [value] can also be formulated in the affirmative in which case the explanation<sup>72</sup> is conditional, if you would say: if the sun rises today, it exists. The conclusion is [as] if you would say: it exists today.<sup>73</sup> This is what must be explained from the Preface; I will now begin to explain the chapters.

Zeraḥiah ben Isaac ben She'alti'el Ḥen  
 Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*  
 Abridged Version  
 [Preface to Commentary]

[Prefatory Poem]

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**68** Cf. ¶10.

**69** Cf. ¶11: “sought to be derived.” The Abridged Version is identical in both instances.

**70** An example of technical contraries (rather than contradictories); cf. *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary*: “Some contraries connect a universal quantity-indicator to the subject of an affirmation and a particular quantity-indicator to the subject of a negation; for example, the statements ‘every man is an animal’ and ‘not every man is an animal’.” These kinds of contraries “divide truth and falsity between them always and in every case.” (2:4, p.57). See also Lameer, *Al-Fārābī and Aristotelian Syllogistics*, 100.

**71** An example of technical subcontraries; cf. *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary*: “some connect to the [common] subjects of both opposites a particular quantity-indicator to indicate that the judgment pertains [only] to *some* of the subject. For example, the statements “some men are white,” and “not every man is white.” These subcontraries “divide truth and falsity between them sometimes, namely in matters of necessity and of impossibility, as with the statements, ‘some men are animals’ and ‘not every man is an animal’... but sometimes they are both true together, namely in [matters of] possibility as, for example, the statements, ‘some man is white’ and ‘not every man is white’.” (56).

**72** Cf. Abridged Version.

**73** The example belongs to the category of conditional syllogisms of the affirmative mode (*modus ponens*). See *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary*: “The first of the two [kinds of conjunctive conditional syllogism] is as follows: ‘if the world is originated, then it has a creator; therefore it follows by this that it has a creator’.” (4:1, p.74), and Lameer, *Al-Fārābī and Aristotelian Syllogistics*, 46–47.

- 27 [13] ואמ' על הגזרה בפרק ראשון מההקש בהגיון אבונאצר אל פראבי <בי>. הגזרה והמאמר הגזור הוא  
 28 מאמר יורו בו בדבר על דבר ויוגד בו בדבר בעבור דבר, כמו שזכרנו למעלה, באמרך ראובן ילך והאדם  
 29 בעל חיים. ומה שזכרנו ג"כ למעלה כי ההקש אמנם חובר על מבוקש בגדר. כמו שתשאל אם כל גשם  
 30 מתנועע או אין כל גשם מתנועע; יחוייב על זאת השאלה אמתתו בזאת התולדה במלה השוללת  
 31 והוא שתאמר אין כל גשם מתנועע ומקצת הגשמים מתנועעים. ויוכל להוות זאת האמות בחיוב ותהיה  
 32 הארה(?) תנאית, באמרך אם יהיה השמש עולה היום יהיה נמצא, והתולדה היא אמרך היום יהיה נמצא.  
 33 הם מה שצריך לבאר במקומות מההקדמה, ואחל מה שצריך לבאר בפרקים.

[זרחיה בן יצחק בן שאלתיאל חן]  
 [מבוא לפירוש מורה הנבוכים]  
 [נוסח קצר]

ונסתרים ואל על מעמידו	זרוע שכלך גלה זרוע שכלך גלה והודו
וסודותיו ותחזק על כבודו	רכב וצלח במורה הנבוכים
ומחנה שכלך עליו תיעדו	חנה עליו כטל וכמן בשכבו
תהי חוקר וגם תשאל [ל]נגידו	ירא מתעלומיו עד לזקן
הדריו רוממו מעל פרודו	המונו אל יפחדך כמורד(?)
ותתן על זרועך צמידו	בחון שכלך באופנו וסודו
וזבד(?) טוב אלהים לך זבדו(?)	ואז תשכיל ותצליח בכל עת
אלהיך ותהיה שר פקידו	ותמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני

28 יורו] **בג** יודן | שזכרנו] **ג** זכרנו | למעלה] **ב** חסר | 29 חובר] **בג** יחובר | 30 במלה השוללת] **ב** במלת השוללות | 31 ומקצת] **בג** או קצת | האמות] **בג** האמתות | בחיוב] **בג** בחיוב | 31 הארה(?) | **בג** הגזרה | תנאית] **בג** תנאית | 33 הם מה שצריך... בפרקים] **בג** כל הנבוכך באמונתו ובדעתו לבו מוגד ילמוד ספר מורה צדק הכולל סוד ע"ו מ"ח נ"ד.

[1] **Who is as the wise man, and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing** [Eccl 8:1]? Who associates himself with an individual from the people of science? The speech of a man betrays whether he is **afflicted** or has **high looks** [cf. Ps 18:27] and yet **the righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart** [Isa 57:1]. The scholar of science is eager to know, to guide, and to make others understand. Therefore, I arose and **I have put my life in my hand** [I Sam 28:22], and came to explain hidden things; **I exercise myself in great matters** and expound on **things too high** [Ps 131:1]. Herein I ask from God **the answer of the tongue** [Prov 16:1], which is that he is one and first of all firsts. After our praises and thanksgivings for his kingdom and his unity, let us say that what I have composed in this book is for two purposes.

[2] The first one is that it should benefit all those who desire to know and to seek after the book of the *Guide of the Perplexed*. [Such a person] has learned by himself or from others many of its notions, but he has not examined all the places where there are hints and the depth of subjects that require further explanation. When he examines what I have explained, he will be **joyful and with gladness of heart** [cf. Deut 28:47] as he will recognize that which has already explained to him, or find something that had been unnoticed, or he will find something to rescue him from doubt concerning something on which he was previously doubtful.

[3] The second purpose is to grant the request of a beginner who **desireth** wisdom [cf. Ps 34:13], but who has not grasped the meaning of this book the *Guide of the Perplexed*, nor has he understood its secrets, and **the comings out thereof and the comings in thereof** [Ezek 43:11]. He did not receive a prior a tradition concerning it from others, but only from himself. For his appetites have aroused him to follow after people who inclined their ear and investigated the book the *Guide of the Perplexed* and other books.

[4] But one must not think, despite what rumor he may hear or what sight he may see, that I came to speak of every detail of a premise or subject brought forward in his honorable book for proof or demonstration, concerning notions or concepts from the books of the philosophers on the basis of the same well-known twenty-six *haqdamot*. For even if I were to explain all these premises and their demonstrations, as they require per the *Physics* and other books of natural science, I would not [thereby] explain the subjects of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, but would [then] write other books instead, and I would stray away from what the Rabbi intended [in the *Guide*].<sup>74</sup> Rather, my entire purpose is directed to the two subjects that I mentioned to you.

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<sup>74</sup> The Long Version interpolates a sentence here, cf. *ad loc.*

[1] **מי כהחכם יודע פשר דבר** [קה' ח, א]? ומי באדם אשר לאנשי החכמה התחבר. ומדברו שלאדם נכר אם **עקש** הוא או **נבר** [ע"פ שמ"ב כב, כז]. ואם **אנשי חסד נאספים ואין מבין** [יש' נו, א]. בעל המדע יכסוף לדעת להורות ולהבין. על כן קמתי אני **ושמתי נפשי בכפי** [שמ"א כח, כב]. ובא[תי] לבאר תעלומות והלכתי **בגדולות**, ודרשתי **בנפלאות** [תה' קלא, א]. והנני שואל מהאל ית' **מענה לשון** [מש' טז, א]. א[שר] הוא אחד ראשון לכל ראשון. ואחרי שבחנו והודאתנו במלכותו ואחדותו נאמר כי מה שחברתי בזה הספר הוא לשתי כוונות.

[2] הכוונה הראשונה הוא להועיל בו לכל מי שהוא חפץ לדעת ולתור אחר ספר מורה הנבוכים. וקבל מעצמו או מאחרים הרבה מענייניו, אבל לא השקיף על כל המקומות אשר בהם רמזים ועומק עניינים וצריכים לביאורים נוספים. ובהשקיפו על מה שביארתי יהיה שמח **וטוב לבב** [ע"פ דב' כח, מז] אם שהוא מצא מה שכבר הבינו, או מצא מה שהיה נעדר, או מצא מה שהוציאו מספק במה שחשבו בו ספק קודם זה.

[3] והכוונה השנית הוא למלאות שאלת המתחיל **החפץ** החכמה [ע"פ תה' לד, יג] ועדיין לא עלתה בידו כוונת זה הספר מורה הנבוכים, ולא הבין סודותיו **מוצאיו ומובאיו** [יח' מג, יא] ולא קדמה לו בו קבלה מאחרים רק מעצמו. כי התעוררו בו תאוותיו ללכת בדרכי האנשים אשר אצלו וחקרו בספר מורה הנבוכים ובספרים אחרים.

[4] ואל יחשוב החושב בשמעו השמועה ובראותו את המראה כי אני באתי לדבר כל דבר ודבר מהקדמה או מעניין שהביא בספרו הנכבד לראייה או למופת על דבר מהדברים או על עניין מהעניין מספרי הפילוסופים באותם הכ"ו הקדמות הידועות. כי אם הייתי מבאר כל אותן הקדמות ומופתיהן כאשר חייב בהן ספר השמע הטבעי ושאר ספרי הטבעי[ים], לא הייתי מבאר ענייני ספר מורה הנבוכים רק הייתי מחבר ספרים אחרים. והייתי מרחיק בזה ממה שכוון בו הרב ז"ל. רק כוונתי כולה היתה לשני עניינים שספרתי לך.

[5] That purpose is to grant the request of the beginner who lacks practice, and to remove what was learned from tradition and what is ambiguous from their doubts, and to remedy their deficiencies if they are not perfect, even though I [have seen] people of merit and they are but few. In any case, this our commentary will **show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is**, as it is said **I will show thee the secrets of wisdom**, etc [Job 11:6].

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]

[1] He says in the Preface: *The ignorant attribute to them only one or some of the meanings in which the term in question is used; others are derivative.* The interpretation: the ignorant take meanings in *the equivocal terms*, all or most of them, as if [they were] a few. A *mashal* of this is the word “hand.” It is said of a human hand as well as of other notions that are not “living.” The term in question is one single term whether per se or per all those entities that can be spoken of as hand, according to the definition of an equivocal term. But the ignorant believe that all of its usage refers to its first meaning as I have explained, which is the human hand.

[2] These terms that [Maimonides] mentions, such as *equivocal* and *derivative* and the term called *univocal*, are explained in books of Logic. Aristotle defined equivocal term or equivocal terms by saying that such a term refers to “things which have nothing general and common, except for the name alone.” Rather, “the definition of each, which states its essence in consideration of the meaning of the equivocal name alone, differs from the definition of the other one and is peculiar to its own definiendum.”

[3] An example is a lion made of stone and a lion that walks. They have nothing in common or shared but the term alone, since the definition of one differs from the definition of the other. The definition of the lion that walks corresponds to the definition of “living,” and the definition of the one that is engraved in stone corresponds to the definition of “inanimate.” Some equivocal terms comprise a distant resemblance, such as the term “dog” referring to a star, due to the resemblance to warmth and dryness that occurs in the days when the sun is present more than in other days of the year. This is the kind of similitude that is indicated by derivative terms. The univocal term is the one that expresses one single notion but encompasses more than one individual, for example “living” and “man.” The *amphibolous* term is said of two things between which there is a resemblance concerning one of their aspects, as in the beginning of a path and the beginning of life that is in the heart.

[5] והיא למלאת שאלת המתחיל אשר לא הרגיל ולהוציא המקובל והמסופק מידי ספקם. ולמלאת חסרונם אם אינם שלמים ואם מועטים הם בני עלייה. מכל מקום פירושו זה **יגד לך תעלומות חכמה כי כפלים לתושיה** [איוב יא,ו] כמ' שכתו' **יגד לך תעלומות חכמה** [שם] וגו'.

[זרחיה בן יצחק בן שאלתיאל חזן]

[פירוש מורה הנבוכים - פירוש על פתיחת הספר]

1 [1] אמר בהקדמה--ויקחום הפתאים על קצת העניינים אשר יאמר עליהם השם הווא המשתתף.  
2 ומהם מושאלים. פ' כי הפתאים יקחו העניינים בכמו השמות המשותפים כולם או רובם כמו קצתם.  
3 המשל בזה מלת יד; כאמרת על יד האדם ועניינים אחרים שאינם חי, והשם הזה הוא שם אחד בעצמו  
4 בכל העצמים ההם אשר נאמר בהם שם יד, כמו שנאמר בגדר השם המשותף. והפתי יחשוב שהכל יאמר  
5 על העניין הראשון ממנו כמו שביארתי, והוא יד האדם.

6 [2] ואלו השמות שזכר, כמו השם המשותף והשם המושאל והשם הנאמר בהסכמה; הם מבוארים בספרי  
7 ההגיון. ארסטו גדר השם המשותף או השמות המשותפים שהם אשר אין להם דבר אחד כולל ומשותף  
8 אלא השם לבד. אבל גדר כל אחד המובן גדרו לפי מה שיורה עליו אותו השם בלבד המשותף הוא חלף  
9 האחר ומיוחד כמו גדרו.

10 [3] כמו האריה החקוק באבן והאריה ההולך, שאין בהם שום דבר כולל ומשתתף אלא השם בלבד, כי גדר זה  
11 אינו כגדר זה. כי האריה ההולך הוא בגדר החי והאריה החקוק באבן הוא בגדר הדומם. ויש מן השמות  
12 המשותפין שיש בהן דמיון רחוק, כשם כלב וכוכב ודמיון החמימות והיובש שיהיה בימי היות השמש בו  
13 יותר משאר הימים, וזאת היא ההשאלה הנאמרת בשם המושאל. והשם הנאמר בהסכמה הוא השם  
14 המורה על ענין אחד ויכלול דברים הרבה כמו החי והאדם. והשם המסופק הוא הנאמר על שנים ענינים  
15 ביניהם דמיון באחד מן הענינים כמו התחלת הדרך והתחלת החי בלב.

2 פ' ב ע"פ לשונו ג + רוצה בזה העניין 3 כאמרת 4 ב נאמרת 5 חי 6 יד 7 העצמים 8 בג העניינים 9 נאמר 10 יאמר 11 בג יהיה נאמר 12 ואלו 13 ב ואלה 14 השמות 15 ב שמות 16 71 המשותפים 17 בג + ואמר 18 8 לבד 19 בג מוגדרו 20 אחד 21 ב + מהם 22 לפי מה 23 ב למה 24 שירה 25 ב שרוצה 26 בלבד 27 בג חסר 28 9 כמו גדרו 29 בג במוגדרו 30 11 מן השמות 31 ב מהשמות 32 12 כשם 33 ב כמו שם 34 וכוכב 35 בג לכוכב 36 ודמיון 37 בג לדמיון 38 שיהיה 39 ג חסר 40 בימי 41 בג + היות 42 13 וזאת 43 בג וזו 44 14 שנים 45 בג שני 46 ענינים 47 בג + יש

[4] He said further in the Preface: *The exposition of one who wishes to teach without recourse to parables and riddles is so obscure and brief as to make obscurity and brevity serve in place of parables and riddles. The men of knowledge and the sages are drawn, as it were, toward this purpose by the divine will just as they are drawn by their natural circumstances.* This passage is not easily understood, but its interpretation is that one who wishes to teach another matters of natural or divine science will not be able to do so appropriately without parables. If one were to teach these matters without them, his idea will be difficult and obscure to understand, to the extent that this results in *the sages and men of knowledge being drawn ... toward this purpose*, meaning the purpose of divine science.

[5] Their words will then bring forth of matters of prophecy, which are the divine will, in a manner similar to how they are drawn to all other natural matters, that is, they follow the natural order and will not believe in prophetic matters as they are, through a method that is not according to the divine purpose. This is prerequisite for those sages if the teacher teaches them these subjects without *meshalim* and riddles.<sup>75</sup> The proof is in what was mentioned previously: due to the obscure nature of the matter it appears and is then concealed. Thus every great sage will aim not to speak of this matter except through *meshalim* and riddles. As he says at the end of his passage: *do you not see the following fact?* The rest of the passage covers the subject in full.

[6] Among the principles of his Treatise is also that the Torah begins with *ma'aseh bereshit*, which is natural science, in the form of riddles and parables, which are called by the Rabbis *setumot* [obscurities].<sup>76</sup> They are constructed by our Sages the scholars of truth as is said thereof: *it is impossible to teach to two individuals and mortals of the power of the Account of the Beginning, for this reason Scripture tells you obscurely*<sup>77</sup>: **In the beginning God created** [Gen. 1:1]. It is also said concerning this matter alone: *the importance of the subject and that our capacity falls short of apprehending those obscure matters.* That is, those matters of divine science. Thus, Scripture was compelled to relate them *in parables and riddles.*

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<sup>75</sup> In other words, Zeraḥiah seems to be saying that if one were to teach theology in the same way that one teaches science the students will not grasp the correct import of theological matters. This passage seems to have been truncated in the transmission of the Long Version, cf. *ad loc.*

<sup>76</sup> *Setumot* is missing from the Long Version. On the rabbinical background of this concept see Moshe Assis, "The Interpretation of *Setumot* in Midrash Bereshit Rabah," *Te'udah* 11 (1996), 1–16 [Hebrew].

<sup>77</sup> The word derives from the same root as *setumot* (*satam*).

16 [4] ועוד אמר בהקדמה כי אשר ירצה ללמד מבלתי המשל והחידות יב[נ]א בדברו מן העומק וההעברה  
 17 מה שיעמוד במקום המשל והדבור בחידות, כאלו החכמים והידועים נמשכים אחר הענין הזה ברצון  
 18 האלוהי כמו שימשכום עניניהם הטבעיים. זה המקום לפי הלשון אינו מובן בנקלה, אבל ביאורו הוא מי  
 19 שירצה ללמד לזולתו ענינים טבעיים או אלהיים לא יתכן ללמדם כראוי בלתי המשל. ואם ללמדם בלתי זה  
 20 יהיה ענינו קשה ועמוק להבינו, עד שיגיע מזה שהחכמים והידועים יהיו נמשכים אחר...הכוונה הזאת,  
 21 כלומ' כוונת החכמה האלהית.

22 [5] ויביאו דבריהם בענינים הנבואיים שהם רצו' אלוהי כמו שהם נמשכים בשאר הענינים הטבעיים כלומ'  
 23 שהולכים על המנהג הטבעי ולא יהיו מאמינים הענינים הנבואיים כמו שהם על דרך שאינו כן לפי הכוונה  
 24 האלהית. וכל זה יהיה קודם לאותם החכמים אם יהיה מלמדם בלא המשל וחידות. והראייה בזה  
 25 מה שזכר לך קודם זה, כי מפני שמטבע זה הענין העמוק שהוא מתראה ומתעלם, יכוון כל חכם גדול שלא  
 26 ידבר בו כי אם במשלים וחידות. ואמ' בסוף דבריו הלא תראה השם ית' ושאר[ר] המאמר עד סוף הענין.

1 [6] ובכלל מאמרו גם כן שהתורה באתה תחלה במעשה בראשית שהיא החכמת הטבעית, בחידות ומשלים  
 2 המכונה אצל החכמים ז"ל סתומות. כמו שאמרו ז"ל להגיד במעשה בראשית לבשר ודם אי אפשר  
 3 לפיכך סתם לך הכתו' בראשית ברא אלהים [בר' א,א]. וגם אמ' לשם בענין זה בעצמו כי לעוצם הענין  
 4 והיות יכולתנו קצרה להשיג הענינים העמוקים ההם כלומ' החכמה האלהית; היה מוכרח הכתו' לספרם  
 5 במשלים וחידות.

15 באחד ב האחד 18 שימשכום ב שימשכו ג שימשכו אותם הטבעיים ג +אמר המבאר 19 או] ב +ענינים בלתי ג  
 מבלתי למדם ג לומדס] ג לומדס 21 כלומ' ג כלומר 22 בענינים ב הענינים הנבואיים ב +כמו רצו' אלהי ג מן אלוה  
 23 הטבעי ב הטבעי 24 המשל וחידות ג משל וחידה 25 שמטבע ג מטבע 26 ואמ' ג ואמר ית' ג +וכו'  
 1 גם כן ג ג"כ שהתורה ג שתורתנו הקדושה באתה ג באת הטבעית ג הטבע 26 המכונה ג מכונה החכמים  
 ב החכמי ג חכמי האמת רבותינו עליהם השלום ז"ל סתומות ג חסר ז"ל ג ע"ה להגיד ב כח ג +לשנים במעשה ב  
 מעשה 3 הכתו' ג הכתוב אלהים ג +את השמים ואת הארץ אמ' ג אמר לשם ב ושם לעוצם ג לעצם  
 4 הכתו' ג הכתוב לספרם ב לספר אותם

[7] Let it not be difficult for you [to comprehend] what was explained to you: that one must teach natural science through parables and riddles. You will then say: if so, as for the philosophers who wrote natural science – why did they not discuss it in parables and riddles? The reply to this is that the Rabbi meant rather by this kind of concealment that which pertained to these natural matters within prophetic discourse alone, even though the philosophers explained natural matters in parables and riddles as well. Nevertheless the ancients would conceal natural subjects to such an extent that Plato termed form “male” and matter “female.” This secret is thus mentioned in the Preface to this book the *Guide of the Perplexed*.

[8] It is said further in the Preface: *because a mashal is taken for the things represented or vice versa*. This means that a subject and its exoteric reading is taken in place of the subject being represented [in a *mashal*], and the subject being represented and the *mashal* are [interpreted] through the same method. The meaning is all the *meshalim* are taken in their literal meaning and [are given meanings that] do not correspond to any known natural [entity], and they are not apprehended in the way that they ought to be correctly apprehended.

[9] In the *sixth cause* of the Preface he mentions four concepts that originate from Logic. They are proposition, premise, conclusion and syllogism. I will now explain you each of them according to their essence. The proposition and the premise are closely related in meaning. The premise is mentioned by ibn Rushd in [the commentary on] *Prior Analytics*: the premise is a sentence affirming one thing of another or denying one thing of another. Abu Nasr al-Farabi describes the proposition thus: It is a statement where one thing is understood concerning another and where one thing is predicated of another. He also says in the eighth type of syllogism that what is entailed by the syllogism is called the consequence.

6 [7] ואל יהיה קשה בעיניך מה שבאר לך שצריך ללמד החכמה הטבעית במשלים וחידות. ותאמר אם כן  
 7 הפילוסופים שחברו ספרי הטבע--מדוע לא דברו בהם במשלים וחידות? כי התשובה על זה היא שהרב  
 8 ז"ל לא כוון בזה ההעלם כשזכר אלא במה שבא מאלו העניינים הטבעיים במשלים וחידות ועם כל זה  
 9 היו הקדמונים מכסים העניינים הטבעיים עד שאפלטון היה מכנה הצורה זכר והחומר נקבה, כמו שנזכר  
 10 בהקדמת זה הספר מורה הנבוכים.

11 [8] ועוד אמר בהקדמה או מפני שאת המשל במקום הנמשל [או שאת הנמשל] במקום המשל, כלומר שיבינו  
 12 דברי המשל ונגלהו במקום העניין הנמשל והמשל על דרך אחד. הכוונה בזה כי כל המשלים  
 13 יקחום על פשוטיהם ולא יתנו עניין לשום טבע בעולם ולא ירגישו בהם על מה שראוי להרגיש בו לפי  
 14 הנכון.

15 [9] אמנם בסבה הששית בהקדמה זכר ארבעה מלות הנזכרות בהגיון והם גזרה והקדמה ותולדה  
 16 והקש, ואני אבאר לך כל אחת מהם כפי מהותם. הגזרה וההקדמה קרובים בענייניהם. וההקדמה אמר  
 17 אבן רשד בספר ההקש: וההקדמה היא מאמר מחייב דבר לדבר או תשולל דבר מדבר. ואמר אבונצר  
 18 אלפראבי: והגזרה היא מאמר מובן בדבר על דבר ויוגד בו בדבר בעבור דבר. ואמר עוד בשמיני ממיני  
 19 ההקש כי המחוייב מן ההיקש נקרא [תולדה] ונקרא הרדפה.

6 ואל] ג ולא יהיה קשה] ב יקשה | שבאר] בג שאבאר | אם כן] ב א"כ | 8 שבא] ב שביאר | מאלו] ב אלו | הטבעיים] ב  
 +מדברי הנביאים לבד אע"פ שהפילוסופים ג"כ ביארו הדברים הטבעיים ג +מדברי הנביאים לבד אע"פ שהפילוסופים גם כן  
 בארו הדברים הטבעיים 9 שנזכר] ב+ שזה ג +זה הסוד | 10 הספר] ב +ר"ל | מורה הנבוכים] ג שזה העלם. שזכר אלא  
 במה שבאו מאלו העניינים הטבעיים בדברי הנביאים לבד, אע"פ שהפילוסופים ג"כ ביארו הדברים הטבעיים במשלים וחידות.  
 ועם כל זה היו הקדמונים מכסים בעניינים הטבעיים עד שאפלטון היה מכנה הצורה זכר והחומר נקבה כמו שזכר זה בהקדמת  
 זה הספר | 11 כלומר] בג כלומר | 12-11 שבינו דברי המשל] ג שיקחו הענין | 12 והמשל על דרך אחד] ג ג"כ אצלם הוא ענין  
 המשל לבד | דרך] ב דעת | הכוונה] ב רוצה ג ר"ל | 13 יתנו] ג יתכן | שראוי] ב שהוא ראוי | 15 ארבעה] בג ד' | 16 מהם] ג  
 מהן | כפי] ג לפי | מהותם] בג מהותן | 17 אבן] ב ך | מחייב] בג מחויב | תשולל] בג שולל | ואמר] בג ואמרו | 18 אלפראבי]  
 בג +מה | והגזרה] בג גזרה | מובן] בג יורו בו | 19 נקרא] ג +תולדה | ונקרא הרדפה] ב התולדה הרדיפה | הרדיפה] ג הרדיפה

[10] Every syllogism is composed of two premises. He says the following in the fifth chapter of the [commentary on] *Prior Analytics*: a syllogism is a statement that presupposes more than one notion from two premises. When those notions are joined, it necessarily follows from them – per se and by accident – something<sup>78</sup> other than they. Likewise [ibn] Radwan(?)<sup>79</sup> defined the syllogism by saying that it is a statement composed of propositions. Their union per se entails a conclusion. That which entails from the syllogism is called the conclusion and is also called the consequence. The syllogism is composed of what is sought to be derived. It is initially considered in terms of its premises, and one weighs its truth value only afterwards.

[11] Now that I have explained to you these logical terms, I will explain you the concealed contradiction of this [logical] type that is in the *fifth cause*. A *mashal* is the sage who wishes to explain a certain matter among obscure matters, such as the existence of the world *a parte ante* or creation *ex nihilo*. He will bring forward several premises concerning one of them as a *mashal*, as you can see is mentioned concerning the sect of peripatetics and the sect of the Mutakallimūn, and all those who bring forward many premises with proofs and arguments. With every question they pose, the matter becomes more concealed and obscure and it then seems to the author that he has brought forward those correct premises, and he then draws the necessary conclusions from them. [It is as if] you said that every body is a composite and every composite is created, and the conclusion is that every body is created. As a *mashal* this is what ought to be done for every conclusion. A correct premise is joined to it, and it is concluded what the nature of the matter entails.

[12] *After many syllogisms the outcome is a contradiction or contrary between the two final conclusions*. This means the scholar who writes a book or treatise [of that nature] will not notice any contradictions anywhere in his treatise or in the final conclusions. He will think, instead, that the two initial propositions are correct. When each proposition is taken and joined to a correct premise, *after several syllogisms the outcome is a contradiction between the two final conclusions*. The author [Maimonides] says this is similar to what happens to scholars who write books.

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78 Cf. Long Version: “a plurality” (*ribui*).

79 This word is unclear in the ms (see critical apparatus). “Radwan” is the reading found in the Long Version *ad loc*.

20 [10] וכל היקש יתחבר משתי הקדמות. ואמ' בפרק ה' מההיקש: וההיקש מאמר יונחו בו עניינים יותר מאחד  
 21 משתי הקדמות. כשיחברו יתחייב בעבורם במקרה דבר אחר זולתם בהכרח. וכן רצו' מן גדר ההיקש  
 22 ואמר והוא מאמר יחובר מגזרות יתחייב מחבורם בעצמם תולדה. והמתחייב בעבור ההיקש נקרא תולדה  
 23 ונקרא גם הרדפה. וההיקש אמנם יתחבר מבוקש נגור. יתקדם ויחושב תחילה, ואחר כן יבוקש אמתתו.

1 [11] ואחר שביארתי לך אילו המלות ההגוניות אבאר לך איך תהיה הסתירה הנעלמת מזה המין בהקדמה  
 2 החמישית. והוא על דרך משל שהחכם שירצה לבאר עניין מן העניינים העמוקים כמו קדמות העולם  
 3 או חדושו. ויביא הקדמות הרבה על אחד מאלו על דרך משל כמו שאתה רואה שזכר בדברי המשאין  
 4 והמדברים וכל אשר יתרבו ההקדמות בראיות ובטענות. על כל אחת מהן יהיה העניין יותר נעלם ויותר  
 5 עמוק ויהיה נראה למחבר שהוא הביא באותן ההקדמות הצודקות, ויוליד מהן מה שיתחייב מן התולדות.  
 6 כאמרך כל גשם מחובר וכל מחובר מחודש; התולדה תהיה שכל גשם מחודש. וכן על דרך משל יעשה  
 7 בכל תולדה. יחובר אליה הקדמה צודקת ויולי'ד] מה שיתחייב יכלה העניין.

8 [12] אחר היקשים רבים [יגיע] לסתירה בין שתי התולדות האחרונות או הפך, כלומ' שזה החכם המחבר  
 9 הספר או המאמר ההוא לא ירגיש שתהיה שם סתירה כלל ממאמרו ותולדותיו האחרונות. אבל יחשוב  
 10 כי שתי הגזרות הראשונות יהיו צודקות. וכשתוקח כל גזרה מהם ויחובר אליה הקדמה צודקת יתלה הענין  
 11 אחר היקשים הרבה אל סתירה בין שתי התולדות האחרונות. ואמר המחבר כי כמו זה הוא אשר יקרה  
 12 אל החכמים מחברי הספרים

20 ה' ב' ח' ג' שמיני מההיקש] בג' ממיני מההיקש] 21 משתי הקדמות] בג' חסר] כשיחברו] בג' כאשר יחברו] בעבורם] ב'  
 +בעצמותם] + בעצמם] אחר] ב' אחד] זולתם] ג' זולתו] רצו' מן] ב' דינו(?) עד ג' רינואן] 22 יחבר] ב' יחבר] מחבורם] בג'  
 מחיבורן] בעצמם] בג' בעצמן] 23 גם] בג' חסר] הרדפה] בג' ההרדפה] אמנם] ב' +יתחייב] יתחבר] ב' +על] נגור] ב' נגור]  
 יתקדם] ב' ויקדם]

2 דרך משל] ב' דעת מ' 3 דרך משל] ב' דעת מוריגו] בדברי] ג' +כת] 4 אשר] ג' אחר] אחת] ג' שאלת] מהן] ב' חסר] ג' מהם  
 5 ויוליד] ג' ויביא] מהן] ב' מהם] התולדות] ג' התולדה] 6 כאמרך] ב' באמרך] ג' חסר] כל] ב' בכל] תהיה] ב' חסר] ג' היא  
 דרך משל] ב' דעת מוריגו] 7 צודקת] ב' צדיקה] שיתחייב] ג' שיחייב] 8 שתי] ב' חסר] כלומ'] בג' כלומר] 9 שם] בג' שום]  
 כלל] בג' חסר] ממאמרו] בג' ממאמרו] 10 יחבר] ב' יחבר] הקדמה] ב' ההקדמה] א' יתלה] ב' יעלה] ג' יכלה]

[13] In Logic, al-Farabi also speaks on the proposition in the first chapter of [the commentary on] *Prior Analytics* and in some of the *Logic*: the subject of a proposition<sup>80</sup> is a statement<sup>81</sup> where one thing is understood of another and where one thing is expressed concerning another, as it was mentioned above. [For example] should you say Reuven walks and man is living. We also mentioned above that the syllogism is composed of that which is sought to be derived. [For example] should you ask whether all bodies move or no body moves, the question entails the truth-value [of the syllogism] in the conclusion through the negative term, which is when you say that not every body moves or a few bodies move. This truth [value] can also be formulated in the affirmative, in which case the proposition is conditional. If you say: if the sun rises today, it exists, the conclusion is [as] if you say: it exists today. Herein ends the Preface.<sup>82</sup>

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**80** In Arabic in the text after the Hebrew term.

**81** In Arabic in the text. The manuscript text has this term placed before “Logic,” which does not make sense; the translation reflects the most likely correct version.

**82** The final sentence differs in the Long Version *ad loc.*

- 13 [13] ואמר על הגזרה בפרק ראשון מן ההיקש בהגיון אבונצר אלקציה ההגיון המאמר הגזר אלגאזם הוא  
 14 מאמר יובן בו בדבר על דבר ויוגד בו בדבר בעבור דבר, כמו שזכרנו למעלה. כאמרך ראובן ילך והאדם  
 15 בעל חיים. ומה שזכרנו גם כן למעלה כי ההיקש אמנם יחובר על מבוקש נגזר. כמו שתשאל אם כל גשם  
 16 מתנועע או אין כל גשם מתנועע. יחוייב על זאת השאלה אמתתו בזו התולדה במלה השוללות. והוא  
 17 שתאמר אין כל גשם מתנועע או קצת הגשמים מתנועעים; ויוכל להיות זאת האמתות בחיוב ותהיה  
 18 הגזרה תנאית, באמרך אם יהיה השמש עולה היום יהיה נמצא, והתולדה היא אמרך היום יהיה נמצא.  
 19 נשלמת ההקדמה.

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13 מן ההיקש] ג מההקש | אלקציה] בג אל פראבי | ההגיון] בג הגזרה | המאמר] ב והמאמר | אלגאזם] בג חסר | 14 יובן] בג יורו | שזכרנו למעלה] בג שזכר בו מעלה | כאמרך] בג באמר | 15 גם כן] בג ג"כ | נגזר] בג בגדר | 16 בזו] בג בזאת | השוללות] בג השוללת | 17 קצת] ב מקצת | בחיוב] ג בחיוב | 18 תנאית] ג תנאית | באמרך] בג כאמרך | 19 נשלמת ההקדמה] בג הם מה שצריך לבאר במקומות מההקדמה ואחל מה שצריך לבאר בפרקים

## 6 Joseph ben Abba Mari ibn Kaspi: Hebrew-English Text

### 6.1 Joseph ibn Kaspi's *'Ammudei kesef*: the Manuscripts

There are eight extant manuscripts of Joseph ibn Kaspi's *'Ammudei kesef* (henceforth A.K.). The following six were consulted:

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek B.H. fol. 14 (Byzantine, 15th century/ F30745 / ff. 89r-127r)

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 264 (Spanish, 1363/F1681 / ff. 190r-263r) [base ms]

Paris, BN héb. 695 (Spanish, 15th century/ F11573 / ff. 1r-41r)

Paris, BN héb. 700 (Byzantine, 15th century/F11578 / ff. 177v-203r)

St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy C 47 (Ashkenazi, 15th century/F69303 / ff.245v-275v)

Vatican, Urbinati 24 (Spanish, 15th century/F663 / 76 ff.)

Two remaining mss were not consulted: Turin, ms BN A VI 34 and Moscow, Russian State Library, ms Guenzburg 275.6.

The base manuscript is Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 264, ff. 192v-196v. It is written in cursive Spanish script by different hands, sometimes switching from hand to another mid-page (f. 197v, f. 206v). The paper as well as the script suggest that the ms was produced in Provence. Extensive marginal annotation on II:6 (f. 235v) and II:20, 23 (f. 238v). Immediately following the end of the commentary on part III, scattered quotations from and comments on ibn Falaquera's commentary *Moreh ha-moreh* (ff. 257r-262r; the first passage is on II:19). At the end of the passages, a colophon states that the ms was commissioned by Levi b. Abraham (also called Leon Abram de Cabestan) on the 15th of Tamuz, 1363 (f. 262r), relatively close to the date of ibn Kaspi's death (1340). Following the colophon we find some excerpts from the *Moreh ha-moreh* on textual contradictions (Preface to Guide), I:1, 1:9, and I:36 (paraphrase).

A.K. is the earliest among all Hebrew philosophical commentaries to comment on the Epistle Dedicatory (Pines 3–4; 'Even-Shmu'el 3), f. 192v-193r (not reproduced here). It is not entirely clear what led ibn Caspi to do so, but it would become commonplace in later commentaries to begin with the Epistle rather than with the Introduction proper. Moses of Narbonne's commentary on the Preface makes only passing mention of the Epistle (see below ¶3), but the commentary by Samuel ben Solomon of Carcassonne, which probably dates to the end of the 14th or the beginning of the 15th century, begins with it. The "classic" commentaries by Asher Crescas, Efodi, Shem

Tov and Abravanel also begin there, and include the opening poem located between the Epistle and the Preface. Asher Crescas goes as far as commenting on Samuel ibn Tibbon's preface to his translation of the *Guide*.

The codex includes a Moses ibn Tibbon's commentary on Song of Songs; commentary on the Passover haggadah by Joseph Gikatilla; commentary on Passover haggadot by Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov; commentary on Esther by Joseph ibn Nahmia, masekhet *Derekh 'eres*; the *Kuzari*; and *Maskiyot kesef*. The texts indicate Levi ben Abraham's interest in philosophical and kabbalistic interpretations of the Aggadah.

## 6.2 Joseph ibn Kaspi's *Maskiyot kesef*: the Manuscripts

There are nine extant mss of *Maskiyot kesef* (henceforth M.K.). The following six were consulted:

Harvard University, Heb. 37 (Spanish, 16th century/F34446 / ff. 7r-8b)

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 264 (Spanish, 1363/ F1681 / ff. 265v-295v) [base ms]

New York, Jewish Theological Seminary ms 2341 (Spanish, 15th century/F28594 / ff.121r-133r)

Paris, BN héb. 693 (Byzantine, 15th century/F11571 / ff. 1r-42r)

Paris, BN héb. 694 (Spanish, 15th century/F11572 / 22 ff.)

Paris, BN héb. 700 (Byzantine, 15th century/F11578 / ff. 203v-216r)

Three remaining mss were not consulted: Turin, ms BN A VI 34; Moscow, Russian State Library, ms Guenzburg 275.6; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek cod. heb. 55 (extant copy begins near the end of the Preface)

The base manuscript for M.K. is the same as for A.K., ms Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 264 (ff. 265r-267v). The entire text is in the same hand although the colophon is in a different one. It states that Levi ben Abraham completed the text for his own use on the 26th of Heshvan, 1364. The ms contains occasional marginal notes (f. 277v, 282v).

The Hebrew texts are based on the following manuscripts:

*'Ammudei kesef*

⌘ Munich 264 (base)

⌚ Paris BN héb 700

⌛ Leipzig 14

⌜ St. Petersburg C47

- ה Paris BN héb 695
- י Vatican Urbinati 24

*Maskiyot kesef*

- ס Munich 264 (base)
- ב Paris héb 693
- ג Paris héb 700
- ד Paris héb 694
- ה Harvard Heb 37
- ו JTS 2341

Conventions and sigla for Hebrew text and apparatus:

+	addition
=	repetition
{ }	marginal note
?	uncertain reading
strikethrough	word stricken through in ms
...	omission in quotation from Guide

Conventions for English translation:

Normal font:	text of commentary
Italic font:	quotations from Guide within the text
Bold font:	biblical prooftexts
Bold italic font:	biblical prooftexts also found in the Guide
...	omission by the commentator in quotation from Guide

### 6.3 Joseph ibn Kaspi's Commentaries: Reception

Ibn Kaspi's commentaries were among the most widely read. They are cited in later commentaries, beginning with that by Moses of Narbonne, though most often without attribution. One example from *'Ammudei kesef* is the list of the seven defining characteristics of the perplexed individual, which was borrowed by both Efodi and Shem Tov in the 15th century, and in turn borrowed by Mordekhai Jaffe in the 16th century. Ibn Kaspi acquired a certain reputation as a radical, ultra-rationalist thinker. For our purposes, this reputation may be partly due to Isaac Abravanel's frequent but negative mentions of ibn Kaspi in his own commentary on the Guide.

Joseph ibn Kaspi's twin commentaries have received little scholarly attention. They first appeared in print only in 1848, edited by Solomon Z. Werbluner (indicated in the notes to follow as Werbluner). The text was reprinted in photostatic reproduction along with ibn Falaquera and Moses of Narbonne's commentaries, in Sheloshah

qadmonei mefarshei ha-moreh (Three Early Commentators on the Guide), (Jerusalem: s.n., 1961). They have not been the focus of any dedicated study, but have been briefly described in the general bibliographical sources by Steinschneider and Renan mentioned throughout this study (*HÜB* and *Les écrivains juifs français*). A new work on Ibn Kaspi, which unfortunately appeared too recently to be used in this study, is Adrian Sackson's *Joseph ibn Kaspi: Portrait of a Hebrew Philosopher in Medieval Provence*. It includes a lengthy chapter on Ibn Kaspi's commentaries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boston: Brill, 2017.

### 6.3.1 Joseph ben Abba Mari ibn Kaspi

*'Ammudei kesef* (Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*)<sup>2</sup>

[Preface to Commentary]

[1] Joseph ibn Kaspi said: Mine is the yearning,<sup>3</sup> [and] that **whereupon I set my mind** [cf. Ezek 24:25] to acquire an understanding of Scripture on the basis of logic and philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Given that Christian thieves have come to our gates and attributed our books of science to themselves,<sup>5</sup> and given that the *Guide* alone was left to us and attributed to the Jews with respect to metaphysics, I have turned my attention to it and composed a commentary on the book. In order for you to remember I will give you signs throughout the commentary.<sup>6</sup> Know that the [number of] combined chapters amount to 177, which is a sign for the Garden of Eden.<sup>7</sup>

[2] Know that our intention in this book is to explain subjects of the *Guide* from among those that [Maimonides] has mentioned as devoid of obvious secrets even though all the subjects are subtle intellectual [matters].<sup>8</sup> We have called it *'Ammudei kesef* [*Pillars of Silver*]. When we come to one of his [Maimonides'] passages in which there is an obvious secret, we will lay the interpretation aside from this [commentary], and explain it in the appropriate place in the book called *'Oṣar 'adonai* [*The Treasure of the Lord*] which after our name is *Maskiyot kesef* [*Filigree of Silver*].<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the notes below *'Ammudei kesef* and *Maskiyot kesef* are indicated respectively as AK and MK.

<sup>3</sup> *Kosef*, a medieval coinage, which shares a linguistic root with “silver” (*kesef*). “Kaspi” means “of silver,” referring to his birth place – he was from Largentière, in the Rhône-Alpes region of France. The titles of all his works (and sometimes linguistic puns) are a play on the word silver (*kesef*), corresponding to the names of silver vessels found in Scripture. Cf. Barry Mesch, *Studies in Joseph ibn Kaspi: Fourteenth-Century Exegete and Philosopher* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 48–49.

<sup>4</sup> In the preface to *Qevuṣat kesef* ibn Kaspi writes that by the age of 30 he had grasped “logic and some of the theoretical sciences,” and “began to understand the Pentateuch and the entire Bible by means of logic and philosophy.” Hannah Kasher suggests that ibn Kaspi aimed to understand the *Guide*, too, according to rules of language and logic. See *Qevuṣat kesef* in Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi* 7 (English), and *Qevuṣat kesef* in *'Asarah kelei kesef*, ed. Isaac Last (Pressburg: Adolf Alkalay and Son, 1903), 1:xx [Hebrew]; Hannah Kasher, “Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete,” Ph.D. diss. Bar-Ilan University, 1979, 103–107 [Hebrew].

<sup>5</sup> See Avraham Melamed, *The Myth of the Jewish Origins of Science and Philosophy* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2010) [Hebrew], 181–189. Ibn Kaspi’s version of this notion, found throughout his works, expresses that Aristotle’s works were originally Jewish but were lost to the Jews because of their sins. See below *'Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶2; *Sefer ha-musar 'o yoreh de'ah*, in *'Asarah kelei kesef*, ed. Isaac Last (Pressburg: Abraham ben David Alkalay and Son, 1903), 2:68 [Hebrew]; *Menorat kesef*, in Last, *'Asarah klei kesef* 2:77 [Hebrew]; Hannah Kasher, “Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete,” 13. See also Norman Roth, “The ‘Theft of Philosophy’ by the Greeks from the Jews,” *Classical Folia* 32:1 (1978), 53–68.

[יוסף אבן כספי - עמודי כסף]

[פירוש מורה הנבוכים - מבוא לפירוש]

[1] אמר יוסף אבן כספי. לי הכסף **משא נפשי** [ע"פ יח' כד, כה] לעמד על הבנת המקרא על דרך ההגיון והפלוסופיא. ובעבור כי ספרינו בחכמות גנובים נכרים באו שערינו ויחסום להם, וכי ספר המורה הוא לבדו נשאר לנו מיוחס ליהודים מחכמת האלהות, שמתני עיני ולבי עליו וחברתי בפירושו הספר הזה. והנה למען תזכור אתן לך סימנים בזה הספר. דע כי כלל פקריו קע"ז, סימן להם גן עדן.

[2] ודע כי כוונתינו בזה הספר לבאר ענינים רבים מספר המורה ממה שזכר ז"ל שאין בו הפלגת הסתר, ואם הכל ענינים דקים שכליים. וקראנו זה הספר **עמודי כסף**, וכאשר יבאו לידינו דבר מדברו ז"ל שיש בו הפלגת הסתר אנחנו נניח ביאורו בכאן וניעיד לו במקומו בספר הנקרא **אוצר יי** ועל שמנו משכיות כסף.

6 The person being addressed here is ibn Kaspi's son, for whom he composed the commentary (*'Ammudei kesef*, Prologue, ¶4). The "signs" may be an allusion to numerical associations that appear twice in the commentary on the Introduction to the *Guide*, once in this paragraph, and once in *'Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶3. Alternatively, ibn Kaspi might have in mind esoteric hints in general, of which there are many throughout the commentary.

7 The numerical value of *gan 'eden* is 177, the number of chapters in the *Guide* (the numerical order of which was added by Samuel ibn Tibbon). Abraham Abulafia and Isaac Abravanel also count the chapters in the *Guide* as 177. 19th-century and modern editions, however, have the number of chapters as 178, owing to the separation of I:27–28 (Pines 57–61) into two chapters. On this discrepancy, see Rafael Jospe, "The 'Garden of Eden' and the Chapters of the *Guide*," in *Shlomo Pines Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, eds. Moshe Idel, Warren Zev Harvey and Eliezer Schweid (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), 1:387–397 [Hebrew].

8 On the notion of revealing the "secret" in Samuel ibn Tibbon, ibn Kaspi and Ḥanokh al-Constantini, see Colette Sirat, "Al-Constantini's *Marot 'elohim*" *Eshel Be'er-Sheva* 1 (1976), 125 [Hebrew]; see also Ravitzky, 45 n2, and Aviezer Ravitzky, *History and Faith*, 205–303.

9 Hence the common description of ibn Kaspi's two commentaries as "exoteric" and "esoteric" (see for example *HÜB* 92, §40). With respect to the commentary on the Preface to the *Guide*, the AK and MK do indeed have a certain difference in emphasis. However, a careful reading reveals that both commentaries display esoteric strategies of interpretation. See also *'Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶24; Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi* 13.

[3] Should one accuse me of commenting on anything from the [Guide], since Maimonides adjured us to refrain from doing so, I have already justified that in my book entitled *The Menorah of Silver*; search it there.<sup>10</sup> Either way, I am hereby adventuring my life<sup>11</sup> [cf. Judges 9:17] in order to benefit and to bless every student. I have brought upon myself a curse, and the welfare of my soul makes no difference to you, the student. If I have benefitted you with my interpretation of certain ideas – which you might not have understood without me – may the curse be upon me, but you **take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee** [Gen 33:11].

[4] In any event, I do this for my oldest son, who lives in Barcelona and whose name is David Mari,<sup>12</sup> may his Maker have mercy upon him, since He declares that **he that keepeth the law, happy is he** [Prov 29:18]. I will now begin with that for which I yearn,<sup>13</sup> with the help of God.<sup>14</sup>

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]

[1] *The first intention of this Treatise. The ignorant attribute to them the purpose of the meanings, etc.* At this point the Teacher [Maimonides] mentions only three categories [of terms]: equivocal, derivative and amphibolous. For example, “image,” taken as a *mashal*, is supposed to refer equivocally to both “intellect” and “face.”<sup>15</sup> When it comes to **in our image** [Gen 1:26], *the ignorant attribute* to it one of its derivative [metaphorical] meanings. As the primary meaning refers to “face” and the secondary meaning refers to the “intellect,” they attribute to it the primary meaning. However, with respect to amphibolous [terms] this error is evident, since *at times they are believed to be* [univocal] *and at other times* [equivocal] *etc*; thus the ignorant incur error concerning those terms.<sup>16</sup>

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**10** *Menorat kesef*, a commentary on *ma'aseh merkavah*. In the preface to that work ibn Kaspi gives four grounds that justify commenting on the secrets of Maimonides: one, he does not reveal anything until the appropriate chapter; two, he perhaps is not revealing the true meaning of anything at all, because his interpretations are entirely original, neither learned from others nor from books (hence pure speculation liable to error); three, Maimonides gave some leeway for commentary in the preface to part III of the *Guide*, in which he allowed for “some” commentary, but “some” is not an objective measure (thus leaving room for exegetical discretion); four, he discloses only the opinions of Aristotle and his peers, who have dealt with a similar problem in their works (i.e. how much to reveal). *Menorat kesef*, in Last, *Asarah kelei kesef* 77.

**11** That is, risking his life.

**12** Ibn Kaspi had three children. He dedicates several of his works to his two sons David, who lived in Barcelona, and Solomon, who lived in Tarascon (the addressee of the *Yoreh de'ah*, ibn Kaspi's ethical

[3] ואם יאשימני אדם על היותי מפרש דבר מן הספר והוא ז"ל השביענו על מניעת זה, הנה כבר התנצלתי על זה בספר הנקרא *מנורת כסף*; יעויין שמה. ואיך שיהיה הנה אנכי משליך את נפשי מנגד [ע"פ שו' ט, יז] להועיל ולברך כל מעיין. והבאתי עלי קללה ומה לך המעיין ולשלום נפשי. ואם טובה עשיתי לך בפירוש דברים, שאולי לא תבין בלעדי, עלי קללתי [קללתו] ואתה **קח נא ברכתי** [בר' לג, יא].

[4] ועל כל פנים אני עושה זה לבני בכורי היושב [ב] ברצלונה שמו דוד מרי, ירחמהו עושהו אם יאמר **שומר תורה אשרהו** [משלי כט, יח]. ואתחיל במה שאכסוף בעזרת האל.

[יוסף אבן כספי - עמודי כסף]

[פירוש מורה הנבוכים - פירוש על פתיחת הספר]

1 [1] המאמר הזה כונתו הראשונה ויקחום הפתאים על עצת הענינים וכו'. הנה המורה לא יזכור בזה רק שלושה  
 2 חלוקות והם משותפים, מושאלים, מסופקים. והוא כי צלם על דרך משל נניח שהוא משותף לשכל ופנים,  
 3 וכאשר נגיע אל **בעלמינו** יקחום הפתאים על הקצת שם מושאל, שהיה ענין ראשון מפנים והשני מושכל;  
 4 יקחום על ענין ראשון. ואולם במסופקים הנה טעות אלו מבואר כי פעם יחשב וכו' ופעם יחשב וכו' לכן  
 5 יטעו במ הפתאים.

1 [רק] ור"ל [31 הקצת] ה הדרך בלתי ראוי כי יפרשהו מפנים וכאשר יגיעו הפתאים לתמונת ה' אשר תמונה כך וכך נניח שהוא  
 I מושכל [בו משכל ה מושאל I יחשב] **בגדו** יחשב ה יחשוב I יחשב] **בגד** יחשבו ה יחשוב I 5 [בם] ה בו

testament). He also had a daughter who lived in Perpignan. See Renan, *Les écrivains juifs français du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1893), 133–134; *HÜB* §41 (93), §201 (352)

13 A pun on the author's name ('ekhsof), which shares the same linguistic root.

14 Cf. this prologue with the prologue of the "earlier" recension of ibn Kaspi's commentaries on the *Guide* in Renan, *écrivains juifs français*, 179.

15 Cf. I:1, Pines 21–23.

16 Ibn Kaspi details different types of errors of equivocation in *Šeror ha-keseif*, a compendium of logic based mostly on ibn Rushd's Middle Commentaries on the first five books of the Organon, and on al-Farabi's Commentary on *Sophistical Refutations*. See Shalom Rosenberg, "Ibn Kaspi's *Sophistical Refutations*," *Iyun* 32 (1984), ¶1–¶4, 280 [Hebrew]. On ibn Kaspi's general attitude towards the "ignorant," see Avraham Grossman, "Social Controversy in Joseph ibn Kaspi's Commentaries on Scripture," in *Studies in Hebrew Poetry and Jewish Heritage: in Memory of Aharon Mirsky*, eds. Efraim Hāzan and Yosef Yahalom (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2006), 109–112 [Hebrew].

[2] *It is not the purpose of this Treatise* etc. Here there are three categories of people: the *vulgar* who are ignorant and **know not anything** [Eccl 9:5]; *beginners* in the study of sciences; and sages who are engaged only in the study of Gemara.<sup>17</sup> *For the purpose of this Treatise*, etc. It says *for* etc. to indicate the reason for saying *I mean the legalistic study of the Law* after saying *science of the Law*. [Maimonides] wishes here to inform us that he found it necessary to clarify that expression. Had he said *science of the Law* in an unqualified sense and not interpreted it by saying [also] *the legalistic study of the Law*, we would have understood [him to mean] speculative science, which is the Torah – as he explains further in III:54.<sup>18</sup> Hence a book that interprets it such the *Guide*, the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*, which were stolen from us and attributed to Aristotle due to our transgressions, are all *the science of the Law in its true sense*.<sup>19</sup> Such being the case, how can he say that it is not the intention of *this Treatise* to make *understandable* the terms to *those who have not engaged in any study other than the science of the Law*? That is precisely his point, however; therefore it was necessary for him to clarify and say *I mean the legalistic study of the Law*.<sup>20</sup>

[3] *Or rather its purpose*, etc. This means that the intention is not to address to any of these three groups, but rather to address the individual who bears certain characteristics outlined here, seven in all, which are symbolized by the seven priestly garments.<sup>21</sup> The first is that he ought to be a *religious man for whom* [religion] *has become established in his soul*,<sup>22</sup> meaning that religion has become habitual in his soul because he has become accustomed to performing the practical commandments constantly.<sup>23</sup> Further: *and for whom the validity of our Law has constituted*<sup>24</sup> his belief, meaning that he believes that the Torah of Moses is true.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>17</sup> On ibn Kaspi's attitude towards Talmudic study, see Isadore Twersky, "Joseph ibn Kaspi: Portrait of a Medieval Jewish Intellectual," in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1:243–247.

<sup>18</sup> In III:54 (Pines 632–638) Maimonides explains the different meanings of the term *hokhmah* ("wisdom" or "science"). He does not say precisely that the Torah includes speculative science (*hokhmah 'iyunit*). Rather, he explains that "knowledge of the Torah is one species and wisdom is a different species, being the verification of the opinions of the Torah through correct speculation" (*'iyun ha-'amiti*, Pines 634). The difference, of course, lies in whether speculative science, in the sense of a scientific-philosophical method, is thought to be an external yet valid criterion of verification for the ideas contained in the Torah or an integral part of it, in which case the Torah could be described as self-verifying. In the former case one could arguably accept the methods of science without necessarily accepting its assumptions or conclusions; in the latter case, the conclusions reached by science and philosophy are also part of the Torah and hence are potentially to be accepted *a priori*.

<sup>19</sup> Regardless of how we interpret the *Guide*, it seems to me that ibn Kaspi follows the second of the two cases described in the previous note. If that is correct, it makes sense, then, that he would appeal to the myth of "stolen science."

<sup>20</sup> That is, had Maimonides excluded those who have studied "the science of the Law" without qualification, he would have excluded those who had studied Aristotelian natural science and metaphysics. Cf. Menachem Kellner, "The Conception of the Torah as a Deductive Science in Medieval Jewish Thought," *REJ* 156:3–4 (1987), 271.

1 [2] ואין הכונה במאמר הזה וכו'. הנה בזה שלושה ענינים מבני אדם, והם ההמון שאינם יודעים  
 2 מאומה [קה' ט, ה], והמתחילים בענין החכמות והחכמים בתלמוד הגמרא לבד. כי ענין המאמר הזה וכו'.  
 3 אמרו כי וכו' הוא נתינת טעם למה שאמר ר"ל תלמודה אחר אמרו חכמת התורה. והודיענו כי הכרח  
 4 היה (?) לו לבאר זה כי אלו אמר חכמת התורה במוחלט ולא פירש ואמר תלמודה היינו מבינים בחכמה  
 5 העיונית שהתורה הוא, הוא כמו שיבאר עוד פרק נ"ד משלישי. ולכן ספר שיפרשה, בספר המורה וספר  
 6 הטבע והאלהות, הגנובים מאתנו ונתיחסו לארסטו בעונותינו; הכל חכמת התורה על האמת. ואחר  
 7 שהוא כן איך יאמר ז"ל שאין כונתו במאמר הזה להבין השמות למי שלא יעיין רק בחכמת התורה? אבל  
 8 לזה הוא מכיין, לכן הוצרך לפרש ולומר ר"ל תלמודה.

9 [3] אבל כונת המאמר הזה וכו'. ר"ל אין כונתי לאחד מאלו השלושה, אבל כונתי להבין לזה האיש אשר  
 10 תארנו כך וכך וכך וכך. והם שבעה תארים סמן להם שבעה בגדי כהונה. תחלה שהוא איש בעל דת ...  
 11 שהורגלה בנפשו, כלומר שהדת הורגלה בנפשו כי הרגיל לעשות המצות מעשיות תמיד. ואחר שעלתה  
 12 האמתו אמתת תורתנו, כלומר שהוא מאמין שתורת משה אמת.

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1 הכונה [בגדו הכונה | 3 הודיענו] | 1 הודיעהו | 5 שהתורה הוא [בהו שהתורה היא | משלישי] | 1 השלישי | ולכן | ה +ספר המורה שהוא פירוש התורה היא חכמת התורה על האמת ובכלל כי התורה תורת משה וכל שיפרשה | ב שפירשה | בספר | ה כספר | וספר | ה | 7 כונתו] | בגדהו כונתו | 8 לכן | 1 לכך | 9 כונת] | בגדהו כונתו | כונתו | הו כונתו | כונתו] | בג כונתו | דהו כונתו | 10 וכך וכך] | דה חסר | סמן ... כהונה | ד חסר

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21 Cf. Exodus 28:4. The seven attributes enumerated by ibn Kaspi are in Pines, 5.

22 It is indeed also possible to read the sentence as saying “a religious man for whom religion [*dat*] has become established in his soul,” which is how ibn Kaspi reads it here. The problem is that in ibn Tibbon’s syntax the object of the verb (*hurgelah*) could refer either to religion or to “validity of our Law” (*‘amitat toratenu*). Furthermore, the verbal form *hurgal* has a meaning that is closer to “be made accustomed, become habitual;” it seems more likely, in that case, to read the sentence as saying that religion has become a *habitus*. This reading agrees with the mention of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the next paragraph (moral excellence as habit, II.1, 1103a).

23 Ibn Kaspi is alluding to a distinction between *mišvot ma’asiot* and *mišvot sikhliot*, practical and intellectual commandments. Cf. III:27–28 (Pines 510–514). In contrast to Maimonides, ibn Kaspi generally refrained from re-interpreting or delving into the meaning of religious commandments. See *Mašref la-keseḥ*, ed. Isaac Last (Cracow: Fisher, 1906), 42; Kasher, “Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete,” 28–38.

24 I have altered the Pines translation to eliminate the expression “become actual,” which has a distinct technical meaning that does not occur in ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew version of this passage.

25 It is possible to read this remark as saying that the Torah is “Truth,” or “truthful” or “is true.” (*Torat Mosheh ‘emet*)

[4] Furthermore he ought to be *perfect in his belief in general and in his character [traits]*.<sup>26</sup> The traits are the ethical dispositions that Aristotle prescribes in the *Nichomachean Ethics*. Further: he [ought to have] *studied the science of the philosophy and came to know what it signifies* – in case he *studied* but did not *come to know* its usefulness, which is useless. Therefore, it is necessary [to say] that he *studied and came to know*.<sup>27</sup> Further: *the human intellect drew him on and led him to dwell in its province*, meaning that his intellect is always in actu, rather than at times in actu and at times in potentia. Further: *he felt distressed by the externals of the Law*, for had they not *distressed* him, he [Maimonides] would not have been compelled to remove that individual from his perplexity according to the intention of this book *which I have called “The Guide of the Perplexed,”* as will be explained later. Further: he will *continue to understand by himself or was made to understand by others the meanings of the above-mentioned equivocal, derivative, or amphibolous terms*. This means that he knew a few of them just enough to perceive some indication [of their meaning].

[5] *He [that individual] would remain in a state of perplexity and confusion*, etc. Here the Teacher emphasized that in the second outcome [of the perplexed individual] *perceiving that he had brought loss to himself and harm to his religion*.<sup>28</sup> The Teacher meant thereby to buttress the observance of the Law. The intention is that the individual described here [is like one] who has two wives, each of whom is deeply loved by him, and they are the Torah and the intellect. Then he approaches them through a proof-text read as a *mashal*, which is: **let us make man in our image, after our likeness**<sup>29</sup> [cf. Gen 1:26]. However, from his youth he had been habituated by his teachers<sup>30</sup> into a vulgar language of corporeal representation, but he now knows that God is not corporeal. He is perplexed on account of his equal love for these two women, who are the Torah and the intellect. If one were more beloved than the other, he would remove her from his house; but this is not his desire since he has a strong belief that every word in the Torah of Moses is true, and it is written there “in our image,” whose received meaning conforms to corporeal representation. Thus he necessarily believes it to be true. **And her adversary also proved her sore, for to make her fret** [1 Sam 1:6], which is the intellect that attests to the incorporeality of God. He loves both and is unable to reconcile the two, and he suffers the quarrel between them by himself.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Kaspi's quotation here is as found in the ibn Tibbon translation, which reads “perfect in his character traits” (cf. Pines: “perfect in his religion and character”).

<sup>27</sup> That is, the expression “studied and came to know” is not redundant; it refers to acquiring knowledge and knowing how to deploy it.

13 [4] ועוד שהוא שלם באמונתו בכלל ומדותיו, והם התכונות המדותיות שצוה ארסטו בספר המדות. ועוד  
 14 שעיין בחכמת הפילוסופיא וידע ענינה, כי אם עיין ולא ידע מה יועיל לא יועיל לכן יצטרך שעיין וידע. ועוד  
 15 ומשכו השכל האנושי להשיגו במשכנו כלומר שהיה משכיל בפועל תמיד לא פעם בפועל ופעם בכת.  
 16 ועוד הציקוהו פשוטי התורה כי אם לא הציקוהו לא אצטרך לו להוציאו ממבוכתו, כמו שכונתי היא בזה  
 17 הספר אשר נקרא מורה הנבוכים כמו שיתבאר אחר כן. ועוד שיהיה מה שלא סר היותו מבין מדעתו או  
 18 הבינהו זולתו מעניני השמות ההם המשותפים או המושאלים או המסופקים, כלומר שידע קצת מהם עד  
 19 שיש לו הערה מה.

1 [5] ואמרו ונשאר במבוכה ובבהלה וכו'. הנה הפליג המורה לומר גם בעבר השני ויחשוב עם זה שהוא  
 2 הביאה עליו הפסד ונוק בתורתו כי יחמיר בזה המורה על שמירת התורה. והכונה כי זה המתואר  
 3 שיש לו שתי נשים כל אחת אהובה לו מאוד והם התורה והשכל. הנה כאשר פגש על דרך משל בפסוק  
 4 אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמינו כדמותינו [בר' א, כו]. וכי כבר לעזוהו לו רבותיו מנעוריו לשון תמונה גשמית  
 5 והוא עתה יודע שהאל אינו גשם. הוא נבון מצד היותו אהב שתי הנשים האלה אהבה שווה והן התורה  
 6 והשכל. כי אם היתה האחת אהובה לו יותר יוציא האחרת מביתו; אבל לא ימצא זה בלבד כי הוא חזק  
 7 האמונה שתורת משה כל דבריה אמת, וכתוב שם בצלמינו, שענינו כמו שהוא מקובל תמונה גשמית.  
 8 לכן הוא מאמין בהכרח שכן הוא אמת. וכעסטה צרתה גם כעס [שמ"א, א, ו] והוא השכל שתאמת שאין  
 9 לאל גשמות. ושתייהן הוא אהב ולא אוכל לשום עצת שלום ביניהם, והוא סובל בעצמו הקטטה ביניהם.

13 ומדותיו] ה ומדותיו | 14 הפילוסופיא וידע ענינה] ה הפילוסופים העניניהם | לא יועיל] בג חסר | 16 אצטרך] דה יצטרך | שכונתי] בגוהו שכונתי ד שכיון | היא] בגו היה ד בשם ה היא | בזה] ד זה | 17 הספר] ד +מ"הנ | אשר] ה +לכן | כמו... כן] ד חסר

1 ויחשוב] בגדהו ויחשב | 2 והכונה] בגדהו והכוונה | זה] בגדו חסר | 3 אהובה] ב אהוב | מאד] ה חסר | 4 כדמותינו] ה חסר | לעזוהו] ג לעזוהו | 5 עתה] ה חסר | 6-5 והן התורה והשכל] ד חסר | 6 יוציא] ה יוצא | 7 כמון] ה חסר |

28 The individual who bears the seven characteristics is confronted with two possibilities: he can follow his intellect "and consider that he has renounced the foundations of the Law, or he turn his back to his intellect and bring loss to himself and harm to his religion" (Pines 5-6).

29 On the use of this biblical construction in the *Guide*, see Sara Klein-Braslavy, *Maimonides' Interpretation of the Adam Stories in Genesis: A Study in Maimonides' Anthropology* (Tel Aviv: Reuven Mas, 1987), 28-36 [Hebrew].

30 Or: "by his rabbis."

[6] This will occur because should he follow his intellect that attests to the incorporeality of God, and *renounce* the verse **in our image** as a **vessel wherein is no pleasure** [Jer 48:38], he would then see that he has *renounced the foundations of the Law*. Nonetheless, should he preserve the interpretation of **in our image** that he has received, and *not let himself be drawn on together with his intellect* – which attests to the incorporeality of God – *rather turning his back on it and moving away from it*, he would then see that he has *brought loss to himself and harm to his religion*. That is, he would see thereby that his religion<sup>31</sup> is moldy and a loss, since it would establish that God is corporeal, as is the case for the religions of other communities.<sup>32</sup>

[7] Notice the emphasis of the Teacher, as we remarked above.<sup>33</sup> He should have said regarding this second outcome *perceiving that he had brought loss to himself and harm to his intellect*. This is certainly the case, but he said *to his religion* to emphasize that also in the second outcome there is a danger to the Torah of Moses. That being the case, in any event the Teacher had an obligation to take this into consideration. He does so by interpreting “in our image” parabolically and [hence] its meaning is not according to the vulgar language in which he was habituated by his ignorant teachers. Rather it is an equivocal term, and one of its meanings corresponds to intellectual form, and on that basis he interprets “in our image.” Thus both women will remain with him without quarrel and in abundant peace, and he lies down with both of them together in a **stately bed** [Ezek 23:41] and a bed decked out for a scholar.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Or: “his Torah.”

<sup>32</sup> In distinction to this negative assessment, in other passages ibn Kaspi’s opinion of Christianity is somewhat ambiguous. He praises them (along with Muslims) for studying the *Guide* while the Jews neglect it (Last, *Sefer ha-musar*, 70), and writes that the concept of the Trinity has a philosophical parallel in the notion of God as the threefold cause of the universe. Yet he also engaged in extensive polemics against Christian beliefs in his later years, dedicating most of his revised commentary on *Genesis* to combating Christian messianic claims. See Werbluner, ‘*Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 70; Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi*, 56–58; Basil Herring, *Joseph ibn Kaspi’s Gevia’ kesef: A Study in Medieval Jewish Bible Commentary* (New York: Ktav, 1982) 69, 96, 136–137; Wilhelm Bacher, “Aus der Bibelexe-gese Joseph ibn Kaspis,” *Monatsschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* 56:2 (1912), 209–217. See also Georges Vajda, *Isaac Albalag* (Paris: Vrin, 1960), 89 n2.

<sup>33</sup> Commentary, ¶5.

<sup>34</sup> b. *Shabbat* 25b.

10 [6] וזה כי אם ימשך אחר שכלו המאמת שאין לאל גשמות, וישליך פסוק **בצלמינו** וכו' **ככלי אין חפץ בו** [יר' 11 מח, לח], הנה הוא רואה שהוא השליך פנות התורה. ואם ישאר עם **בצלמינו** בפירוש המקובל לו ולא 12 ימשך אחר שכלו המאמת שאין לאל גשמות, אך ישליכהו אחרי גוו ויטה מעליו, הנה הוא רואה שהוא 13 הביא עליו הפסד ונזק בתורתו. כלומר שרואה הוא בזה שתורתו עפוש והפסד מאשר היא מנחת שלא ל 14 גשמות כיתר דתות האומות.

15 [7] וראה הפלגת המורה כמו שאמרנו שהוא היה ראוי לומר בזה העבר השני ויחשוב עם זה שהוא הביא 16 עליו הפסד ונזק בשכלו. וזה על כל פנים כן הוא, אבל אמר בתורתו להפליג שגם בעבר השני היתה סכנה 17 על התורה תורת משה. אם כן על כל פנים היה חוב על המורה שיקח עצה על זה. ויהיה זה כשיבאר כי 18 בצלמינו על דרך משל אין ענינו כמו שלעזוהו רבותיו הפתאים, אבל הוא שם משותף וקצת ענינו הצורה 19 השכלית ומזה הוא פירוש בצלמינו. ולכן ישארו שתי נשיו אצלו מבלי קטטה ושלוס רב ביניהן; והוא שוכב 20 עם שתיהן יחד על **מטה כבודה** [יח' כג, מא] ומטה מוצעת לתלמיד חכם.

11 בצלמינו] ה + וכו' | 14 כיתר דתות האומות] ד כאמונ[ת] הנוצרי[ם] | 16 סכנה] ה הסכנה | 17 משה] ד + רבינו ע"ה | אם כן] בנו א"כ | המורה] ד הרב | 18 על דרך משל] ד עד"מ | ענינו] ה ענינו | 20 מטה] ה + אחת |

[8] *This Treatise also has a second purpose, etc.* This means that the first purpose concerns absolute terms<sup>35</sup>, while the second purpose concerns composite statements that appear in parabolic narratives.<sup>36</sup> *One who truly possesses knowledge.* [The individual] designated as *one who truly possesses knowledge* is the individual characterized by his knowledge of the philosophical sciences. Someone else will not be able to confound him with literal meanings that are impossible in view of the intellect. *That is why I have called this Treatise “The Guide of the Perplexed.”* That is, for the sake of these two purposes, because by means of them I intend to remove the individual from perplexity. The rationale is that it is not fitting to call it “Guide of the Fools,” since it was said earlier that it is not intended for them; and it is not fitting to call it “The Guide of the Sages,” since they already know all. Therefore it is composed only for those who are intermediate between the two, which is the individual who was described earlier: he is half a simpleton and half wise. He knows a few interpretations of Scriptural secrets, but not all of them, and therefore he is perplexed. Pay attention to the emphasis of the book, as there is no chapter in it that does not contain some notion related to these purposes or that constitutes a *preparation* for them, as [Maimonides] will say later on. Indeed it begins with an interpretation of the equivocality of the term *image* and it ends with the interpretation of the equivocality of the term *wisdom*.

[9] *For those who understand it*, meaning understand this treatise, that is, this book. *When we mention a subject*, meaning [a subject] related to absolute terms – which constitutes the first purpose, and thus what follows it is *or that when we engage in the explanation of the meaning of a mashal* – which is the second purpose. [An intelligent man would] *be unable to do so* that is, [Maimonides] is not saying thereby that he wished to do so in an absolute way, but rather in a restrained manner. It says *it is impossible [that he should not become a target]*. The meaning of *impossible* is [something] impossible per se.<sup>37</sup> And it says *who would let fly at him the shafts of his ignorance*, that is, *him* meaning at himself. As if he had said to himself that the *target* is placed very far away from man to fly arrows to it, and thus that one makes a *target* of his own and *lets fly* at it *the shafts of his ignorance*.

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35 *shemot ha-nifradim*.

36 According to ibn Kaspi, every chapter of the *Guide* deals with a particular subject that is unique to it, but every chapter also meets these two purposes; cf. the end of his commentary on I:50, in Werbluner, *Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 57–58.

37 Ibn Kaspi explains here the term *i'efshar* with the technical term *nimna'*. Cf. III:15: “the impossible (*nimna'*) has a stable nature, one whose stability is constant and is not made by a maker... according to every opinion and school, there are impossible things whose existence cannot be admitted... accordingly they are necessarily as they are and are not due to the act of an agent” (Pines 459). *Nimna'*, then, indicates something impossible per se. In the context of this paragraph, it indicates that Maimonides is not responsible for becoming a target to detractors, since it is *per se* impossible to write about these matters without being attacked in some way. The statement is significant in the background of Maimonidean controversies during the 13th century and the controversy over the teaching of philosophy in 1303–1306.

1 [8] וכלל המאמר הזה כונה שניה וכו'. ר"ל כי הכונה הראשונה היא בשמות הנפרדים והכונה השני היא  
 2 במאמרים המורכבים שבאו דרך ספורים המשליים. היודע באמת ר"ל הנקרא יודע באמת והוא  
 3 האיש המתואר מצד דעתו החכמות הפילוסופיות, כי זולתו לא יקשה לו דבר מן הפשטים הנמנעים אצל  
 4 השכל. ולזה נקרא מורה הנבוכים ר"ל לשתי הכונות האלה כי בשתיהם אכזיז להוציא האיש ממבוכה.  
 5 והטעם כי אין ראוי לקרותו מורה השכלים כי כבר קדם לו שאין כונתו להם, וכן אין ראוי לקרותו מורה  
 6 החכמים כי הם יודעים הכל. אם כן לא חובר זה אלא לממוצעים בין שתי אלה, והוא האיש שקדמו לו  
 7 תארו, שהוא חצי שוטה וחצי חכם. כי יודע מן המקרא מעט מבאור סודות אבל לא הכל ולכן הוא נבוכ.  
 8 וראה הפלגת זה הספר כי אין פרק בזה הספר שלא יהיה בו ענין מאלו הכונות או הצעה להם, כמו  
 9 שיאמר הוא עוד באמרו. והוא הביא תחלתו באור שתוף צלם וסופו באור שתוף חכמה.

10 [9] למי שיבינהו ר"ל שיבין המאמר הזה כלומר הספר הזה. ענין מן הענינים, ר"ל מן השמות הנפרדים שהוא  
 11 הכונה הראשונה לכן אחריו או כשנתחיל לבאר משל וכו' שהוא הכונה השנית. זה אי אפשר וכו' ר"ל  
 12 אינו אומר בזה שהוא רצה במוחלט אבל מתנה. ואומר שאי אפשר שלא ישוב מטרה וכו' וטעם אי אפשר  
 13 נמנע. ואמרו יורה חצי סכלותו נגדו ר"ל נגד עצמו, כאלו אמר אל לבו כי המטרה תושם רחוק רחוק מן  
 14 האדם לירות חצים שם, וזה ישים המטרה בלבו ויורה זה חצי סכלותו.

1 כונה [בגדהו כוונה | הכונה] בגדהו הכוונה | הנפרדים] בדהו הנרדפים | והכונה] בגדהו והכוונה | 2 המשליים] ו המשלים | 4  
 הכונות] בגדהו הכוונות | 5 ראוי] בגדה חסר | לן] ו חסר | כונתו] בגדהו כוונתו | 6 אם כן] בגדהו א"כ | חובר] ב יחבר | אלא] א  
 ה רק | 7 חצי שוטה וחצי חכם] ד סכל וחכם | יודע] ד + וירגיש | מעט מבאור] ד חסר | הכל ולכן הוא נבוכ] ד בשלמות כ"א  
 במבוכה | 8 מאלו] בגדו + שתי | הכונות] בגדהו הכוונות | 9 והוא] בגדהו נה | הביא] ה נביא פרקים וכו' ועל כל פנים ר"ל  
 זה הספר בכלליו ובפרקיו אחד אחד סובב אל אלו שתי הכונות ולכן | שתוף צלם] ה שתוף שם צלם | שתוף חכמה] ד שתוף  
 שם חכמה | 10 הנפרדים] בגדו הנרדפים | 11 הכונה] בגדהו הכוונה | כשנתחיל] ד כשנתחיל | הכונה] בגדהו הכוונה | 12  
 ישוב] ו ישאר | 13 רחוק] דו חסר | 14 חצים] ה החצים | זה] ד לעמו ה שם | חצי] בגו חסר |

[10] *The Sages... likewise have spoken of them [in riddles and parables]*, meaning the Sages [of the Talmud]. *Nature and habit in their various forms*<sup>38</sup> refer to two ideas: *nature*, meaning those among the material faculties that are attached to us; and *habit*, meaning habits that persist with them, whether [habits] of opinion or of undesirable traits, as will be explained in I:33.<sup>39</sup> *Among us there are those*,<sup>40</sup> here the Teacher is speaking of himself and of an individual who is similar to him whose intellect is not *in actu* and constantly intellectualizing, which is Maimonides and those who like him, namely the philosophers. However, he illustrates the subject with the science of prophecy, since there are biblical verses regarding them. As he illustrates them he says *it is in accord with these states that the degrees of the perfect vary*<sup>41</sup> that is, the philosophers. The meaning of *in the whole of [his] night* is his lifetime; that is, that entire time is as night among those deficient in the intellect *in actu*. The meaning of *greater or shorter intervals* is that they are sometimes frequent and sometimes infrequent, and this is the case for Isaiah, Jeremiah, and those akin to them.

[11] *He who does not attain a degree*, etc. This refers to those in the first degree of prophecy, and regarding the second, the Teacher mentions in II:45 that they are in reality not prophets.<sup>42</sup> ***Bright in the skies*** [Job 37:21], meaning his sapphire is in the skies.<sup>43</sup> *All the great Sages possessing knowledge of God the Lord ...* meaning our Sages such as R. Akiva, R. Shimon b. Lakish and those like them only. *They even multiplied the parables* – all these notions are found in Gemara.<sup>44</sup>

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38 Pines, 7: “matter and habit in their various forms.”

39 In the modern editions the reference is to I:34 (Pines 76–77).

40 Pines: *among us there is one (ve-yesh mimmenu)*.

41 Pines 7, line 34–35.

42 The first degree of prophecy (of eleven) “consists in the fact that an individual receives a divine help that moves and activates him to a great, righteous, and important action... the individual in question finds in himself something that moves and incites him to action, and that is called the spirit of the Lord... such a spirit of the Lord by no means caused one of these to speak of anything; rather its object was to move the one strengthened by it to a certain action.” The second degree designates all those who are said to have spoken “through the Holy Spirit” (Pines 396–400).

15 [10] ודברו בהם החכמים ר"ל רבותי ז"ל הטבעים והמנהגים אלו שני ענינים: הטבעיים, ר"ל הדבקתנו בכחות  
 16 החמרים, והמנהגים ר"ל ההרגלים ששקדנו עליהם, אם בדעות אם במדות שאינם טובות, כמו שיתבאר  
 17 פל"ג מראשון. והנה יש ממנו, הנה המורה מדבר על עצמו והדומה לו שאינו בפועל משכיל תמיד והוא  
 18 ז"ל והדומים לו והם חכמי העיון, אבל הוא ממשל הענין בחכמת הנבואה כי מהם ימצא פסוקים. וכאשר  
 19 השלימם יאמר וכפי אלו הענינים יתחלפו מדרגות השלמים כלומר חכמי העיון. וטעם בלילו כלו בזמנו  
 20 כלומר כי כל זמן האלה הוא לילה מאלו חלושי השכל בפועל. וטעם אמרו הפרשים רבים ומעטים כלומר  
 21 פעם רבים פעם מעטים, וזה כענין ישעיה וירמיה וחבריהם.

22 [11] ואמרו ויש מי שלא יגיע מדרגה וכו' בעלי מדרגה ראשונה מן הנבואה, והשני שיזכור המורה במ"ה  
 23 משני כי הם אינם על דרך האמת נביאים. **בהיר הוא בשחקים** [איוב לו, כא] ר"ל ספירי הוא בשחקים.  
 24 [כשכיון] כל חכם גדול אלהי רבני ר"ל מרבותינו כר' עקיבא ור' שמעון בן לקיש והדומים להם לבד. והרב  
 25 המשלים וכו', כל אלו הענינים נמצאו בגמרא.

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15 רבותי ז"ל] **בגדהו** חז"ל | הדבקותנו | **ג** הדבקותינו | **ד** התדבקותנו | **ה** הדבקתנו | 16 ששקדנו | **בד** ששקדו | **ה** שגדלנו | וששקדו |  
 18 ז"ל והדומים לו] | **ד** והם הנקראים | 18–19 אבל ... השלימים | **ו** חסר | 18 ממשל | **בדו** ממשל | 19 השלימים | **בגד** ישלימים |  
 חכמי] **בגדו** מחכמי | **בד** בלילו | **בד** בלילה | כלו] | **ג** חסר | **ד** ר"ל | כלו בזמנו] | **ב** בזמנו כולו | 20 כלומר] | **ד** כלו | זמן] | **ד**  
 הזמנים | לילה] | **ה** +ר"ל | 21 פעם] | **ד** פעמים | פעם] | **ד** פעמים | ישעיה וירמיה] | **ג** ירמיה וישעיה | וחבריהם] | **בגדה** וחבריהם |  
 ו דומיהם | 22 וכו' בעלי] | **בגדו** חסר | מן הנבואה] | **ה** והשנית | והשני] | **בד** והוא | חסר | 23 ספירי] | **בדו** ספירי | בשחקים] | **ג**  
 +כשהיו | 24 אלהי] | **ה** חסר

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43 Ibn Kaspi interprets "sapphire" elsewhere as a reference to the Neoplatonic notion of World Soul, but describes it as a sphere immediately beneath the Active Intellect (departing from his avowed source, al-Batalyusi). Cf. Last, *Menorat kesef*, 124. The motif reappears in a later sources; see Ḥanokh al-Constantini, *Les visions divines*, trans. Colette Sirat (Jerusalem : s.n., 1976), 22–24. In the translation I follow the variant reading (cf. Hebrew apparatus, "his sapphire").

44 Cf. b. *Sanhedrin* 38b: "when R. Meir used to deliver his public discourses, a third was Halakhah, a third Haggadah, and a third consisted of parables. R. Joḥanan also said: R. Meir had three hundred parables of foxes, and we have only three left."

[12] *Do you not see the following fact?* This [question] follows after *we are told [about those profound matters] ... in parables and riddles*. It hints that there are parables and riddles in *ma'aseh bereshit*. I have explained this in the book *The Basin of Silver*.<sup>45</sup> *That which is said [about all this is in equivocal terms]*, meaning that God caused this section of the Torah to be written this way.<sup>46</sup> *[The latter] being a book*, that is, the *Book of Correspondence*. *We would, as it were, have replaced one individual by another of the same species*. This refers to a parabolic interpretation of the dictum “I will go and uproot a mountain” as the root of his soul is stone.<sup>47</sup> *[It was to the vulgar that] we wanted to explain*, meaning our whole purpose was to explain these things to the *vulgar* alone and to give them this [as a] gift. This being so, how could he [Maimonides] have given them something that *an ignoramus among the multitude of the Rabbanites* abhors?<sup>48</sup> Such an individual is truly not one of the *great Sages, possessing knowledge of God* who had been mentioned previously.<sup>49</sup>

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**45** *Mizraq kesef* (*Mizraq* is the basin used for sprinkling blood upon the altar in the Tabernacle; cf. Num 7:84). This treatise by ibn Kaspi dealt with the narrative of *ma'aseh bereshit* but does not survive. Cf. Ibn Kaspi, *Shulḥan kesef*, ed. Ḥannah Kasher (Jerusalem: Ben-Tzvi Institute, 1996), 26. For ibn Kaspi *ma'aseh bereshit* and *ma'aseh merkavah* constitute the principal part of the *Guide*. Werbluner, *'Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 16.

**46** The comment is unclear. It can be read as *ve-sham ha-'el kotev ha-torah*, lit. “There God writes the Torah,” which is obscure in this context, or *ve-shem ha-'el kotev ha-torah*, “the name of God writes the Torah,” which does not make sense. Hence I prefer a version of the first alternative, though only tentatively.

**47** See b. *Berakhot* 54b. The context is a discussion about Og, king of Bashan (one of the kings present in Canaan at the time of Israelite settlement; cf. Deut. 3). It begins with the baraita “the stone (‘even) which Og, king of Bashan, wanted to throw at Israel.” Og asks how large the Israelite camp is and then declares that “I will uproot a mountain” (*tura'*) the size of the Israelite camp so as to kill them; but God intervenes. Ibn Kaspi’s explanation, it seems, is a different reading of Og’s statement. The noun for root, *'iqqar*, has the double meaning of a physical root (biblical) as well as principle (post-biblical). *Tura'* is a biblical Aramaic term that in its original context means mountain (cf. Dan 2:45). However, it is etymologically related to the Hebrew for “rock,” *šur*, and apparently with this association in mind, ibn Kaspi goes on to substitute *tura'* by a Hebrew synonym for *šur*, which is ‘even (stone). Thus: *'iqqar* (in the source, ‘e'eqor) *tura'* is a parabolic statement about the character of Og, but a parabolic statement of a particular kind; it seems to be closer to a double entendre rather than a formal *mashal* that conveys a *nimshal* (the non-literal meaning or interpretation). Hence the statement “replaced one individual by another of the same species.”

**48** That is, it seems that according to ibn Kaspi the multitude rejects the true import of the midrashim, as we read in the preceding sentence “if, on the other hand, we explained what ought to be explained, it would be unsuitable for the vulgar among the people.” This begs the question of why then “we wanted to explain the import of the Midrashim and the external meanings of prophecy.”

**49** Pines 8, line 17.

- 1 [12] הלא תראה וכו', זה נמשך עם אמרו הגיד לנו וכו'. במשלים וחידות רמז בזה כי במעשה בראשית יש  
 2 משלים וחידות, וכבר בארתי זה בספר מזרק כסף. ושם הדברים וכו' ר"ל ושם האל כותב התורה. הוא  
 3 ספר ר"ל ספר ההשואה. תהיה מחליפים איש באיש ממין אחד זה על דרך משל לפרש אמרם "עקר טורא"  
 4 שעקר מנפשו אבן. ואנחנו השתדלנו וכו' כלומר כי כונתינו כלה לבאר הדברים להמון לבד ולתת להם  
 5 זאת המתנה. אם כן איך נתן להם דבר שיתעבוהו(?) סכל מהמון הרבנים? אין זה באמת חכם גדול אלהי  
 6 רבני כמו שכבר קדם זכרו.

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1 תראה | 1 + וכו' | לנו | גר + וכו' | 2 | התורה | גר בתורה | 3 ממין אחד | ד ממין אחר | על דרך משל | ד עד"מ | לפרש | ד + עקרי  
 התורה | עקר | בגדו | אעיקר | טורא | ג טורה | 4 כונתינו | בגדו | כונתינו | 5 זאת המתנה | 1 וזה במתנה | אם כן | בגדו | א"כ |  
 שיתעבוהו | ג שיתעבוהו | באמת חכם גדול | ה חכם גדול | באמת | 6 רבני | בדו | חסר | קדם | בד חסר

[13] *Thereby extricating*<sup>50</sup> *himself from his predicament*, meaning escaping from perplexity thereby. *Another manner of explanation*, meaning that an interpretation that reveals a handbreath while concealing a handbreath, and not an interpretation that is completely unconcealed.<sup>51</sup> [My speech] *in the present Treatise*. This means that the book *Mishneh Torah* is beneficial for all, *but my speech in the present Treatise is directed to* the individual whom we have described above.<sup>52</sup> *Because of the amphibolous terms*<sup>53</sup> – the Arabic term indicates the equivocal, metaphorical and amphibolous [terms].<sup>54</sup> It indicates that there are different meanings under one single term.<sup>55</sup> *We shall include [in this Treatise] some chapters, etc.* Since [Maimonides] anticipated that he would intend one of those two purposes in every instance, perhaps we would have been astonished if we were to find one [chapter] where he mentions nothing related to them;<sup>56</sup> that is why he makes this stipulation here. The interpretation of those obscure instances is in *Treasury of the Lord [Maskiyot kesef]*.<sup>57</sup> What can be said here is only that his saying *such a chapter may contain strange matters* is on account of one of those two purposes. Indeed, this is like chapters 50, 51 and 52 of the first part, which deal with the eradication of [divine] attributes in a parabolic way, or chapters 13, 14 and 15 of the second part, which deal with Creation in time.

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**50** Heb. “being saved,” “being rescued.”

**51** Cf. Moses of Salerno, Commentary, ¶14, ¶63. This is a common topos in the Maimonidean-Tibbonian philosophical circle. See also Aviezer Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zerahiah b. Isaac b. Shealtiel Ḥen & the Maimonidean-Tibbonian Philosophy in the 13th Century,” Ph.D. diss. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977, 47 [Hebrew].

**52** That is, the perplexed individual who bears seven character traits analogous to the seven garments of the priesthood. See above, Commentary, ¶3–¶4. The notion that the *Guide* and the *Mishneh Torah* were written for two different audiences, with the implication (or perhaps due to the assumption) that the nature of the *Guide* is esoteric and that of the *Mishneh Torah* is exoteric has divided scholars even in the twentieth century. See arguments for the dualist and the “coherentist” positions in Daniel Frank, “Maimonides and Medieval Jewish Aristotelianism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Frank and Oliver Leaman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 138–142. Samuel ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* contrasts Maimonides’ work in the field of *halakhah* against the *Guide*, Samuel ibn Tibbon writes that “all of this was insignificant in his eyes. Thus he composed yet another Treatise – a flawless pearl.” Robinson, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, 164.

**53** *ha-mesuppaqim*. Pines: “uncertain terms” (10).

**54** It is unlikely that ibn Kaspi acquired this knowledge first hand, and more likely that ibn Falaquera was a source for this statement. Even if ibn Kaspi was able to read Arabic, we should not assume that he had access to a Judeo-Arabic copy of the *Guide*, which seems to have become rare in Europe as early as the late 13th century. See Cyril Aslanov, “How Much Arabic Did Joseph Kaspi Know?” *Aleph* 2 (2002), 265; Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 323; Ravitzky, “The Thought of R. Zerahiah,” 32.

**55** Munk, like ibn Kaspi, observes that the word that appears in the ibn Tibbon translation, *mesuppaqim*, was used here in place of the general descriptive Arabic term for all the categories of terms. Most printed editions of ibn Tibbon read the sentence as “the amphibolous and the metaphorical terms” (*ha-mesuppaqim ve-ha-mush'alim*) instead of “the obscure terms and the parables” (*ha-mesuppaqim*

7 [13] וכבר ניצל ר"ל וכבר נמלט ממבוכה. בדרך אחר מן הבאור ר"ל באור כשנגלה טפח ונכסה טפח לא באור  
 8 גלוי גמור. אבל המאמר הזה וכו' כלומר כי חבור משנה תורה טוב לכל אבל המאמר הזה דברי בו עם  
 9 האישי שתארנו למעלה. השמות המסופקים צ"ל לפי הערבי לשון כולל משותפים, מושאלים מסופקים כי  
 10 ענינו מתחלפי הענין עם התאחדות השם. והנה נביא פרקים וכו' בעבור שקדם שהוא על כל פנים מכויז  
 11 לזה לאחת משתי כוונות הנה אולי נפלא עליו במצאנו פמ"ה שלא נזכר בו דבר מאחת מהן, לכן יאמר  
 12 בזה טענה. והנה באור אלו המקומות הנעלמים אוצר יי יבא, רק כי אומר בכאן כי אמרו או יהיה הפרק  
 13 ההוא כולל ענינים זרים מפני שאחת משתי הכוונות האלה. הנה זה כמו פ"ג ונ"א ונ"ב מראשון על דרך  
 14 משל המדברים בהרחקת התארים, או בפ"ג, י"ד, ט"ו [משני] המדברים בחדוש.

7 ניצל] **בגדו** נצל | 11 כוונות] **בגדו** כוונות | במצאנו] ו במצינו | פמ"ה] ה פרק מ"ה | 12 כי] ה חסר | כי אומר] ג חסר | 13  
 הכוונות] **בגדו** כוונות | זה] ה + הוא | 13–14 [פ"ג ... התארים] ה חסר | 14 בפ"ג] ה פרק י"ג

*ve-ha-meshalim*). I altered the Pines translation so that the reader would be aware of the ambiguity that ibn Kaspi is trying to eliminate.

56 To reiterate, the two purposes are “to give indications to a religious man who would remain in a state of perplexity due to the externals of the Law”; and the “explanation of very obscure parables occurring in the books of the prophets but not explicitly identified there as such” (Pines 5, 6).

57 Cf. *Maskiyot kesef*, Prologue, ¶1: “I have resolved to make a treasury from silver, the secrets of the noble *Guide* which are the secrets of divine science. Therefore I have called it the *Treasury of the Lord* and as derived from my own name, *Maskiyot kesef*.”

[14] *Because a mashal is taken for the thing being represented, such as interpreting behold, there met him a woman* [Proverbs 7:10] by its literal meaning. *Or the thing represented is taken for the mashal,*<sup>58</sup> such as interpreting **behold, there met him a woman** as referring to matter. He conveys [this notion] by means of the same narrative, and the purpose here is that the statement is [both] revealed and concealed. Sometimes one seizes the revealed when it would have been proper to seize the concealed, and sometimes the opposite; deduce from it.<sup>59</sup> *As I have mentioned the parables, we shall make the following introductory remarks, that is, this corresponds to his saying that parables are intentionally representational. Their comparison of the concealment [of a subject], etc, meaning consider also their [procedure of] comparison.*<sup>60</sup>

[15] *All [these bodily pleasures]*<sup>61</sup> – this will be explained in I:9 and II:10, since it contains two indications together.<sup>62</sup> *The circumstances described in it being of a kind typical for adulterers.* This means the actions of the adulterer walking over **to the corner toward her house**, and likewise the adulteress [as she] **lays hold of him and kisses him; brazenly she says to him** [Prov 7:8, 13]. *Also the spoken words*, meaning the words spoken are in the discourse of an adulterer and an adulteress.

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58 Pines: *or vice versa*.

59 Werbluner, the 19th century editor of AK, adds a note here that the second verse should have been **from the roof he saw a woman bathing** (2 Sam 11:2), Werbluner, *'Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef* 5. What he means by this is that in the first *mashal* one reads **behold there met him a woman** by its literal meaning when it should have been the metaphorical meaning, while **from the roof...** is read metaphorically but it is intended as literal. It is indeed possible that this is what Maimonides had in mind and Werbluner's reading is confirmed by ms. Paris 695 (but not found in other mss). However, it seems to me that ibn Kaspi interpreted Maimonides as saying that the same *mashal* could potentially have a double meaning; that is why he says that Maimonides makes this understood "by means of only one *mashal*," that is, ibn Kaspi quotes the same *mashal* to illustrate both kinds of reading. For certain parables, this double reading is admissible, for others only one or the other meaning is admissible, and that is what ibn Kaspi means by "deduce from it." Werbluner's reading has a parallel in Efodi, cf. *The Guide of the Perplexed of Maimonides in the Translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon with Four Commentaries* (Warsaw: Y Goldman, 1872, reprinted Jerusalem 1960), *ad loc*.

60 The passage in the *Guide* reads "Consider the explicit affirmation" that the internal meaning is such and the external meaning is such [ibn Kaspi: and "consider" also] their [the Sages'] comparison of concealment" to a man who lost a pearl.

61 The complete sentence is "accordingly [Solomon] likens matter, which is the cause of all these bodily pleasures," Pines 13.

62 It is not quite clear to me what ibn Kaspi has in mind here. I:9 explains the meaning of the term "throne" (*kise*). II:10 discusses the causes of the motions of the spheres, and the forces that proceed from the spheres and affect the sublunar world. In addition, it contains an interpretation of the number of steps in Jacob's ladder (Gen 28). Two mss have quite a different version of this sentence of *'Ammudei kesef*. In place of the term "all" (*kulam*) they have instead *ladder (sulam)*, meaning Jacob's ladder, mentioned in Pines 12–13. This version makes some sense in the context of the passage in the commentary, since II:10 indeed deals with the *mashal* of the ladder. If this indeed is ibn Kaspi's intent, the indication to I:9 should be emended to read I:15, which does discuss Jacob's ladder.

15 [14] ואמרו מפני שאת המשל במקום הנמשל כמו שנפרש **והנה אשה לקראתו** [מש' ז, י] כפשוטו. ואמרו  
 16 שאת הנמשל במקום המשל כמו שנפרש **והנה אשה לקראתו** שהוא החומר והוא הבין בספור אחת  
 17 לבד. והכונה כי המאמר נגלה ונסתר ופעמים נקח הנגלה והיה ראוי שנקח הנסתר ופעמים בהפך, והקש  
 18 על זה. ואחר שזכרתי המשלים נקדים הקדמה ר"ל באמרו המשלים דמיונים לכונה ודמותם וכו' ר"ל וגם  
 19 'התבונן דמותם וכו'.

20 [15] כי אמרו כולם וכו' זה יתבאר עוד פט"ו מראשון ופ"י משני כי הוא סובל שתי הוראות יחד. כי אלו הענינים  
 21 אשר זכר הם מן ענין הזונים ר"ל המעשים בעבורם הנואף **אצל פנה ודרך ביתה יצעד** וכמו החזיק הנואפת  
 22 **בו ונשקה לו** [מש' ז, ח\יג]. ואמרו וכן אלו הדברים וכו' ר"ל הדבורים שידברו בלשון הנואף והנואפת.

15 כפשוטו] ד שהוא החמר 16-15 ואמרו ... החומר] ד חסר 16 והנה אשה לקראתו] ה יורא אשה רוחצת מעל הגג] שהוא  
 ה שהיא] והוא] ה הוא] הבין] ה הדין] 17 והכונה] **בגדהו** והכוונה] ופעמים] ד +בהפך] 18 וגם] ה עם] 19 וכו'] **בגדו** חסר]  
 20 כולם] **בה** סולם] ד והנה סולם] פט"ו] **בדגו** פ"ט] 21 בעבורם] **בגד** בעברם] ה בעבור] החזיק] **בגד** החזק] ה החזיקה] 22  
 וכן] **בג** וכל] אלו] **בגד** אלה

[16] *Instruction with Respect to this Treatise. Your intention must be not only to understand the totality of the subject of that chapter, but also to grasp each word that occurs in it in the course of the speech, even if that word does not belong to the intention of the chapter.* Some of those who parse the *Guide* say that because of this [statement] it is not proper to establish the intention of each and every one of its chapters on the basis of words and statements that are not part of its general and primary intention.<sup>63</sup> A decisive proof to this is what Maimonides himself says at the end of I:20: *in this chapter my purpose* etc., even though it reveals notions that are not related to the purpose.<sup>64</sup> Likewise at the end of I:36: *this was the subject of this chapter*, even though it contains words and ideas that refer to various subjects.<sup>65</sup> He says further in I:70: *there is no doubt that there are many other intimations with reference to this subject. However, the purpose of the chapter, toward which the argument was repeatedly brought back, etc.*<sup>66</sup>

[17] In fact, this [method] is not unique to this honorable book. In all books of science, it has been the custom of philosophers to do the same. Namely, the thread of the discussion deviates from the general and primary intention,<sup>67</sup> as one often reads: “we have gone beyond the limits of the subject of this chapter” or “this matter has inserted itself into our discussion” and likewise for all similar expressions. A *mashal* of this is chapter 15 [of Part I], whose purpose is to interpret the equivocal [term] *set up* as it appears in the verse **and behold a ladder set up on the earth** [Gen 28:12].<sup>68</sup> That same chapter defines the interpretation of **ascending and descending on it** [ibid], even though the term *ascending* had been interpreted in I:10.<sup>69</sup> Therefore it is said in relation to this in I:15: *I shall now return to our purpose: stood erect upon it*, etc. See now whether this constrained [Maimonides] from declaring that his purpose in chapter 15 is the interpretation of the equivocality of [the term] *to stand erect*.

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**63** *ha-kavanah ha-kolelet ha-’aşmit*. Ibn Kaspi frequently announces the essential “intention” or “purpose” of each chapter; cf. for instance AK on I:9, I:10 (Werbluner, ‘*Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 27, 28).

**64** It begins by an examination of the equivocality of “high/to bear” (*ram/naso*) but it eventually delves into the problem of divine attributes (Pines 46–47).

**65** The chapter begins with an investigation on the meaning of expressions of divine anger or jealousy, then goes on to discuss the nature of idolatrous worship.

**66** The chapter begins with an examination of the equivocality of “to ride” (*rakhov*) but it delves also into the meaning of ‘*aravot* (“dry land,” cf. Ps 68:6).

**67** *ha-kavanah ha-kolelet ha-’aşmit*.

**68** The chapter, which explains the verb *naşav*, does not cite the verse mentioned by ibn Kaspi even though the verb does appear in that verse under a different tense (*muşav*). According to Maimonides the term means “rising and being erect or to be stable and permanent” (the proper meaning in reference to God). The verse that Maimonides chooses to comment is Genesis 28:13: “And behold, the Lord stood erect upon it” (Pines 40–41).

**69** Pines 34–35.

1 [16] צואת זה המאמר. ולא תהיה כונתך מן הפרק הבנת כלל ענינו לבד אלא להעלות בידך גם כן ענין כל מלה  
 2 שבאה בתוך הדברים ואע"פ שלא תהיה מענין הפרק. יש מן המדקדקים בספר המורה שאומרים בעבור  
 3 זה כי אין ראוי להניח כונת פרק ממנו מהמלות או מאמרים אינם מכונת הפרק הכוללת העצמית.  
 4 והעד הנאמן מה שאמר המורה עצמו סוף פרק כ [מראשון] ואמנם הכונה בזה הפרק וכו' ואם יתגלגלו לו  
 5 דברים אינם מן הכונה. וכן סוף פל"ו מראשון וזאת היתה כונת הפרק ואם בתוכו מלות ורמזים על ענינים  
 6 רבים. ואמר עוד פ"ע מראשון: אי אפשר מבלתי הערות אחרות גם כי רבות בזה הענין, אמנם המכוון  
 7 בזה הפרק אשר עדין היתה השבת הדברים וכו'.

8 [17] והנה לא זה בלבד בזה הספר הנכבד, כי בכל ספרי החכמות ינהגו זה החכמים שדרך המשכות הדברים  
 9 יצאו מן הכונה הכוללת העצמית. ויאמרו: וכבר יצאנו מכונת הפרק, או: זה דבר קרה לנו בדברינו, וכן  
 10 כל הדומה לזה. והמשל בזה פט"ו שכונתו לבאר שתוף יצב באמרנו **והנה סולם מוצב ארצה** [בר' כח, יב].  
 11 ונגדר שם לפרש **עולים ויורדים** [שם] ואם כבר קדם לנו פ"י עלה, ולכן אמר בזה רצוני פט"ו ואשוב אל  
 12 ענינינו כי נצב וכו'. וראה האם בעבור זה נחדל מלומר שכונת פרק ט"ו הוא באור שתוף נצב.

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1 המאמר] **בגדהו** וכו' וגם כן] **בגדהו** ג"כ [3 כונת] **בגדהו** כוונת] ממנו] ה + ונהפוך הוא כי זה יחייב שניח הפרק רצוני הכוונה הכוללת העצמית אבל שנשמור כי בפרקים מה | מהמלות] ה מלות | מכונת] **בגדהו** מכונת | 4 הכונה] **בגדהו** הכוונה | 5 הכונה] **בגדהו** הכוונה | פל"ו] ג חסר ה פרק ב' (?) | על] **בגדהו** חסר | ענינים] **בגדהו** מענינים | 7 וכו'] **בגדהו** חסר | 8 בזה] ג חסר | 9 הכונה] **בגדהו** הכוונה | מכונת] **בגדהו** מכונת | דבר] **בגדהו** חסר | 10 שכונתו] **בגדהו** שכונתו | יצב] **בגדהו** נצב | 11 ויורדים] **בגדהו** + בו | פ"י] **בגדהו** פרק יוד ה + ביאור | עלה] ה + וירד | אמר] ב חסר | רצוני] **בגדהו** רצוני ד + לומ' | פט"ו] ד בפט"ו | ואשוב] ד ונשוב | 12 האם] גר אם | שכונת] **בגדהו** שכונתו |

[18] *Be careful to avoid*, this means “and with care [to avoid].”<sup>70</sup> *You therefore should not pursue it through your own schemes,*<sup>71</sup> *for that would hurt me and be of no use to yourself.* Here the Teacher commanded us by saying *not to pursue* this Treatise according to your own thoughts. This means not to come upon it suddenly and then depart from it, as is the manner of those who pursue an enemy and are suddenly burned and injured. He says should you do so that will injure him and *be of no use to yourself.* You will not gain any intelligible benefit. You would *hurt me and it will be of no use* for your thoughts, since you will “pass an unfavorable judgment”<sup>72</sup> upon me on this matter; hence [Maimonides] says further *that would hurt me.* You must therefore practice the opposite of such pursuit, which is that [*you ought rather*] *to learn* in pleasantness and unhurriedly *everything that ought to be learned*, that is, from the speculative sciences. Following [thereupon] you ought to *study* this book *constantly... for as we are enjoined to act in this way toward our vulgar ones*, meaning the Sages have commanded us to *pass a favorable judgment* upon every person.<sup>73</sup>

[19] [The Sages’] saying in a similar case **it is time to do something for the Lord for they have infringed thy Law** [Ps 119:126].<sup>74</sup> The meaning is that with regards to things that are [transmitted] orally you are not permitted to put them in writing.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, as they saw that students were becoming far and few, they allowed the Mishnah and also the Talmud [to be set down in writing].<sup>76</sup>

[20] *Introduction. Causes that account for the contradictory or contrary statements to be found in any book.* Those who are knowledgeable in logic are familiar with the notion of contradiction and contrary.<sup>77</sup> *The first cause*, etc. *The second cause*, etc. He further explains the representation of these contradictions at length and they do not appear in our sacred texts.<sup>78</sup> However, the *third* and the *fourth* [causes] appear in our Scriptures, as [Maimonides] will explain and illustrate further. Those who understand the secrets of the Bible will find many of these. The interpretation of his saying that the fourth cause *involves a proviso* is [a reference to] the subject of a proposition, since he later says that *the two subjects may differ.*

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<sup>70</sup> The entire sentence reads literally “but with great exactness and with exceeding precision, and be careful to avoid...” In ibn Kaspi’s opinion it should read (as in Pines) “with care.” All that is necessary is to add a preposition to the verb, functionally turning it into a noun. The al-Ḥarizi translation has a preposition with a noun derived from the same root as the verb (*be-shemirah*).

<sup>71</sup> This is a more literal translation of the sentence “you therefore should not let your fantasies elaborate on what is said here” (Pines 15). The direct object “fantasies” (*zemamekhah*) has a distinctive connotation of “evil plans, schemes” (Ps 140:9).

<sup>72</sup> b. *Berakhot* 31b.

<sup>73</sup> Mishnah, *Pirquei ’avot* I:6.

<sup>74</sup> b. *Berakhot* 63a.

<sup>75</sup> b. *Temurah* 14b, b. *Gitin* 60b.

13 [18] והשמר מלחסר וכו' ר"ל ובהשמר ולא תרדפהו בזממך שתזיקני ולא תועיל לעצמך, צווננו המורה  
 14 ואמר לנו לא תרדוף המאמר הזה במחשבתך. כלומר שלא נברא עליו פתאום ולהסתלק מעליו כדרך  
 15 הרודפים אחר האויב פתאום הכוות(?) ופצוע, ואמר כי אם תעשה זה הנה תזיק לו ולא תועיל לעצמך.  
 16 כי לך לא יעלה בידך מזה תועלת מושכל ואתה תזיק לי ולא תועיל במחשבתך, כי תדין אותו לכף חובה  
 17 בדבר כמו שיאמר עוד ויזקני וכו'. לכן צריך שתעשה הפך הרדיפה והוא שתלמד בנחת ובמתון כל מה  
 18 שצריך ללמדו, כלומר מן החכמות העיוניות. ואחר תעיין בספר הזה ותדיר... כפי מה שיחוייב עלינו בחק  
 19 המונינו ר"ל מה שצונו ז"ל [הוי] דן את כל האדם לכף זכות

20 [19] אמרם בכמו זה הענין עת לעשות ליי הפרו תורתך [תה' קיט, קכו] ר"ל שאמרו זה על דברים שבעל פה אי  
 21 אתה רשאי לאמרו בכתב. אבל כי ראו התלמידים מתמעטים והולכים התירו לכתוב המשניות והתלמוד  
 22 גם כן.

1 [20] הקדמה. סבות הסתירה או ההפך וכו'. ידוע ליודעי בהגיון מה ענין הסותרות וההפכיות. הסבה  
 2 הראשונה וכו' הסבה השנית וכו'. אלו הסותרות יבאר הוא דמיונים בארוכה ואין אלו נמצאים בספרי הקדש  
 3 שלנו. אבל השלישית והרביעית הם נמצאות בספרי הקדש שלנו כמו שיבאר עוד ויביא משלים, מה ומי  
 4 שיבין סודות המקרא ימצא מזה רבים. ופירוש אמרו ברביעית שיהיה שם תנאי הוא בנושא הגזרה כי אחר  
 5 יאמר הנושאים מתחלפים.

14 [לנו] ה חסר | 15 אחר | ה חסר | האויב | בגד | אויב | הכוות | בגו | הכות | ופצוע | ה ופצע | לו | בגו | לי | לעצמך | ה + כלומר  
 16 | מושכל | ג המשכל | אותו | בדהו | אותי | 17 בדבר | דו חסר | בדברי | שיאמר | ד שאמר | ויזיקני | ד ותזיקני | שתלמד | ד  
 שתלמוד | 18 | העיוניות | ב | העיונית | ותדיר | ג ותכיר | ה ותדיר | 19 | ר"ל | בגדהו | כלומר | 21 | כי | דה | לפי | ראו | דה | שראו | 22  
 גם כן | ד חסר

1 [וכו'] בדהו הנמצא בספר מהספרים | הסותרות | בגדו הסותרות | 2 | הסותרות | ה חסר | דמיונים | בגדהו דמיונים | חסר | 3 | עוד |  
 בגדו חסר | משלים | בגד +מה | 4 | בנושא | בגד בנושא | הגזרה | בגו הגזירה |

76 Cf. Tosefta 'Eduyot 1:1; Mishneh Torah, Preface. The upshot of this interpretation is that Maimonides set the *Guide* down in writing for a similar reason.

77 *De Interpretatione* 7, 17b, *Categories* 10, 11b–13b; *MH*, chapter 4.

78 However, Maimonides states later in the Introduction to the *Guide* that the first cause appears in the Mishnah and both appear in the Talmud (Pines 18–19).

[21] *The fifth cause arises from the requirements of teaching and making someone understand. A mashal for this is the procedure followed by Aristotle in the Categories under the category of relation. He begins with a rough definition, and then follows with a polished definition.*<sup>79</sup> He excuses himself for doing so with such an acknowledgement [as this cause].<sup>80</sup> This interpretation provides a basis for the phrasing of the *Guide*, as the notion of relation is *something that is difficult to conceive*, per se as well as [if one were to] *take it as a premise* to explain something else that is mentioned as *easy in conception*. It is proper that this something else *be taught before the difficult first matter* that had been mentioned before it, since it is necessary that an introduction to students should *always be easy*. Thus Aristotle was compelled to sketch a simple conception of relation at the beginning of the category of relation. He simplified the definition since it is a *certain obscure matter that is difficult to conceive*. After he digressed for one or two pages from his purposes for that category, he returned to the concept of relation and to its definition.<sup>81</sup>

[22] *The sixth cause, etc.* This corresponds to the assumption by the Mutakallimūn that God is incorporeal and in spite of that they also assumed that God has motion.<sup>82</sup> However, had they known the methods of logic they would have known, with the help of syllogisms, that anything that is incorporeal cannot have motion, since it is evident that anything that has motion is capable of being divided into parts and anything that can be divided into parts is a body, hence anything that has motion is a body.<sup>83</sup> They also said that God is one and yet he has [real] attributes, as the Teacher mentions in I:50.<sup>84</sup>

[23] *The seventh cause.* [Regarding] *compulsion to speak about very obscure matters*. This means that when a scholar speaks about *very obscure matters* he is compelled and required to conceal some of their aspects but to reveal a few, just as it was mentioned earlier *the necessity of teaching and making someone understand*, etc. Such necessity is [now] described in another account as the scholar whose speech *proceeds on the basis of a certain premise which contradicts the first one; in such cases the vulgar must in no way be aware of the contradiction* between the two premises. This is the explanation of the phrasing of this cause as written in the text.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *Categories* ch. 7, 6a, 36–38, and 8a, 29–34. Regarding this chapter and the two definitions, see P. M. Hood, *Aristotle on the Category of Relation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), 22–53.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. I:5 (Pines 29–31).

<sup>81</sup> Or: and he defined it. In *Gevia' kesef* ibn Kaspi describes the fifth cause as “sometimes the Torah is exact, and at other times it is inexact” (Herring, *Gevia' kesef*, 143).

<sup>82</sup> Three arguments of the Mutakallimūn refuting divine corporeality are outlined in I:76 (Pines 227–231).

<sup>83</sup> See the seventh *haqdamah*, Preface to second part of *Guide* (Pines 236); *Physics* 6.4, 234b, 10–21.

<sup>84</sup> In I:50 this charge is explicitly imputed to Christians and implicitly to the Mutakallimūn (Pines 111).

6 [21] והסבה החמישית הכרח הלמוד וההבנה וכו' זה על דרך משל כמו מה שיעשה אריסטו בספר המאמרות  
 7 על גדר המצטרף. כי גדרו תחלה בעיון גס ואחר גדרו בעיון דק והתנצל שם זה ההתנצלות. וביאור זה  
 8 לישוב לשון המורה כי ענין המצטרף הוא ענין סתום קשה לציירו יצטרך אם מצד עצמו אם מצד לקחו  
 9 הקדמה לביאור דבר אחר שיזכור קל הציור. והוא ראוי שיקדם זה הקל על הראשון הקשה שכבר זכרנו  
 10 ראשון, בעבור שהכרח הוא שהתחלה לתלמידים לעולם תהיה בקל. ולכן הוצרך אריסטו כי במאמר  
 11 המצטרף בראשיתו עשה ציור קל למצטרף והקל בגדרו שהוא ענין סתום קשה לציירו. וכאשר  
 12 האריך דף או דפים מן הכונה שלו במאמר ההוא שב לדקדק ציור המצטרף וגדרו.

13 [22] והסבה השישית וכו' זה כמו שהניחו המדברים שהאל אינו גשם ועם זה הניחו שהאל מתנועע. ואלו  
 14 ידעו מיני ההגיון ידע בהקשים כי כל מה שאינו גשם אינו מתנועע, מאשר יתבאר שכל מתנועע מתחלק  
 15 וכל מתחלק גשם, אם כן כל מתנועע גשם. או כמו שאמרו שהשם אחד והוא בעל התארים כמו שיזכור  
 16 המורה פ"ג [מראשון].

17 [23] והסבה השביעית וכו' כל אנוס הדברים עמוקים מאד כלומר שהחכם כשמדבר בענינים עמוקים מאד הוא  
 18 אנוס ומוכרח שיעלים קצת עניניהם ויגלה קצתם, כמו שקדם אמרו הכרח הלמוד וההבנה וכו'. וכבר  
 19 יבא ההכרח כפי ספור אחר שהחכם ימשיך הדבור בו לפי הנחת הקדמה שהיא סותרת לראשונה, וצריך  
 20 שלא ירגישו ההמון בשום פנים שיש שם סתירה בין שתי ההקדמות. זה באור לשון הספר בזאת הסבה.

6 על דרך משל ד ע"מ שיעשה בגדה שעשה בספר בגדה בס' 7 בעיון בג ענין גס ב דק בעיון בג בענין דק ב גס והתנצלות ה + גדולה 8 סתום בדו חסר 9 לביאור בגדו לבאר הציור בגדו בציור 10 שהתחלה בדו שתחלה ה שבהתחלה תהיה בדהו יהיה במאמר בגדהו +הוא 12 הכונה בגדהו הכונה ההוא בגדו היא 14 מיני בגדהו דרכי 15 אם כן בגדהו א"כ 16 פ"ג ב פנ"א 17 השביעית בגו +כל אנס ב אלה ד חסר הדברים ה +בענינים ו דברים 18 וכבר בגדו ועוד 19 יבא ה יבא אחר ה אחד ימשיך בגד ימשוך הנחת בד חסר הקדמה ה +אחת ויבא חכרח במקום אחר שימשיך הדבור בו לפי הנחת ההקדמה 20 זה ה זהו הסבה בגדה הסיבה

[24] Nonetheless, there is an explanation of this issue and presentation of examples from the *Guide* and the prophetic books, and further explanation of the third and fourth causes that abound in all the prophetic books, in *The Treasury of the Lord* [*Maskiyot kesef*].<sup>85</sup> It seems to me, furthermore, that this [cause] is found in the Torah and the prophetic books concerning the question of whether an individual's actions are determined by God or whether that individual chooses freely. The first view is established occasionally so that the vulgar will suppose that God creates and exercises action over every instance, while the second view aims to make clear to them that they freely choose to act and to repent from action.<sup>86</sup> Ibn Rushd had written on this subject, namely, that within religions one will find contradictions concerning this notion.<sup>87</sup> This will suffice here for our purposes as an interpretation that is to be transmitted for all readers.<sup>88</sup> Herein we end the explanation of the honorable Preface.

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**85** In one version of ibn Kaspi's catalog *Qevuṣat kesef*, the title 'Oṣar 'adonai designates the *Gevia' kesef*, which like the MK has an esoteric agenda: it purports to explain esoteric passages in Scripture, those "whose purpose it is not appropriate to explain to everyone." See Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi*, 26, and Herring, *Gevia' kesef*, 128–129.

**86** See Third *Derush* in *Tam ha-Kesef*, ed. Isaac Last (London: s.n., 1913), 19–23, and AK on III:17, Werbluner, *'Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef* 126–127. In the comment on III:17 ibn Kaspi quotes a quasi-deterministic answer to the problem, whose source was identified as ibn Rushd's *Exposition of Religious Arguments* and borrowed via ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-moreh*. See Kasher, "Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete," 66 n21. On the link between divine providence and foreknowledge in ibn Kaspi, see Kasher, "Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete," 62–70.

**87** See ibn Rushd, *The Book of the Clarification of the Systems of Proof* [*Kitāb al-Kashf 'an Manahij al-Adilla*], *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' Exposition of Religious Arguments*, trans Ibrahim Najjar (London: Oneworld, 2014), 105.

**88** That is, an exoteric interpretation; cf. above, Prologue, ¶2.

- 21 [24] ואמנם באור ענין זה והביא משל על זה עם מספר המורה אם מספרי הנביאים, וכן באור יותר הסבה  
 22 השלישית והרביעית שכל ספרי הנביאים מלאים מהם, הנה כל זה אוצר יי יבא. ונראה לי שזה ימצא  
 23 בתורה ובנביאים על השאלה אם האדם מוכרח מאת האל בפעליו אם הוא בורר ובוחר. כי הדעת הראשון  
 24 יונח לפעמים מצד הניחו להמון שהאל ברא ופעל לכל הענינים, והשני מניח לבאר להם שהם עושים אותם  
 25 וישובו מהם בבחירה. וכבר כתב זה בן רשד ר"ל כי בדתות ימצאו אלו הסותרות בזה המונח. ודי בבאור  
 26 זה בכאן לפי כונתינו בספר הזה שימסר לכל. ובזה נשלם באור הפתיחה הנכבדת.

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21 עם] ו אס] מספר] גזו מספרו] 22 מלאים מהם] בג מהם מלאים ה מליאים מהם] 23 מאת] ב מאתו] בפעליו] בג בפעוליו]  
 בורר] בגו בורא ד חסר] ובוחר] ה +אותם] 25 רשד] בגדו רש"ד] 26 כונתינו] בגדו כונתנו] ובזה] ד חסר] באור] בגו  
 ביאור ד חסר

### 6.3.2 Joseph ben Abba Mari ibn Kaspi

*Maskiyot kesef* (Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*)

[Preface to Commentary]

[1] Joseph ibn Kaspi said: **There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise** [Prov 21:20] but the treasures of the wicked are of no benefit. Therefore, I **have set my face** [Isa 50:7] to building a treasure out of the silver of the secrets of the honorable book of the *Guide*,<sup>89</sup> since they are the secrets of metaphysics. I have called it the *Treasure of the Lord*,<sup>90</sup> and after my own name, *Filigree of Silver*.<sup>91</sup> I will now begin with that for which I long,<sup>92</sup> with the help of God.

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]

[1] *Or that chapter will hint at one of the meanings of an equivocal term that I might not wish to mention explicitly in that place*; such is the case of I:17. It does not mention an equivocal term and yet it is not *preparatory* for the next chapter in the way that the preceding chapter is *preparatory*.<sup>93</sup> *Such a chapter will be preparatory for another*. The term *preparatory* indicates a notion in something earlier that is *preparatory* for a later [chapter]. Thus I:17 hints at the equivocality discussed in I:16,<sup>94</sup> as we will explain in the appropriate place.<sup>95</sup> The same [applies to] I:31–36; these six chapters are *preparatory* for what follows them, as we will discuss it when we reach them, with the help of God.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Sodot sefer ha-moreh ha-nikhbad*; alternatively: “secrets from the book of the honorable Teacher” (i.e. Maimonides).

<sup>90</sup> Ibn Kaspi describes the *Gevia' kesef* rather than MK as *Treasury of the Lord* (‘Ošar ‘adonai) in one of the extant versions of *Qevuṣat kesef*. See Mesch, *Joseph ibn Kaspi* 26, and ‘*Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶24.

<sup>91</sup> The title is a reference to a passage in the Introduction to the *Guide* where Maimonides interprets Proverbs 26:13: “Like apples of gold in settings (*maskiyot*) of silver is a phrase well turned” (slightly modified), Pines, 11–12.

<sup>92</sup> A play on the same root as ibn Kaspi’s name and the Hebrew word for “silver.”

<sup>93</sup> The subject of I:17 is the necessity of withholding “the greater part of natural science” from the multitude (Pines 42).

<sup>94</sup> I:16 explains the equivocality of “rock” (*šur*).

<sup>95</sup> In MK on I:17 ibn Kaspi quotes and interprets the following statement from the Introduction to the *Guide*: “we shall include in this Treatise come chapters in which there will be no mention of an equivocal term; such a chapter will be preparatory for another, or it will hint at one of the meanings of an equivocal term” (Pines, 10). The meaning of I:17 as a complement to I:16 is as follows: “the Teacher (or *Guide*) wished to emphasize that many matters in natural science must be concealed, especially their ground principles, as it says in the Introduction ‘know that with regard to natural matters as well, it is impossible to give a clear exposition when teaching some of their principles’, etc [the quotation

[יוסף בן אבא מרי אבן כספי - משכיות כסף]

[מבוא לפירוש מורה הנבוכים]

[1] אמר יוסף אבן כספי. **אוצר נחמד ושמן בונה חכם** [מש' כא, ב] ולא יועילו אוצרות רשע על כן שמתי **פני** [יש' ג, ז], לעשות אוצר מכסף סודות ספר המורה הנכבד שהם סודות חכמת האלהות. לכן קראתי **אוצר** יי ואל שמי **משכיות כסף** והגני מתחיל בזה הנכסף בעז' האל.

[יוסף אבן כספי - משכיות כסף]

[פירוש מורה הנבוכים - פירוש על פתיחת הספר]

1 [1] הפתיחה. או יהיה הפרק הוא מעורר על ענין מענייני שם משתתף אינני רוצה לגלות אותו זכרון השם  
2 ההוא במקום ההוא. זה כמו פרק י"ז מראשון שאין בו זכרון שם משותף וזה אינו הצעה לאחר שבא  
3 אחריו עד שיהיה הצעה כמו שקדם לו אבל יהיה הפרק הצעה לזולתו כי לשון הצעה מונח לדבר מוקדם  
4 שהוא הצעה למאוחר. והנה פי"ז הוא רמז לשתוף מה שזכר פי"ו כמו שנפרש במקומו, וכן פרק ל"א, ל"ב,  
5 ל"ג, ל"ד, ל"ה, ל"ו. הנה אלו הששה פרקים הם הצעה לבא אחריהם כמו שנבאר כשנגיע לשם בעז' השם.

1 [הפתיחה] ג חסר | מעורר | בד חסר | מענייני | בד מעצמי | אינני | בגדו אינו ה אינו | לגלות | ו + בהם | אותו  
בד חסר | 2 | ההוא/ההוא | ה זה/זה | פי"ז | ג פ"ט | שאין | ו שמשותף | 3 | שקדם | בד שיוקדם | לו | בד + אמרו | 4 | למאוחר |  
בגדהו למאוחר | פי"ז | בד פי"א | רמז | בדהו רמז | מה | בד + זולת מה | שזכר פי"ו | בד שזכרם בפרק י"א | במקומו | ה במקום  
זה | 5 | שנבאר | בגדו שנבאר | בעז' | בגדהו בעזר

differs slightly from the modern ibn Tibbon version]. The Teacher emphasized this point because it revealed something of divine science while concealing something of natural science. [The revelation] is that the previous chapter [I:16] he mentions among the meanings of *rock* as God being agent [*po'el*] and this belongs to divine science. In the same chapter the meaning of *rock* is a hint to matter, form and privation, which are the [material] causes of the sublunar world, and this belongs to natural science. The purpose of the chapter is to hint at the meaning of the verse in parashat *Beshalakh*: **I will be standing before you there before you on the rock at Horev; strike the rock and water will issue from it** [Exod 17:6].” Werbluner, *Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 32. The meaning of “rock” in this proof-text is explained in I:16.

96 See Werbluner, *Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef*, 42. Ibn Kaspi writes there that I:32–34 are preparatory for two notions that Maimonides will discuss later on: the first notion is that Moses was not allowed to see the face of God, as it is mentioned in I:37 and preceded in I:21. The second notion is the subject of I:35–36, on the basis of the opening line of I:35: “do not think that all we have laid down in the preceding chapters,” where “laid down” (*hoṣi’anuho*) shares the same linguistic root as the term for *preparatory* (*haṣa’ah*). I:35–36 discuss the diversity in degrees of capacity for apprehending divine science and other various impediments that stand in the way of its apprehension.

[2] *Introduction. Causes that should account for contradictory or contrary statements, etc.* Here it is appropriate that we should explain something other than what we have explained in our book *'Ammudei kesef*.<sup>97</sup> The *first and second causes* – God forbid that the prophets or the philosophers are accustomed to [employ] them, unless they are engaged in explaining the difference [of subjects] among various speakers or time periods. However, the *third and fourth causes* do abound in the books of the prophets, as the Teacher said.<sup>98</sup> These causes constitute their entire principle for concealing their secrets. Notice that these two causes do not amount to factual contradictions, though they seem contradictory to us. This is due to a convention originating with the founders of the Hebrew language, from the prophets, and from the philosophers: it is proper for a scholar to speak through *meshalim* and riddles.<sup>99</sup> An example is in Samson's foolish utterance, **out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness** [Judges 14:14] – even though the notions to which he refers are honorable.

[3] It is also conventional for them to omit a *proviso* in the predicate of a proposition or to use an equivocal term in the subject, so that *the two subjects may differ*.<sup>100</sup> For instance it is the custom of the philosophers to legitimately omit terms indicating existence, and to leave them implied, which is the convention in such an instance.<sup>101</sup> All our books of Torah and of Scripture constitute, in this instance, one single book, since the Torah is the head and the rock whence all the other books of Scripture are hewn, and it is as if they were all *given from one shepherd* [Eccl 12:11].<sup>102</sup>

[4] The *meshal* of the contradiction that can be found amongst our sacred books due to the *third cause* is the statement, **will thou shew wonders to the dead?** [Ps 88:10]. Apart from this, there are many scattered instances in Scripture that indicate that the dead will never return to their previous existence. But in Ezekiel there is a passage that reads **the hand of the Lord was upon me**, etc. [Ezek 37:1], in which it is described how the dead came back to life. This being the case, the propositions are contradictory; the solution to this is that the book of Ezekiel is a *meshal*, and we know without a doubt that the notion of resurrection of the dead is actually true.

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶21.

<sup>98</sup> “That some passages in every prophetic book, when taken in their external sense, appear to contradict or be contrary to one another is due to the third cause and to the fourth. And it was with this in view that this entire introduction was written” (Pines 19, line 17–21).

<sup>99</sup> Ibn Kaspi describes the “creators of the Hebrew language” as “scholars of the true sciences, which are natural science and metaphysics [who] wished to benefit us in making known the us the nature of each and every thing by giving them certain names.” Isaac Last ed., “*Sharshot Kesef: the Hebrew Dictionary of Roots*, by Joseph ibn Kaspi,” *JSQ* o.s. 19 (1907), 670.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. the “fourth cause,” Pines 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibn Kaspi's example is unclear to me. Perhaps he has in mind the fact that both Arabic and Hebrew lack the verb “to be” as the copula.

6 [2] הקדמה. סבות הסתירה או ההפך וכו' הנה ראוי לנו לבאר בכאן זולת מה שבארנו בספר עמודי כסף הוא  
 7 כי הסבה הראשונה והשנית חלילה שינהגום הנביאים והפילוסופים אלא אם כן יאמרו בפני [רוש] חלוף  
 8 האומרים או חלוף הזמנים. ואמנם הסבה השלישית והרביעית הם רבים בספרי הנביאים כמו שאמר  
 9 המורה כי אלו הם כל עקרים בהסתרת סודותיהם. וראה כי אלו שתי הסבות הנה על דרך האמת אין שם  
 10 סתירה, אבל יראה לנו שיש שם סתירה. וזה כי מוסכם ממיסדי לשון העברי ומהנביאים והפילוסופים  
 11 שיהיה נכון לחכם לדבר במשלים וחידות, כמו שנהג שמשון בדברי הבליים מן האוכל {יצא(?)} ומעז יצא  
 12 מתוק [שו' יד,ד] אף כי בענינים הנכבדים.

13 [3] וכן מוסכם מהם לחסר תנאי בנשוא הגזרה או לדבר בשם משותף בנושא עד ששני הנושאים  
 14 הם מתחלפים וזה כי כמו שמוסכם מהפילוסופים שמלות המציאות יהיו נכון לחסרם ויהיו בכח לבד כן  
 15 המוסכם בזה. והנה כל ספרי התורה והמקרא שלנו הוא כספר אחד בזה הענין כי התורה היא הראש  
 16 והצור אשר ממנו חוצבו כל שאר ספרי המקרא וכאלו כלם נתנו מרועה אחד [קה' יב,יא].

17 [4] והמשל לסתירה הנמצאת בכלל ספרי הקדש שלנו מצד הסבה השלישית כ"י מה שכתוב הלמתיים תעשה  
 18 פלא [תה' פח,יא]. וזולת זה מקומות מפוזרים רבים במקרא שהמתים לא יחיו לעולם לשוב למנהגם.  
 19 וכתוב ביחזקאל פרשת היתה עלי יד יי וכו' [לז.א] שספר שם כי המתים חיו. אם כן אלו הגזרות סותרות  
 20 אבל ההתר בזה כי ספור יחזקאל משל היה ואם ידענו כי אין ספק שדבר אמת הוא ענין תחיית  
 21 המתים.

7 כי ג חסר | הסבה ג שהסבה | 9 כל | בד ר"ל גה חסר | בהסתרת | ב בהסתר | אין שם | בגוה אינם | 10 סתירה | ה +כלל  
 מוסכם | דה +הוא | ממיסדי | ה ממוסדי | 11 יצא | ה חסר | 12 בענינים | בגד הדברים | ה הענינים | הנכבדים | בגד  
 נכבדים | 14 יהיו | בד יהיה | לחסרם | בגד +בפעל | ה להסתירם | בפעל | 15 בזה | בד הזה | ספרי | בגד +הקדש | התורה | בגד  
 והתורה | והמקרא | בד חסר | ג שלנו | הו +שלנו | הראש | ג חסר | 16 והצור | ג הצור | חוצבו | ג הוצבו | 18 יחיו | גה יהיו  
 | 19 אלו | בגדו חסר | 20 ההתר | בד ההיתר | ספור | בגוה ספר | תחיית | בגדהו תחית

[5] As for the *mashal* of the contradiction due to the *fourth cause* that can be found amongst our sacred books: First, on account of the lack of a *proviso* involving either time or place. It is as if we said: Reuven eats today or Reuven will not eat tomorrow, or if we said: Reuven eats at home or Reuven does not eat at the market; we omit mentioning such provisos. Other than this, there can be found instances in Scripture involving matters that depend on opinions.<sup>103</sup> The Sages deduced likewise concerning **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children** [Exod 20:5] and **the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers** [Deut 24:16].<sup>104</sup> Likewise **the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee** [Num 6:26] compared to **who does not lift up His countenance** [Deut 10:17].<sup>105</sup> They resolved all these by appealing to the *fourth cause*. We have mentioned the contradiction found in **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children** in a more strictly religious context, though not in the manner that the Sages did; this is found in the book entitled *Qe'arat kesef*.<sup>106</sup>

[6] Notice the emphasis in the categories of contradictions described here. We have disposed of the *first* and the *second*, since they are neither in our sacred books {nor in} books of speculative science, and the *sixth*, which is an error by the author. Let us now concentrate on the four remaining ones, which are the *third*, *fourth*, *fifth* and *seventh*. [Maimonides] says that the *third* and the *fourth* are found in books and purposefully inserted by the author, so that the vulgar will accept things in the way the Teacher describes above: *in accord with the capacity of their understanding and the weakness of their representation*, etc. This means a notion devoid of truth – which is indeed what the author intends – since the vulgar cannot bear the matter as it truly is without losing their mind, behaving disorderly and becoming completely unraveled.<sup>107</sup> However, there is no genuine contradiction but there is rather *mashal and inner content*, or the lack of a *proviso* or a *difference* in the *subject*.

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103 *de'ot*.

104 Cf. b. *Berakhot* 27b.

105 Cf. b. *Berakhot* 20b. The King James translation of Deuteronomy 10:17 is **who regardeth not persons**; I modify it here to make the contradiction explicit.

106 *Qe'arat kesef (Bowl of Silver)* is a commentary on the book of Daniel which is not extant. All manuscripts of MK, with the exception of the base manuscript, mention instead *Tam ha-kesef*, which does contain the relevant reference. See Essay 2 in Last, *Tam ha-kesef*, 7.

107 The perils of revealing metaphysical truths contained in Scripture to the vulgar are described in I:33–34 (Pines 70–79).

1 [5] והמשל לסתירה הנמצאת בכלל ספרי הקדש שלנו מצד הסבה הרביעית וזה תחלה מצד חסרון תנאי  
 2 שכולל אם תנאי זמן או מקום, כאמרנו ראובן אוכל היום וראובן אינו אוכל מחר או כאמרנו ראובן אוכל  
 3 בבית ראובן אינו אוכל בשוק ואנחנו נשמיט זכירת אלו התנאים או זולת זה הנה זה נמצא בספרי הקדש  
 4 וזה בענינים תלויים בדעות. כמו שהקשו כתו' פוקד עון על בניס [שמ' כ,ה] וכתו' לא יומתו אבות על בניס  
 5 ובניס לא יומתו על אבות [דב' כה,טז]. וכן כתו' ישא יי פניו אליך [במ' ו,כז] וכתו' אשר לא ישא פנים [דב'  
 6 י,יז]. והנה התיירו כל זה מצד הסבה הרביעית. והנה אנחנו זכרנו הסתירה הנמצאת על פוקד עון אבות  
 7 על בניס ממקומות יותר חמורים ולא התרנוה בדרך שעשו הם, וזה ימצא בספר המכונה קערת  
 8 כסף.

9 [6] ועתה ראה הפלגת אלו החלוקות מן הסתירות ונניח הראשונה והשנית כי אינם בספרי הקדש שלנו {וגם לא}  
 10 בספרי החכמות העיוניות וכן נניח הששית כי היא טעות מן המחבר, ונחזיק בד' הנשארות והם  
 11 השלשית, הרביעית, החמשית, והשביעית. ואמר כי השלישית והרביעית נמצאו בספרים כונת מכויין מן  
 12 המחבר כדי שיקחו ההמון הדברים כמו שאמר המורה למעלה על ענין כשעור הבנתם וחולשת ציורם וכו'  
 13 כלומ' ענין בלתי אמתי. ולזה מכויין המחבר כי לא יוכל ההמון לסבול הענין האמתי כי ישתגע ויתהולל ויצא  
 14 מדעתו לגמרי אבל על דרך האמת אין שם סתירה לפי שיש שם משל ותוך או חסרון תנאי או חלוף נושא.

1 הנמצאת | ו חסר | תנאי | ב התנאי | ו חסר | 2 זמן | ד הזמן | 3 נשמיט | ב באמרנו | ג כאמרנו | זה נמצא | בגדו | מה נמצא |  
 נמצא | 4 בענינים | ג הענינים | כתו' | ב אמרם כתיב | גדהו | וכתוב | וכתו' | בדגהו | וכתוב | 5 כתו' | בגדהו | כתוב | וכתו' | בגדהו  
 וכתוב | 7 ימצא | ד נמצא | בספר | הו | בספרי | 8-7 | קערת כסף | בגדהו | תם הכסף | 9 אלו | ג חסר | והשנית | ה חסר | {וגם  
 לא} | בגדהו | וגם לא | 10 החכמות העיוניות | בה | החכמה העיונית | ו החכמות העיוניות | 11 נמצאו | בגדהו | נמצא  
 12 הדברים | ה חסר | 13 כלומ' | בגדהו | כלומר | אמתי | בו | אמת | יוכל | בג | חסר | לסבול | ג לסבל | 14 שיש | ב חסר

[7] This procedure is a convention among prophets and wise individuals that allows them to find a concealed place<sup>108</sup> in which to hide their secrets. If one grasps them as contradiction he will acknowledge his error as soon as the *mashal*, the *proviso* or the equivocality of the *subject* is made known to him. This is the meaning of the *third* and *fourth causes*, as the Teacher describes them: *two apparently contradictory* [propositions] or *a contradiction appears to have been said whereas there is no contradiction*.

[8] However, the *fifth* [cause] concerns a genuine contradiction, where neither the author has not committed an error, nor is there an acknowledgement that a *mashal* and an *inner meaning* are involved, nor the lack of a *proviso* or a *difference in subject*. It is all [intended] at the literal level without *mashal*, lack [of *proviso*] or equivocality. Nevertheless, he does so {explicitly} and he intends thereby that the student should, in the end,<sup>109</sup> understand the whole truth perfectly. This [contradiction] is not found in the books of the prophets, only in the books of the philosophers, among which is the *Guide*, praise be to God. With respect to the *seventh cause*, it is found in the books of the prophets in some small measure and in the books of the Teacher, concerning many very deep subjects. {I:35} contains something of this notion.<sup>110</sup>

[9] God forbid that the author committed an error; rather, it was his intention. There is [in the *seventh cause*] no stratagem<sup>111</sup> or acknowledgement for there being a *mashal* and *inner meaning* or lack of a *proviso* or a *difference in subject*, as is the case for the *third* and *fourth* [causes]. Therefore, there is no great [danger?]<sup>112</sup> when *the vulgar are aware of the contradiction*. It is also not the intention of the teacher to present matters to the student in a simpler way, as is the case of the *fifth* [cause]. Therefore [the propositions] are contradictory under every aspect or are contraries that can never both be true at the same time. For the Teacher does not say here *a contradiction appears to have been said, whereas there is no contradiction*, as he says in the case of the *third* and the *fourth* [causes].

**108** An expression with a neutral connotation in b. *Shabbat* 35b, and a negative one in y. *Kil'ayim* 40b and y. *Eruvin* 55b. The context of the latter two instances is the claim that certain actions are restricted to a “discreet” or “concealed” place (*maqom šanua'*) out of concern for the appearance of impropriety. An accompanying opinion contests that what is restricted for that reason is not permissible even in a concealed place.

**109** The term used here for “in the end,” *‘aharit*, is the same used by Maimonides in the Epistle Dedicatory to Joseph ben Judah, *knowing where you would end* (*‘aharitekha*), Pines 3.

**110** In I:35 Maimonides declares that it is imperative to teach to the multitude that God is incorporeal and that God is not “subject to affections,” but a number of other subjects constitute “secrets of the Torah.” As such, they are not to be taught publicly, or taught to people who lack the requisite background to understand their import (Pines 79–80).

**111** *taḥbulah*; see Moses of Salerno, ¶48, ¶66.

**112** The word found in the ms, *hasavah*, does not make sense here. Another reading is *qefidah* found in 3 (or possibly 4) manuscripts. The translation reflects the most plausible reading, which is found in ms JTS 2341 (*ha-sakhanah*).

15 [7] ולעשות זה הוא מוסכם בנביאים ובחכמים כדי שיהיה להם מקום צנוע להסתיר סודותיהם ואם יתפשם  
 16 שום אדם על הסתירה יתנצלו כשיודיעו לו המשל או התנאי או שתוף הנושא. זהו ענין הסבה השלישית  
 17 והרביעית כמו שיאמר במ המורה וסותרות זו את זו לפי הנראה או תראה סתירה בדבר ואין שם סתירה.

18 [8] ואמנם החמשיית הנה על דרך האמת יש שם סתירה ואין המחבר טועה בזה וגם אין לו התנצלות בשיש  
 19 שם משל ותוך או חסרון תנאי או חלוף נושא, אבל הכל כפשוטו מבלי משל ומבלי חסרון ושתוף שם  
 20 ואולם הוא עושה {זה לעיני} הכל כונת מכויך כדי שייבין התלמיד באחרית כל האמת בשלמות. וזה אינו  
 21 נמצא בספרי הנביאים רק בספרי הפלוסופים שמהם המורה תהלה לאל. ואמנם הסבה השביעית שהיא  
 22 נמצאת בספרי הנביאים רק בספרי הפלוסופים על דרך מעט ובספרי המורה אשר היא בענינים עמוקים  
 23 מאד רבים {פ' ל"ה} מראשון מה תהא עליו.

24 [9] וחלילה שהמחבר טועה אבל הוא מכויך לזה. והנה אין בזה תחבולה והתנצלות מצד היות שם משל ותוך  
 25 או חסרון תנאי או חלוף נושא כמו שהוא הענין בשלישית וברביעית. ולכן אין שם הסבה גדולה אם ירגישו  
 26 ההמון בסתירה וגם עם לא בזאת כונת המלמד להקל לתלמיד כמו בחמישית אם כן העולה מזה  
 27 שהם סותרות על כל פנים או הפכיות שאינן צודקות יחד לעולם כי לא אמר בזאת המורה ותראה שם  
 28 בדבר סתירה ואין שם סתירה כמו שאמ' בשלישית וברביעית.

15 ולעשות] ה חסר | בנביאים] ה + או | 16 לו] ב אלו | 17 זו את זו] גהו זה את זה | 20 ואולם] ב ואולי | עושה] בנהו עשה  
 {זה לעיני} בגדהו זה לעיני | כונת] בהו חסר | באחרית] ב באחרת | בשלמות] בד בשלימות | וזה] בד מה | 21–22 רק  
 ... הנביאים] ב חסר | 21 שהיא] ה אשר היא | 22 מעט] ב המעט | ובספרי] בגדהו ובספר | היא] בד היה | ג הוא |  
 23 מאד] ב +שמנה פרקים פרק ל"ה גדה +שמנה | מצד] {פ' ל"ה} בגדה פרק ל"ה | פל"ו | מראשון] ב חסר | תהא] גהו תבוא  
 עליו] ב עליה | 24 וחלילה] בנה כי חלילה | 25 נושא] ב +כי | הסבה] בדה קפידה | ג קידה(?) | ו הסכנה | 26 ההמון בסתירה]  
 ה חסר | המלמד] ג חסר | אם כן] בגדהו א"כ | העולה] ב נעלה | 28 שאמ' | בגדו שאמר

[10] Therefore it seems that the Teacher's opinion is that under every aspect it constitutes a contradiction or a contrary and the speaker is constrained to employ them, as [Maimonides] says, to the extent that [the speaker] is obliged to lay down two propositions, of which one or both of may be false. What I mean is that one of the propositions is false is they are contradictory, or both may be false if they are material contraries.<sup>113</sup> Therefore the Teacher says *the vulgar must in no way be aware of the contradiction*. The Teacher does not mean by this the attributes of change, passion or corporeality of God that are mentioned in Scripture, since they contradict his establishing that God is not a body and that He is one. The whole of Scripture, however, is full of such instances. How can the Teacher then say *whether contradictions [due to the seventh cause are to be found in the books of the prophets]*, etc.?<sup>114</sup> And further [he says] that the attributes are all a *mashal*, or there is equivocality [of terms], as the Teacher will mention all the many equivocal [terms] later on.<sup>115</sup>

[11] It seems to me therefore, that this is the case concerning the word of God. In [certain] places in the Torah and Scripture it is written that it is never retracted nor false, such as **God is not a man, that He should lie**, etc. [Num 23:19] and likewise **the Strength of Israel will not lie** [1 Sam 15:29]. Isaiah says **the word of our God shall stand forever** [40:8] and Jeremiah says **shall my words fall and not arise?** [8:4].<sup>116</sup> There are many such cases. [The prophets] emphasized it to impart to Israel that divine decrees are never abrogated in any way, and they do it in order to inflict pain upon Israel. Yet in many other places they impart words [indicating] that Israel should turn back and repent, as in **turn, O backsliding children**, etc. [Jer 3:14] and **for if ye thoroughly amend your ways**, etc. [Jer 7:5]. There are many examples of this type in all the prophets; I mean they impart their words in certain places upon the multitude of the people [to convey] that the word of God is never abrogated in any way.<sup>117</sup>

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113 "Material" refers to material over formal contrariety, that is, both propositions may be false by virtue of the nature of the subject and predicate terms, rather than by virtue of form. An example is such as "some animals talk" and "not every animal talks," both of which are materially false but formally valid. This is a tentative translation of a sentence that is missing from several of the manuscripts. The original reads *hafakhiot* [contraries] *ve-zeh ha-ḥomerim yaḥad*, with "ḥomerim" referring to the subject and predicate terms. I would like to thank Charles Manekin for bringing this point to my attention and suggesting this translation.

114 Pines, 19.

115 That is, the opening chapters of the *Guide*, corresponding to Part I, I:1–49 (with some exceptions), Pines 21–110.

116 The verse reads only "shall fall and not arise" (*hayiplu ve-lo' yaqumu*), but Jonah ibn Janah reads the verse as ibn Kaspi does here: "shall my words fall and not arise" (*hayiplu devarai ve-lo' yaqumu*). See Jonah ibn Janah, *Sefer ha-riqmah*, trans. Judah ibn Tibbon, ed. Michael Wilensky, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1964), 1:268:5–6 [Hebrew].

117 In several places ibn Kaspi deals with contradictory biblical accounts implying that God's word can be retracted. See references in *'Ammudei kesef*, Commentary ¶24.

1 [10] אם כן נראה שדעת המורה שעל כל פנים יש שם סתירה או הפך, והמדבר מוכרח בזה כמו שאמר עד  
 2 שהוא אנוש שיניח שתי גזרות שבאחת יכזיבו או שתיהם כוזבות רצוני שהאחת כוזבת אם הם סותרות או  
 3 שתיהן כוזבות או אם הן הפכיות וזה החמרים יחד. ולכן אמ' המורה וצריך שלא ידגישו ההמון בשום פנים  
 4 במקום הסתירה ביניהם. והנה אין כונת המורה בזה מצד כל תארי השנוי והתפעלות והגשמות הנזכרים  
 5 במקרא, שזה סותר למה שהונח שהאל אינו גשם ושהוא אחד והנה כל המקרא מלא מזה. ואיך יאמר  
 6 המורה על זה אם תמצא וכו'? ועוד כי אלו התארים הם כלם משל או בו שתוף כמו שיזכור המורה עוד  
 7 כל השתופים ורבים.

8 [11] לכן נראה לי כי זהו על ענין דבר יי אשר במקומות בתורה ובמקרא כתו' שלא ישוב ושלא יכזב כמו שכתו'  
 9 לא איש אל ויכזבו וכו' [במ' כג, יט] וכן וגם נצח ישראל לא ישקר וכו' [שמ"א טו, כט]. ואמ' ישעיה ודבר  
 10 אלהינו יקום לעולם [מ, ת] ואמ' ירמיה היפלו דברי ולא יקומו [ח, ד], וכזה רבים היו מפליגים להמשיך  
 11 דבריהם לישראל שגזרות האל לא יפלו לעולם בשום פנים העושים זה להכאיב להם. ובמקומות רבים  
 12 אחרים ממשיכים דבריהם כדי שישובו בתשובה לאמור להם שובו בנים שובבים וכו' [יר' ג, ד] אם הטיב  
 13 תטיבו דרכיכם וכו' [שם, ז.ה.]. והרבה מזה המין לכל הנביאים, רצוני שממשיכים דבריהם במקומות מה  
 14 להמון העם כי דבר יי לא יבטל בשום (?) פנים.

1 אם כן [בגדהו א"כ] והמדבר ב והדבר 2 [שהוא בג שיהיה ד שהיא א אנוס] ד אנוש [שבאחת בגד שהאחת יכזיבו] בדה  
 כוזבת ו יכזיב 3-2 רצוני ... כוזבות] בגד חסר 3 [הן] ג הם הפכיות] ו +לו] זה החמרים יחד] בגד חסר ה בזה החמר א אמ'  
 בגדו אמר 4 [הגשמות] דו והגשמת גשמות 5-4 הנזכרים ... כל] ג חסר 5 [במקרא] ה במקרה [מלא] גה מלאה ד חסר  
 7 [ורבים] בגדה הרבים 8 [זהו] בגדו זה [בתורה ובמקרא] ד התורה והמקרא [כתו'] בגדו כתוב [בגדו שכתוב  
 9 [ישקר] בדה +ולא ינחם 10 [ואמ'] בגדהו ואמר [דברי] בד רפאים [וכוה] ד ובוה 11 [דבריהם] בד דברים [להכאיב] בגד  
 להנאת [להם] בגדה לבם [רבים] בד חסר 12 [שישבו] בגד שיעשו הו שישוב [בתשובה] בגד תשובה 13 [רצוני] ב +לומר  
 שממשיכים] ב +לזה ו שמשיגים 14 [יבטל] ה יבטל

[12] Yet in other places they impart words [indicating] that it can be annulled if they repent, fast, and pray, so much so that our Rabbis deduced something close to this regarding one verse that says **o Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved** [Jer 4:14] and another verse that says **though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much soap yet thine iniquity is marked before me** [Jer 2:22]. They resolved this by saying that the “former came before the decree and the latter came after the decree.”<sup>118</sup> This solution was on the basis of the *fourth cause*. Nevertheless, this solution is not quite precise and all the more so it is not the intention [contained] in what I have written above. What I mean is that [the prophets] would impart in one place that the word of the Lord and His decree cannot be annulled, and in another place that it can be annulled.<sup>119</sup> The two propositions are according to their simple meaning, and neither involves the lack of a *provisio* or a *difference in subject*. I do not have in mind here statements such as **and it repented the Lord** [Gen 6:6], as this conforms rather to the [dictum] “the Torah speaks in the language of the sons of men.”<sup>120</sup> The same is true for **the Lord spoke**<sup>121</sup> [e.g. Gen 8:15], **the Lord heard**<sup>122</sup> [Gen 21:17], **the Lord smelled**<sup>123</sup> [Genesis 8:21], **the Lord was saddened**<sup>124</sup> [Gen 6:6], and generally speaking they are all equivocal or metaphorical [terms].

[13] Nevertheless, I affirm that [the two verses] are explicitly according to the simple level, not that they are *mashal* or metaphor; and all the more so since they do not contain the lack of a *provisio* or *difference in subject*. Thus, the two propositions that I mentioned are contradictory, namely, that [the word of God] can be annulled and that it cannot, and these two propositions are said explicitly said by most of the prophets. Undoubtedly, however, that the word of God will not be abrogated is the one true proposition that is completely established, but there is danger in their saying that it can be abrogated. What I mean is there is danger regardless of whether this proposition is true or false, since how could it be reconciled with the first one? Furthermore, how can we find it in our hearts to say that it is correct that the word of the Lord can be abrogated, and thus in such a case his word is false? This is undoubtedly a very obscure matter, that is, whether the word of the Lord can be annulled or not. I have spoken of this matter at length in the book called *Table of Silver*.<sup>125</sup>

**118** b. *Rosh Hashanah* 18a.

**119** i.e. ibn Kaspi argues that the two prooftexts just quoted are an example of a genuine contradiction, unlike the Rabbis of the Talmud.

**120** Cf. I:26 (Pines 56–57), I:29 (Pines 62–63), I:46 (Pines 100). For sources of the dictum, see b. *Yevamot* 71a, b. *Baba Meš'ah* 31b. See also the analysis by Hannah Kasher, “Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete,” 136–144.

**121** In I:65 the meaning of “saying” or “speaking” when applied to God is “to denote either will and volition or a notion that has been grasped by the understanding having come from God” (Pines 158).

15 [12] ובמקומות אחרים ממשיכים דבריהם כי יבטל אם יעשו תשובה ויצומו ויתפללו עד שקרוב לזה הקשו  
 16 רבותי ואמרו כתו' אחד אומ' **כבסי מרעה לבך ירושלם למען תושעי** [יר' דיד] וכתו' אחד אומר כי  
 17 אם **תכבסי בנתר ותרבית לך בורית נכתם עונך לפני** [שם ב,בב]. והתירו "כאן קודם גזרת דין כאן  
 18 לאחר גזרת דין." וזה מין ההיתר הסבה הרביעית. אמנם זה ההתר אינו המדוקדק כל שכן שאין זאת  
 19 הכונה במה שזכרתי רצוני מהיותם ממשיכים במקום אחר שדבר יי וגזרתו לא יבטל ובמקום אחר שיבטל.  
 20 ושתי הגזרות האלה הם כפשטן ואין באחת מהם **חסרון תנאי** או חלוף נושא. ואין אני אומ' זה בעבור  
 21 **וינחם יי** [בר' ו.ו.] כי זה יותר בדברה תורה כלשון בני אדם כמו וידבר יי [שם ח,טו], **וישמע** [שם כא,ז  
 22 **וירח** [שם ח,כא], **ויתעצב** [שם ו.ו.] ובכלל הכל מצד השתופים וההשאלות.

1 [13] אבל אני אומר כי בפירושו כפשוטו מבלי משל ומבלי השאלת לשון כל שכן שאין שם **חסרון תנאי** או  
 2 **חלוף נושא**. הנה שתי הגזרות שזכרתי המה סותרות רצוני לא יבטל ויבטל, ששתי אלו הגזרות אומרים  
 3 רוב הנביאים בפי[רוש]. ואין ספק שאמנם לא יבטל הוא גזרה אמתית לעולם קיימת במוחלט אבל הסבות  
 4 הוא כאמרם שיבטל, רצוני כי בה הסכנה(?) אם זאת הגזרה אמתית או כוזבת כי איך תצדק זאת אם  
 5 הראשונה? ועוד איך נמצא עם לבנו לומר שיעדק שדבר השם יבטל אם כן יהיה כוזב דברו? והנה אין ספק  
 6 שזה ענין עמוק מאוד, רצוני אם דבר יי יבטל אם לא. כבר הארכתי בזה הענין בספר המכונה **שלחן כסף**.

15 ממשיכים] ו משיגים | לזה] ה להם | 16 כתו' | **בגדהו** כתוב | אומ' | **בגדהו** אומר | וכתו' | **בגדהו** וכתוב | 17 גזרת] **בגדהו** גזר  
 18 גזרת] **בגדהו** גזר | מין] **בגדהו** מין | ההיתר] **בוהו** ההתר | המדוקדק] **בד** מדוקדק | 19 מהיותם] **ב** חסר | שיבטל] ה שיבטלו  
 הם] **ב** הן | חסר] כפשטן | ד כפשוטם | חלוף] **בד** חסרון | אומ' | **בדהו** אומר | 22 הכל] **בגדה** חסר | מצד] **בגדה** + כל | 20 |  
 1 בפירושו] **בד** בפירושו | גו פירושו | מבלי] **בד** על דרך | 3 רוב] **בגד** חסר | שאמנם] **בגדה** שאמרם | אבל] ו אכן | הסבות] **בגדה**  
 הסכנה | 4 הוא] **בגדו** היא | כאמרם] **בג** באמרם | בה] **בד** בזה | **גהו** בא | 5 יהיה] ה+דבריו | דבריו] **בגדה** חסר | 6 |  
 אם דבר יי יבטל] **בדה** דבר אם הוא חוזר | לא] **בדה** +והנה | **בוה** | **גה** על זה

122 The meaning of "the Lord heard" according to I:45 is "the apprehension of science" (Pines 96).

123 In I:46, the sense of smell in God is said to indicate apprehension (Pines 97–103).

124 I:29 describes the term "sorrow" when applied to God as indicating divine anger (Pines 62–63).

125 Kasher, *Shulhan kesef*, 41–43, 123–144.

[14] I have set down here matters in which there is no contradiction according to the *fourth cause*, that is, the lack of a *proviso*, whether [the proviso concerns] time, place, a given aspect, or the views of the multitude--although all this is meant by the expression *lack of a proviso*. Perhaps the Teacher did not mean to include by *lack* the explanation of a given aspect, or the views of the multitude and *listener's imagination* in *lack of a proviso*. If this is indeed his opinion, and we were then to say that it could be abrogated, he would be lying. However, we are constrained to establish such before the multitude so that they will fast, pray, and renounce the evil of their hands, which is for the good "of him for whose sake the whole world was created."<sup>126</sup> Therefore generally, under all circumstances, it is necessary for the prophets and for us to declare to the multitude that the word of the Lord can be abrogated for the sake of their fasting, their cries [to heaven] and their prayers, even though the truth of the matter is otherwise, as we have explained in the book *Table of Silver*.<sup>127</sup>

[15] It seems to me there is yet another prophetic *mashal* that falls under the *fourth cause* in the opinion of the Teacher. We have mentioned it in the book *Table of Silver*.<sup>128</sup> It is written in the Torah **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children** [Exod 20:5] and written there in another place **He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He** [Deut 32:4]. Likewise, another instance is the statement by Ezekiel **the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father** [18:20]. Undoubtedly this is a very obscure matter and contains a lofty secret. Further, there is the *mashal* where the God declares to Jeremiah **run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth: and I will pardon it** [5:1]. Ezekiel also spoke of it, I mean the destruction of the first Temple and that God would send four plagues upon Jerusalem. Even if any pious individuals were to be found there, they would not have been able to save it [14:21–22]. [Ezekiel] also says that at the beginning concerning the whole land [14:12] and he especially mentions Noah, Daniel and Job [Ezek 14:14, 20].<sup>129</sup> There is no doubt that this is a very obscure matter and contains a lofty secret.<sup>130</sup> Even more so the Torah narrates about Sodom that if ten [upright men] could be found therein they would have saved the entire city [Gen 18:32].

<sup>126</sup> Cf. b. *Berakhot* 6b, b. *Shabbat* 30b. However, it seems that the context that ibn Kaspi has in mind is Maimonides' quotation of this dictum in the introduction to the Commentary on the Mishnah. There Maimonides describes the perfect wise man for whose sake the multitude was created so that he could live in society. Isaac Shailat ed, *Haqdamot ha-Rambam la-Mishnah* (Jerusalem: Ma'alyot, 1992), 355.

<sup>127</sup> See above, Commentary, ¶13, and ibn Rushd, *Exposition of Religious Arguments*, 59.

<sup>128</sup> See Kasher, *Shulhan kesef*, 130–131.

<sup>129</sup> In Ezekiel 14 it is stated that even if Noah, Daniel and Job were to be present in a land where the four plagues of sword, famine, wild beasts and pestilence were let loose, they would be able to save

7 [14] ואני ישתתי הענינים שאין שם סתירה מצד הסבה הרביעית רצוני חסרון תנאי, אם מזמן או מקום או צד  
 8 או כפי מחשבת ההמון אם כל זהו נכלל באמרו ז"ל חסרון תנאי. ואולי המורה לא יכלול חסרון ביאור הצד  
 9 או כפי מחשבת ההמון דמיון השמע, חסרון תנאי אם דעתו ז"ל כן הנה אמרנו יבטל הוא כוזב אבל אנו  
 10 אנוסים שנגיח כן לפני ההמון כדי שיצומו ויתפללו היישובו מן (ה?)חמס אשר בכפיהם וזה לטוב "לאשר  
 11 לא נברא העולם אלא לצוות לו." ובכלל הנה על כל פנים הכרח לנביאים ולנו שנאמר להמון שדבר יי בטל  
 12 בעבור תעניתם וצעקתם ותפלתם, והנה אם אין הדבר כן באמת כמו שפרשנו בספר שולחן כסף.

13 [15] והנה נראה לי עוד משל בנביאים נופל תחת סבה הרביעית לפי דעת המורה והוא מה שזכרנו בספר  
 14 שולחן כסף מאשר כתוב בתורה פוקד עון אבות על בנים [שמ' כ, ה] וכתוב שם במקום אחר הצור תמים  
 15 פעלו כי כל דרכיו משפט אל אמונה ואין עול צדיק וישר הוא [דב' לב, ד], כ"ש מאמר יחזקאל בן לא ישא  
 16 בעון אביו [יח, כ]. ואין ספק שזה ענין עמוק מאוד ובו סוד מופלג. ועוד משל נאם יי אמר ירמיה שוטטו  
 17 בחוצות ירושלם ודעו נא וראו, ובקשו ברחובותיה אם תמצאו מבקש אמונה ואסלח לה [ה, א]. ואמ'  
 18 יחזקאל גם על זה רצוני על חרבן ראשון כי ארבעה שפטים ישלח יי על ירושלם ואם ימצאו בה צדיקים  
 19 לא יצילוה [יד, כא-כב] וגם זה אמר זה תחלה בכלל על כל ארץ והפליג לזכור נח דניאל ואיוב. ואין ספק  
 20 שזה ענין עמוק מאד ובו סוד מופלג כל שכן שהתורה ספרה על סודם כי אם ימצאון שם עשרה כי יצילו  
 21 כל העיר [בר' יח, לב].

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8 א] ו ואם [ זהו] בדה זה הוא | 9-8 ואולי המורה לא יכלול חסרון ביאור הצד או כפי [ ה חסר | 8 לא] ג חסר | 9 ההמון  
 בד +ההמוני ודמיון השמע חסרון תנאי [ ה חסר | כוזב] גז כוזב | 10 היישובו] בגדהו וישובו | בכפיהם] גהו בכפיהם | 11  
 שנאמר] ב לנאמר ד לאמר | 12 והנה אם] גה ואם | שפרשנו] בדה שפירשנו | 14 בתורה] ב במורה | 15 כ"ש] בגדה כל |  
 16 ענין] בגדהו חסר | ועוד] ב והוא | נאם] בדה אחר גו נאום | יי] בה חסר | 17 ודעו נא וראו] בגדה וראו נא ודעהו | ואמ'  
 בגדהו ואמר | 18 חרבן] ה +בית | בה] בד בו |

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only themselves. A fortiori no one in Jerusalem would be able to escape these four plagues; yet a remnant was preserved as a witness for the justice of the destruction (14:22-24).

130 These three individuals are, of course, the archetypal figures of piety in the midst of generalized licentiousness, but this in itself does not make for a "secret" meaning. In his commentary on the prophetic books (*Adnei kesef*) Kaspi writes "Noah, Daniel and Job, but not Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or Moses, Aaron and Samuel – and this is a great secret. However, its meaning is not like that of **though Moses and Samuel stood before me** (Jeremiah 15:1)." See Last, 'Adnei kesef on Ezek 14.

[16] I cannot give an illustration [*mashal*] on this from the meaning of verses that indicate creation in time, and from some that indicate that the world is uncreated since the Teacher had said in II:25: *nor are the gates of figurative interpretation shut in our faces*.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps the opinion of the Teacher is that from within the *seventh cause* is the account of miracles written in the Torah and the prophets.<sup>132</sup> Solomon said ***there is no new thing under the sun*** [Eccl 1:9], as I discussed it at length at the end in II:29; search there.<sup>133</sup>

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**131** Ibn Kaspi interprets this sentence *ad absurdum* to point out that not all can be allegorized. See his commentary on Job in Last, *Asarah kelei kesef*, 138, and discussion in Kasher, “Joseph ibn Kaspi as Philosophical Exegete,” 21. The entire sentence in II:25 reads “Nor are the gates of figurative interpretation shut in our faces or impossible of access to us regarding the subject of creation in time” (Pines 327–328).

**132** On ibn Kaspi’s interpretation of miracles, see Kasher, *Shulhan kesef*, 47–49, 189–211; Dov Schwartz, *Central Problems of Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 92–93; Herring, *Gevia’ kesef*, 99–122.

**133** Cf. AK on II:29, where Ibn Kaspi states that “the creation of the heaven and the earth and the statement ‘let there be light’ are a *mashal* of Moses and his times. Not that the literal level should be annulled thereby, since it is irrefutable that there are heavens and earth, and light, and sun and moon and all the rest, but the literal reading is as silver, while the rest is as gold.” Werbluner, *Ammudei kesef u-maskiyot kesef* 41.

- 22 [16] ולא אוכל להביא משל על זה מענין הפסוקים המורים על החדוש וקצתם מורים על הקדמות כי כבר אמ' המורה פ' כ"ה משני כי אין שערי הפרושים נעולים בפנינו. ואולי דעת המורה כי מכלל הסבה השביעית הוא ספור הנפלאות הכתובות בתורה ובנביאים ושלמה אמר **אין כל חדש תחת השמש** [קה' א, ט] כמו 25 שהאריך בזה פ' כ"ט משני יעויין שמה.

# 7 Moses ben Joshua ben David of Narbonne: Hebrew-English Text

## 7.1 Moses of Narbonne's Commentary: The Manuscripts

There are thirty-three extant manuscripts of Moses of Narbonne's commentary. All manuscripts which include the Preface to the *Guide* were consulted, and a representative sample accounting for all textual variants was then built. Eight manuscripts, which include all variants, were used to establish the edition:

Bodleian Oppenheim 579 (Spanish/Provençal, 14th century/F22073 / 222 ff.)<sup>1</sup> [base ms]

Leeuwarden, Provinciale Bibliotheek van Friesland B.A. Fr. 18 (14th–15th century/F3478 / unnumbered)<sup>2</sup>

Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit cod. or. 4751 (=Warn. 13) (Spanish, 1397/F31909 / ff. 60r-114v)<sup>3</sup>

Moscow, Russian State Library ms Günzburg 1202 (Byzantine, 15th century/F48205 / 188 ff.) (incomplete)

Paris, BN héb. 698 (Byzantine script, 1400/F11576 / 91 ff.)<sup>4</sup>

St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy C95 (Byzantine, 15th century/F69260 / 82 ff.)

Vatican, Urbinati ebr. 26 (Spanish, c. 1400/F665 / 243 ff.)<sup>5</sup>

The remaining manuscripts are:

Bodleian, ms Mich. 214 (Byzantine, 15th century/ F22080)<sup>6</sup>

Bodleian Oppenheim 573 (Ashkenazi, 1490/ F22078)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886–1906), no. 1259.

<sup>2</sup> Nehemya Allony and Ephraim Kupfer, *List of Photocopies in the Institute* (Jerusalem: R.Mas, 1957–1968), no. 888 [Hebrew]; M.J. de Goeje, *Catalogus codicum orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*, vol. 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1851–1877), 305.

<sup>3</sup> M.Steinschneider, *Catalogus codicum hebraeorum Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1858), 38

<sup>4</sup> Steinschneider, *Catalogus codicum hebraeorum*, 264–269

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Richler ed., *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library Catalogue* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2008), 613–614.

<sup>6</sup> Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, no. 1266.

<sup>7</sup> Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, no. 1264.

Bodleian Oppenheim 598 (Italian, 1428/F22074 / 305 ff.)<sup>8</sup>

Cambridge, Add. 538.1 (Spanish, 15th–16th century/F16828 / 189 ff.s) (part of the commentary on the Preface to *Guide* is missing)<sup>9</sup>

Cambridge, Add. 1030 (Spanish, 15th–16th century/F17031 / 154 ff.)<sup>10</sup>

Cambridge, Trinity College R.8.21 (Byzantine, 14th–15th century/F12608 / 193 ff.)<sup>11</sup>

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurentiana Plut.I.8 (Spanish, 14th–15th century/F17636 / ff. 35r-41r) (covers I:52–63)<sup>12</sup>

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurentiana Plut.I.26 (Italian, 15th–16th century/F17644 / covers I:70, f. 230v-231r; II:29–35, ff. 75r-90v)<sup>13</sup>

Harvard University, Heb. 37 (Spanish, 1485/F3446 / ff. 9r-33v)<sup>14</sup>

Mantua, Comunita Israelitica ms ebr. 8 (Ashkenazi, 15th century/F788 / ff. 215r-280r)

Moscow, Russian State Library ms Günzburg 1179 (Spanish, 15th century/F48904 / 148 ff.)<sup>15</sup>

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek cod. heb. 61 (Ashkenazi, 16th century/F1616 / ff. 239r-426v)

New York, Jewish Theological Seminary 2329 (Spanish, 15th century/F28582 / 6 ff.) (excerpts from II:19, 31–33, 37–40)

New York, Jewish Theological Seminary 2341 (Spanish, 15th century/F28594 / ff. 1r-71v)

New York, Jewish Theological Seminary 2408 (Byzantine, 15th century/F28661 / 20 ff.) (begins on I:52)

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**8** Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, no. 1260.

**9** S.C. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), SCR 702 (390)

**10** Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, SCR 703 (390)

**11** E. H. Palmer, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Turkish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & co, 1870) 221–222.

**12** Antonio M. Biscioni, *Bibliothecae Mediceo-Laurentianae catalogus*, vol. 2 (Florence: Imperiali typographio, 1752–57).

**13** *ibid.*

**14** Charles Berlin and Rodney G. Dennis eds, *Hebrew manuscripts in the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library: a Catalogue* (Cambridge: Harvard University Library, 1975).

**15** The folios corresponding to the Preface are torn in half.

Paris, BN héb 696 (Spanish, 14th–15th century/F11574 / ff. 1r-70r)<sup>16</sup>

Paris, BN héb 697 (Spanish, 14th–15th century/F11575 / 213 ff.)<sup>17</sup>

Paris, BN héb. 699 (Spanish/Byzantine, 15th century/F11577 / 145 ff. )<sup>18</sup>

Paris, BN héb. 700 (Byzantine, 15th century/F11578 / ff.1v-89r)<sup>19</sup>

Paris, BN héb. 701 (Eastern/Yemenite, 1485/F11579 / 237 ff.)<sup>20</sup>

Paris, BN héb. 702 (Byzantine, 1488/F11580 / 103 ff.)<sup>21</sup>

Paris, BN héb. 703 (Spanish, 15th century/F11591 / 93 ff.)<sup>22</sup>

St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy C 47 (Ashkenazi, 15th century/ F69303 / ff.4v-245v) (appears alongside text of the *Guide*)

St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Evr I 477 (Ashkenazi, 15th century/F51305 / 1 f.) (appears alongside text of the *Guide*; covers I:32–34).

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek cod. heb. 55 (Spanish, 15th–16th century/ F1332 / f. 181r-182v) (covers II:*haqdamot* 1–7).<sup>23</sup>

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek cod. heb.101 (Italian, 15th century/F1377 / ff. 2r-195v).

The base manuscript for the text below is Oxford ms Bodleian Oppenheim 579, the first part of which was finished at Burgos in 1369, ff. 1r-5v.<sup>24</sup> The manuscript, which is in Spanish script,<sup>25</sup> was probably produced in Provence.<sup>26</sup> It contains numerous marginal notes by different hands, some of which are signed.<sup>27</sup> The owner was Baruch of

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**16** Philippe Bobichon ed., *Bibliothèque nationale de France: Hébreu 669 à 703: Manuscrits de théologie* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 250–256

**17** Bobichon, *Manuscrits de théologie*, 258–262

**18** Bobichon, *Manuscrits de théologie*, 270–274

**19** Bobichon, *Manuscrits de théologie*, 276–283

**20** Bobichon, *Manuscrits de théologie*, 284–289

**21** Bobichon, *Manuscrits de théologie*, 290–294

**22** Bobichon, *Manuscrits de théologie*, 296–302.

**23** Arthur Zacharias Schwarz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien* (Vienna: Strache, 1925), no. 141.

**24** Cf. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, no. 1259.

**25** According to the catalog of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts.

**26** Cf. Beit-Arié, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol 1 (A. Neubauer's Catalogue)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 205.

**27** Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, no. 1259, writes that several glosses are signed כ"י"פ.

Peschiera, who penned a large part of the glosses.<sup>28</sup> His glosses should be the object of a systematic study.<sup>29</sup>

The Hebrew text is based on the following manuscripts:

- ⌘ Bodleian Opp. 597 (base)
- א Paris BN héb. 698
- ב Leiden 4751
- ג Paris BN héb. 697
- ד Vatican Urbinati 26
- ה Moscow 1202
- ו St. Petersburg C95
- ז Leeuwarden 18

Conventions and sigla for Hebrew text and apparatus:

- + addition
- = repetition
- { } marginal note
- ? uncertain reading
- ~~strikethrough~~ word stricken through in ms
- ... omission by commentator in quotation from *Guide*
- < > written above line

Conventions for English translation:

- Normal font: text of commentary
- Italic font*: quotations from *Guide* within the text
- Bold font**: biblical prooftexts
- Bold italic font***: biblical prooftexts also found in the *Guide*
- ... omission by the commentator in quotation from *Guide*

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**28** On Peschiera see Steinschneider, “Die hebräischen Commentare” zum ‘Führer’ des Maimonides,” in *Festschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstage A. Berliner’s*, eds. A. Freimann and M. Hildesheimer (Frankfurt: J. Kaufmann, 1903), 351. A Baruch Peschiera is also recorded as the commissioner of ms Parma Palatina 3163, a copy of the *Guide* with numerous marginal glosses. f. 2a lists the names of those who studied that copy: Baruch Pesquiera, David Provençalo, Moses Provençalo (who also wrote a formal, partial commentary on the *Guide*), and Abraham Provençalo the younger. The authors of the glosses rely on several sources, among which are Ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbone. Carlos Fraenkel, *From Maimonides to Samuel ibn Tibbon: The Transformation of the “Dalālat al-Ḥā’irīn” into the “Moreh ha-Nevukhīm”* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007), 286–287 [Hebrew].

**29** The marginal notes found in the base ms were not reproduced in the edition since their sheer number would make the text unreadable; marginal notes found in the other mss are indicated in the critical apparatus. I made only one exception (¶16) because it stood a good chance of being a correction by the copyist.

## 7.2 Moses of Narbonne's Commentary: Reception

Moses of Narbonne's commentary was among the most widely read, but also widely reviled. Since I discuss the reception of his commentary in Chapter One, I shall limit my remarks here to its publication history.

The commentary was first printed alongside another commentary on the *Guide* entitled *Giv'at ha-Moreh* by Solomon Maimon.<sup>30</sup> The first part was edited by Isaac Euchel, one of the early founders of the Haskalah movement, in 1791.<sup>31</sup> This edition was reprinted in Sulzbach in 1800 and 1828, and in Vienna in 1818.<sup>32</sup> A stand-alone edition with was published by Jakob Goldenthal in 1848.<sup>33</sup> All those editions lacked the postface, which appeared separately in *Quntres ha-Mafteah*, an anthology of ancient and medieval sources edited by Adolph Jellinek in 1881.<sup>34</sup> The Goldenthal edition was reproduced in the volume *Sheloshah qadmonei mefarshai ha-moreh (Three Early Commentators on the Guide)*, which also included the commentaries by Shem Tov ibn Falaquera and Joseph ibn Kaspi.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, Maurice-Ruben Hayoun has produced a modern critical edition of the first fifty chapters of part I. It contains the Hebrew text with an annotated French translation, the text of the postface, the commentary on chapters 19 and 30 of part II, and excerpts from the commentaries on *Intentions of the Philosophers* and on the *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction*. To date, Moses of Narbonne's *Be'ur* is the only commentary on the *Guide* to have been translated into a Western language, and only one of two that have been critically edited in Hebrew (the other is the *Moreh ha-Moreh* by Shem Tov ibn Falaquera).<sup>36</sup>

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**30** *More Nebuchim sive Liber Doctor Perplexorum ... . novis commentaries uno R. Mosis Narbonensis ... altero anonymi cujusdam sub nomine Gibeath Hamore* (Berlin: Officina Scholae Liberae Judaicae, 1791). See also Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 298–299.

**31** Cf. Andreas Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskalah* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 129; Irene Zwiep, "From *Perush* to *Be'ur*: Authenticity and Authority in Eighteenth-Century Jewish Interpretation," in *Studies in Hebrew Literature and Jewish Culture*, eds. F.J. Baaten and Reinier Munk (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 264–266.

**32** See Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Auteurs juifs en France médiévale: leur oeuvre imprimée* (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1975).

**33** Jakob Goldenthal ed., *Der Kommentar des Rabbi Moses Narbonensis, Philosophen aus dem XIV. Jahrhundert zu dem Werke "More Nebuchim" des Maimonides* (Vienna: K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1852) [Hebrew].

**34** Vienna: G. Brag, 1881, 32–34.

**35** Jerusalem: s.n., 1960.

**36** Maurice-Ruben Hayoun ed., trans., *Moshe Narboni* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986).

Aside from references already cited, Steinschneider and Renan were among the first to investigate the commentary.<sup>37</sup> More recently, Maurice-Ruben Hayoun's edition includes a study into different aspects of the commentary, and Gitit Holzman has recently published a brief study of the *Be'ur*.<sup>38</sup>

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**37** *HÜB* §149 (277); §210 (367); §176 (319); Ernest Renan, *Les écrivains juifs français du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie National, 1893), 333–334.

**38** “R. Moshe Narboni's Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides,” *Da'at* 74–75 (2013), 197–236 [Hebrew].

Moses ben Joshua of Narbonne  
 Commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed*<sup>39</sup>

[Preface to Commentary]

[1] Given that the perfection of the soul [consists] of perfection of ethical virtues and of intellectual virtues<sup>40</sup>: the intellectual virtues are interpreted in the sciences, and the ethical virtues within political science; the divine Torah contains allusions to intellectual virtues, in particular to the intelligibles that depend upon God and His angels,<sup>41</sup> and to *ma'aseh merkavah* in general<sup>42</sup>; and to the relations among the sublunar existents described in *ma'aseh bereshit*<sup>43</sup>; and to their emanation from [God], their hierarchy and order<sup>44</sup>, God's knowledge, providence, and governance of them; and to his attributes and traits,<sup>45</sup> that is, the ways of God, meaning His concrete actions; and to prophecy, its truthfulness and degrees; and to the eudaemonia of the soul and its *telos*, and the *telos* of all existents and their perfection.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the entire Torah likewise explains ethical virtues and treats them at length.

<sup>39</sup> Editions of the commentary referenced below: Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni*, and Goldenthal, *Kommentar*.

<sup>40</sup> In many of his writings Moses of Narbonne describes perfection of the soul as conjunction with the Active Intellect. In this opening line, he might have in mind instead the pre-requisites for the soul's ultimate perfection – perfection of ethics and intellect – while “the eudaemonia of the soul and its *telos*” (below) may be understood as a reference to conjunction. See *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect by Ibn Rushd with the Commentary of Moses of Narbonne*, trans. Kalman P. Bland (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982, 53–59, 109–110 (English), 54–64, 147–149 (Hebrew)).

<sup>41</sup> That is, the intelligibles that depend on them as source. Cf. the commentary on I:16: “[God] is the praiseworthy existence, which is in the existents as His form, and they shine forth from His truth, ‘for the Lord is a sun and shield’ [Ps 84:11], He shines forth the forms and makes them into intelligibles, just as the sun is the cause of what is seen and of seeing them in actuality” (Goldenthal, *Kommentar*, 3v).

<sup>42</sup> That is, *ma'aseh merkavah* means metaphysics in general.

<sup>43</sup> *Ma'aseh bereshit* indicates physics in general. In his commentary on II:30 Moses of Narbonne writes that *ma'aseh bereshit* encompasses all that is within the sublunar sphere: “the whole of existence including its principles, elements and laws, its parts, what causes and what is caused” (Goldenthal, *Kommentar*, 41r). See also below, Commentary, ¶12.

<sup>44</sup> The notion of an “order” (*siddur*) of existence is found in ibn Rushd, *Epitome of Metaphysics*, in *On Aristotle's “Metaphysics”: An Annotated Translation of the So-Called “Epitome,”* ed. and trans. Rüdiger Arnzen (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2010), 159. See also Gersonides, *Wars of the Lord*, trans Seymour Feldman (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1984), *passim*.

<sup>45</sup> *Middot*.

<sup>46</sup> That is, the final conjunction of the soul. On eudaemonia (*haṣlakhaḥ*) of the soul, cf. Bland, *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction* 21–23 (English), 1–3 (Hebrew); Al-Ghazali, *Maqāsid al-Falāsifa, o Intenciones de los Filósofos*, trans Manuel A. Alonso (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1963), 287.

[משה בן יהושוע בן דוד הנרבוני]  
 [מבוא לפירוש מורה הנבוכים]

[1] למה שהיה שלמות הנפש אמנם הוא בשלמות מעלות המדות ומעלות שכליות והיו המעלות השכליות מבוארות בחכמות {מופתיות} ומעלות המדות בחכמה המדינית, והיתה התורה האלהית רומזת על מעלות השכליות ובייחוד על המושכלות הנתלות באלהים ית' [ו] מלאכיו ובמעשה מרכבה בכלל ויחסי הנמצאות השפלות והוא המתואר במעשה בראשית והשפעתם מאתו ומדרגותם וסדרם וידיעת[ו] [ו] [הש] גחתו והנהגתו ית' להם ותאוריו ומדותיו כלומ' דרכי השם ר"ל מעשיו במציא[ות] והנבואה ואמתתה ומדרגותיה והצלחת הנפש ותכליתה ותכלית הנמצאות כלם ושלמותם. והנה היא גם כן ר"ל התורה מבארת מעלות המדות ומארכת בהן.

[2] For the first part [of the Torah] concerning His true [notion] is specifically for scholars, although some of the multitude is included therein in a distinct way and according to vulgar imagination. The second part, however, is set aside for the multitude to the extent that they need it. It is also suitable and naturally [congenial] to perfect scholars, it necessarily following that the perfection of the soul be in the divine Torah and that its province be within the Torah.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless when this second part is present in it, it seems as if there is a conflict between Torah and science, since the modes of conceptualization of truths diverge between what is understood by the multitude and what is apprehended by scholars who are the elite individuals.<sup>48</sup> The Torah is, however, specific to the multitude as they are the majority, and they were the first to receive it. This entails confusion to the scholar who investigates the Torah; he becomes perplexed and in acute pain. In order to eliminate this perplexity, to cure this disease, and to enlighten the eyes of scholars, came the luminary of the Exile, the divine philosopher Maimonides. He composed this divine book and he established the title as a derivation from [the word] Torah,<sup>49</sup> and destined it to be seen by those who speak with it and grasp it. He called it the *Guide of the Perplexed* as he explains in the Preface.<sup>50</sup>

[3] As we have seen the high station of this book, it is as a candle illuminating all darkness, to the extent that it is like the true form [ṣurah] of the Torah. As it is said about it **the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul** [Psalm 19:7] to its foundation and its principle, as it includes in the perfection of the soul the two parts mentioned earlier regarding ethics and intellect. But we have seen that most benefits of the book, especially among those that are precious and wondrous, are lacking from us just as the Sages (*hakhamim*) are lacking from us due to our sins of negligence and insufficiency of effort. That constitutes a disgrace to science within the nation, and a disgrace to [both] common people and eminent persons in disseminating foolishness and the absence of truth.<sup>51</sup> In relation to this is the length and force of the exile as well as the force of tragedy and hardship. The spirit of generosity has animated my spirit to widen and fill in the openings of the filigree [of silver] and to interpret this wondrous divine book.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, in some places I will point to the [philosophical] disagreements therein.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The term for “province” (*mishkan*) parallels a passage at the beginning of the Preface to the *Guide*: “the human intellect having drawn him on and led him to dwell within its province (*mishkano*)...” (Pines, 5).

<sup>48</sup> *yehidei ha-segullot*. In I:34 *yehidei segullah* translates as “a few solitary individuals of a very special sort” (Pines 79). In III:26 *ha-segullot* is “the elite” (Pines 507).

<sup>49</sup> The words *Torah* and *moreh* (“guide” or “teacher”) share the same linguistic root.

<sup>50</sup> Pines, 6.

[2] כי החלק הראשון על אמתתו מיוחד לחכמים ואם כבר יכללו להמון מה באופן מה כפי הדמיון ההמוני. אמנם החלק השני הוא המיוחד להמון עד שיוכרחו בו. והוא נאות וטבעי לחכמים השלמים [י]חויב שיהיה שלמות הנפש אמנם הוא בתורה האלהית גם עמידת משכנה. אמנם היא בה רק שיראה כאלו יש שם מחלקת בין החכמה והתורה למה שהיו אופני ציור האממטיות מתחפלים בין מה שיובן להמון ובין מה שיובן לחכמים יחידי סגולות. והתורה אמנם יוחדה להמון כי הם הרבים והם אשר אליהם נתנה ראשונה. ולזה ימשך מזה בלבול לחכם המעיין בתורה עד שיהיה נבון ובכאב אנוש. ולהסיר זאת המבוכה ולרפ[ו] את זאת המחלה ולהאיר עיני החכמים בא מאור הגולה הפילוסוף האלהי הרב רבנו משה בן מיימון ז"ל וחבר הספר האלהי הזה ויסוד שמו כגור מן תורה עד שיחדהו בהראותו(?) בו מי שידבר עמו וחזקו בו וקראהו מורה הנבוכים כמו שביאר הוא בפתיחה.

[3] ולמה שראינו אנחנו מעלת הספר כאלו הוא נר מאיר כל מחשך עד כאלו הוא צורת התורה באמת הנאמר עליה **תורת יי תמימה משיבת נפש** [תה' יט,ח] ליסודה והתחלתה כי היא תכלול לשלמות הנפש בשני החלקים הנזכרים במדות ובדבריות. וראינו כי רוב תועלות הספר ובפרט היקרים ממנו והנפלאים כאלו הוא נפקדו ממנו למה שנפקדו ממנו החכמים בעונותינו לרוב ההתרשלות ומעט ההשתדלות. וזה לבזיון החכמה בין האומה ובזיון אנשיה ובעליה להתפשטות הסכלות והעדר האמת. מצורף לזה ארך הגלות ותקפו ותכיפת הצרות וקשיין. העירני רוחי רוח נדיבה להרחיב נקבי המשכיות ולבאר הספר הנפלא הזה האלהי. גם בקצת מקומות אעיר על מה עליו מן המחלוקת שבא.

51 This is a version of the myth of stolen science, according to which rather than science being stolen (i.e. misattributed), it was lost to the Jews. See also I:71 (Pines 175); *Ammudei kesef*, Commentary, ¶2; Alexander Altmann, "Moses Narboni's 'Epistle on *Shi'ur Qomā*': A Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with an Introduction and an Annotated English Translation," in *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 265–266 (henceforth *ESQ*).

52 Pines, 12. Cf. Moses of Salerno, ¶31–¶32, *ESQ* 287 n139, and Goldenthal, *Kommentar*, 34r.

53 Presumably Moses of Narbonne means disagreement between the Torah and science. Alternatively, he might have in mind disagreements in the interpretation of the *Guide*.

[4] The reason for it is the author's reliance on the ideas and words of ibn Sina, whose understanding [Maimonides] apprehended.<sup>54</sup> But I will not write on this at length since it is not obligatory for me to do so in a commentary; everything will be in accordance to what I see of its benefit. Given that this Treatise is directed to one who has practiced philosophy, the commentary will consider that which is potential within the Treatise and actualize it, not that which is already actualized.<sup>55</sup> Rather, it will serve as an abridgment to those who have not seen the required preliminary sources.<sup>56</sup> Thus in the course of this book we followed in the path of [the *Guide*] and widened it. We explained its words to the philosopher and to those who are suitable for it, and to all those who long for it, though not to those who are not fitting. For it is not fitting to coerce anyone with speech; it is an act of free will.<sup>57</sup> Likewise it is not proper to *oppose that divine* and rabbinic *purpose*<sup>58</sup> that rules over all, and it is necessary to render honor to the Rabbi [Maimonides] and to obey his command without transgressing his injunction.<sup>59</sup> In fact, most of his secrets are already known through general books of science since they provide a foundation for him, although he perfects them<sup>60</sup> and first drew our attention to them. It is proper to turn to the preliminary cause and all the more so when it dates from the time of youth: for my father **raised me from my youth** [Job 31:18] on [the knowledge of] this cause.<sup>61</sup>

[5] To this end, my intention is to explain only what relates to obscure language without prolonged commentary on what relates to matters of science, and without insolence by considering in depth and widening its secrets, since that is not in their nature. Moreover, I have included the interpretations of most of them in my scientific books, which are not restricted in that manner.<sup>62</sup> Among those books are the commentary on the *Intentions of the Philosophers*, the commentary on the *Letter on the Possibility of Conjunction*, and the commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless I will not rescue [the reader] from the words [of the *Guide*] without signaling to its secrets and innermost parts. The nature of diligence obligates me to do so, but in proper manner and measure and destined specifically for suitable readers, whom we have already identified explicitly. After I have proclaimed my intention and what must precede it, I implore for help from the First, may He be exalted, and thus we begin.

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54 On Maimonides' relation to ibn Sina, see Pines xciii-ciii; Mauro Zonta, "Maimonides' Knowledge of Avicenna: Some Tentative Conclusions About a Debated Question," In *The Trias of Maimonides: Jewish, Arabic, and Ancient Culture of Knowledge = Die Trias des Maimonides: jüdische, arabische und antike Wissenskultur*, ed Georges Tamer (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2005), 211–222; Warren Z. Harvey, "Maimonides' Avicennianism," *Maimonidean Studies* 5 (2008), 107–119; Yair Shiffman, "Further on Maimonides and Ibn Sina," *Tarbiš* 64:4 (1994), 523–534 [Hebrew].

55 That is, it will bring into consideration that which latent or implied and render it clear, while sidestepping the obvious.

56 That is, the commentary will be an abridgment of scientific notions for those who have not fulfilled the curriculum required before reading the *Guide*, namely logic, mathematics, astronomy and natural science, as well as Jewish sacred texts. See the Epistle Dedicatory, Pines, 3–4.

[4] היתה הסבה בזה המשך המחבר אחר דעת בן סינא ודבריו והוא אשר כבר ישיגוהו התפישות אכן לא אאריך בזה כי אין זה מוטל עלי במה שהוא פירוש והכל כפי שאראה בתועלתו. ולמה שהיה המאמר הזה דבריו בו עם מי שנתפלסף והיה הפירוש {אמנם הוא} מה שבכח המאמר להוציאו לפועל לא מה שבא בו בפועל אלא שהוא יקצר למי שלא ראה המאמרים אשר יצטרכו להציע לפני הספר ההוא. הלכנו בזה דרכו והרחבנו דבריו ובארנו דבריו אל הפילוסוף ולנאות אליו ולכל מי שישתוקק לו. אך לא לבלתי ראוי כי אין ראוי להורות <לאנוס> בדבור לשום אדם והוא פועל בחיריי. גם כי אין ראוי לחלוק על הכוונה האלהית הרבנית המנצחת לכל וצריך לחלוק כבוד לרב ולקיים מצותו ולבלתי עבור על השבעתו. ואם באמת רוב סודותיו כבר יודעו לנו מספרי החכמות הכוללים למה שהעמידוהו עליו אלא שהוא המשלים והוא אשר העירנו ראשונה. וראוי לישא פנים לסבה המקדימה כל שכן כשהיתה מעט הנערות **כי מנעורי גדלני** [איוב לא, יח] אבי ע"ה עליו.

[5] ולזה אין כונתי לבאר אלא מה שבו מעומק הלשון מבילתי האריך בביאור מה שבא בו מעניני החכמות ומבלי גלוי פנים בהעמיק להרחיק <להרחיב> סודותיו כי אין זה מטבעם. גם כי כבר כללתי רוב ביאורים בספרי החכמות הבלתי משועבדים לזה מהם בדברי לכונות בפירושי מהם בפירושי לאגרת אפשרות הדבקות ופירושי לחי בן יקטן. ואם לא אמלט בדברי לבלתי אעיר על סתריו וסודותיו ומצפוניו כי טבע החריצות יכריחני לזה, אך באופן ראוי ובשיעור ראוי עד שייחד למי שראוי ואם עד הראוי כבר אמתנוהו בגלוי. ואחרי הודיעי כונתי ומה שצריך להקדימו ושאלת העזר מאת הראשון ית' ראשונה נתחיל באשר התחיל ונאמר.

57 On Moses of Narbonne's views on free will, see his *Epistle on Free Will*, ed. Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, "L'êpître du libre arbitre de Moïse de Narbonne," *REJ* 141 (1982), 139–167. In this paragraph, he seems to mean that the commentary is directed to those who are already familiar with the *Guide* rather than to persuade readers as to the benefit of the book.

58 Pines, 7.

59 The reference is to the passage in the Preface where Maimonides asks readers of the *Guide* "not to comment upon a single word of it," Pines 15.

60 Or: presents them in the form of *marshal*.

61 That is, his father taught him the *Guide* from his earliest youth. Cf. Holzman, "R. Moshe Narboni's Commentary," 198.

62 The sentence can also be translated as "I give the larger part of the explanation [of secrets] in my scientific books, which do not share in that nature [of the secrets]."

63 Moses of Narbonne writes that he inserted allusions to the *Guide* in his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Ya-ḡẓān*, "because it is a well-regarded work in our times, it leads towards truth and completes that which we did not mention in our commentary on *Intentions of the Philosophers*. It is as if we had explained all these secrets." See Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, "Le commentaire de Moïse de Narbonne (1300–1362) sur le 'Ḥayy ibn Yaḡẓān' d'ibn Ṭufayl (mort en 1185)," *Archives d'histoire et littéraire du Moyen-Âge* 55 (1988), 37.

[Commentary: Preface to *Guide*]

[1] **He who has stood in the council of the Lord, and seen, and heard His word and He who has listened to his word and heard** [Jer 23:18] *the beginning of the word of the Lord to Hosea* [Hos 1:2] **with the Lord God** [of your fathers] [2 Chr 13:12] concerning the unity of God – whose true meaning of His unity can only [come about] by means of the eradication of anthropomorphism. Since the secrets of the Torah are those that have been interpreted through demonstration to those who are knowledgeable, and as the Torah of the knowledgeable corresponds to philosophy – it is therefore proper for every scholar to turn to his first Torah<sup>64</sup> which is common to all, namely: **the Torah of the Lord is perfect, renewing life** [Ps 19:8]. [He is to] abstain from revealing its secrets and from *opposing its purpose which has concealed from the vulgar among the people those truths especially destined<sup>65</sup> for His apprehension. As He has said: the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him* [Ps 25:14]. This means that it is proper that the secrets that concern the true notion of God be destined to **them that fear him**.<sup>66</sup>

[2] The *Sage possessing knowledge of God* [Maimonides]<sup>67</sup> has explained that it is proper to follow in the footsteps of our divine Torah to conceal that which it has concealed, since it is impossible to possibly oppose it,<sup>68</sup> as one of the *sages possessing knowledge of God* has said: he who reveals a divine secret will be put to death by God.<sup>69</sup> The divine nature, i.e., the nature of existence that connects [the existents]<sup>70</sup> to each other, unites them and rules over them, requires that this should be the case.<sup>71</sup> For God wills the hierarchy of the existents, but the revelation of secrets distorts that hierarchy and destroys what has been thus ordered.<sup>72</sup> Knowledge [of secrets] necessarily follows from [knowledge of] the one who orders.<sup>73</sup> However, the Rabbi [Maimonides] thought that the eradication of anthropomorphism does not belong to the class of secrets. He says that it is proper that the multitude as well as the elite both adopt the notion of eradication of anthropomorphism, even though the instruction of the multitude is distinct from that of the elite.<sup>74</sup>

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64 Or: the religious doctrine which he was taught at first.

65 Pines: requisite (*meyuḥadot*). The term *meyuḥad* occurs several times in the Prologue and the first paragraph of the commentary (translated here as “specific” or “destined”).

66 A parallel notion can be found in ibn Rushd, *Decisive Treatise*; cf. *Decisive Treatise & Epistle Dedicatory*, trans Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 26–27.

67 *Ha-'elohi*. Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni*, has “le métaphysicien” (37).

68 The subject in the sentence in the *Guide* is the divine will, but it is clear that Narbonne means the Torah in this context.

69 The identity of the author of this statement is not clear.

70 In the commentary on I:72, however, Moses of Narbonne writes that “the force (or faculty) that connects the existents to each other (*koah ha-qosher*) emanates from God, but is not identical to him, just as the human nature (*teva' ha-'ishii*) is a force that emanates from the form of ‘living’,” Goldenthal, *Kommentar*, 17r.

71 In Moses of Narbonne’s opinion, everything that is can only be to the extent that it shares in the divine essence; that essence is the factor that grants each thing its existence and preserves it in existence. God is equivalent to all reality in the sense that God is the archetype of the world and is coextensive

[משה בן אבא מארי בן דוד הנרבוני]

[פירוש מורה הנבוכים - פירוש על פתיחת הספר]

- 1 [1] מי עמד בסוד יי ורא וישמע את דברו מי הקשיב דברו וישמע [יר' כג, יח] תחלת דבר יי בהושע [הו' א, ב]  
 2 עם יי אלהי ישראל [דהי"ב יג, יב] ביחוד השם ית' אשר אין אמתות לאחדותו אלא בהרחקת הגשמות.  
 3 ולמה שהיו סתרי התורה הם אשר התבארו במופת ליודעים כי התורה אצל היודעים היא החכמה  
 4 ראוי לכל חכם שישא פנים לתורתו הראשונה שהיא המשותפת לכל ר"ל תורת יי תמימה משיבת נפש  
 5 [תה' יט, ח], לבלתי יגלה סתריה ובלתי יחלוק על כונתיה אשר שמה האמתות המיוחדות בהשגתו  
 6 נעלמות מההמון אמר סוד יי ליראיו [תה' כד, יד] ר"ל הסודות אשר הם על אמתת השם ית' ראוי  
 7 שייוחדו ליראיו.

- 8 [2] וכבר ביאר האלהי ע"ה כי ראוי ללכת בעקבות תורתנו האלהית להסתיר מה שהסתירה כי אי אפשר  
 9 לחלוק עליה כמו שאמר אחד מן האלהיים מי שמגלה סוד האלוה האלוה ימיתנו. והטבע האלהי ר"ל  
 10 טבע מציאות הקשר [הנמצאות] קצתו בקצתו המאחדו המנהיגו יחייב זה כי הוא רוצה בסדור הנמצאות  
 11 ובגלוי הסתרים יתבלבל הסדור ויאבד המסודר הנה יתחייב מן המסדר הכרתם. אמנם חשב הרב כי אין  
 12 מכלל הסתרים הפשטת הגשמות ואמר כי בהרחקת הגשמות ראוי שישותפו בו ההמון והסגולות, ואם  
 13 יובדל הלמוד ההמוני מן הלמוד הסגולי.

2 ישראל] בגדוזה חסר 3 כי התורה] בגדוזה + המיוחדת 4 שישא 5 ח לנשא 6 המשותפת] בגדוזה משותפת משיבת נפש] בג חסר 6 אמתת 7 אמתות 7 שייוחדו] בגוזה שייוחדו 8 אלהית] ז חסר 1 להסתיר] ה 1 להסתירו 9 שמגלה] ד שיגלה 1 האלוה] ז חסר 1 ימיתנו] בגוזה ימיתנו 10 מציאות הקשר] בגדוזה הנמצאות הקושר 1 המאחדו] ד המאחד ה המיוחדו 1 יחייב 1 לחייב 11 יתבלבל] דוח יבלבל 1 הנה יתחייב מן המסדר הכרתם] 1 חסר + והנה יתחייב מן המסדר הכרתם] 1 יתחייב ... אמנם] ג חסר 1 יתחייב] ה יתחייב 1 המסדר] ב חסר 1 הכרתם] ז הכרת המסודר ב + הכרת המסודר ח הכרתת הכורת (?) 1 אמנם] ב הנה 12 ואמר] נח + פ' לה' חלק א 1 + ל"ב מזה החלק] 1 בהרחקת] ב הרחקת 1 הגשמות] 1 והגשמה 1 שישותפו] בגדוזה שישתתפו 1 יובדל] גוזה הובדל

with it. Cf. commentary on al-Ghazali's *Intentions of the Philosophers*, in G.B. Chertoff, "The Logical Part of al-Ghazali's *Maqasid al-Falasifa* in an Anonymous Hebrew Translation with the Hebrew Commentary of Moses Narboni," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1952, 2:16-17, and Charles Touati, "Dieu et le monde selon Moïse de Narbonne," *Archives d'histoire et littéraire du Moyen-Âge* 21 (1954), 193-205.  
 72 In *ESQ* Moses of Narbonne offers quotations from ibn Rushd that parallel the claims found here (245, 274-275, 277-278).

73 Commenting on Abraham ibn Ezra, Moses of Narbonne states that God showed Moses "the connection of the caused with the [First] Cause, which is the root principle from which all else is driven, and with which all else is connected. God made known to him how it all necessarily follows from Him, this being the mystery of Divinity," *ESQ* 269.

74 Cf. I:35 (Pines 79-80).

[3] In fact the greatest part of *his book is based on* this interpretation, and he [Maimonides] begins the chapters [of the *Guide*] with an explanation of the true meaning of the term *image*. For what is understood by it embraces corporeality, in the eyes of the multitude, and likewise other notions of corporeality involve or comprise that term. Likewise, the epistle that [Maimonides] sent to his *honored pupil*<sup>75</sup> draws attention to a premise that he gives to the philosopher: he has interpreted what [the philosopher] seeks to know, namely the existence of God, His unity and the eradication of anthropomorphism.<sup>76</sup> The premise that is deduced therefrom that one is eternity of the universe, that is, eternal creation and continuous motion.<sup>77</sup>

[4] This is what [Maimonides] had in mind by saying *to inform you of the intentions of the Mutakallimūn in this respect, and to let you know whether their [methods] were demonstrative and, if not, to what art they belonged*. He thus alludes to the fact that their proofs regarding creation in time are not correct,<sup>78</sup> and also that there can be no explanation of these three sublime aspects of God<sup>79</sup> except through the activity which is specific to Him – the continuous motion of that which is moved by Him. He explained that it was the former meetings he conducted [with his student] that provoked him to compose this treatise, as he says *these meetings aroused in me a resolution*. Understand also his statement *unto you, o men, I call forth true notions, and my voice [calls] imaginary notions to the sons of men, who are the multitude; and apply thy heart unto my knowledge*.<sup>80</sup>

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75 Pines 3.

76 Moses of Narbonne later designates these as the “three sublimes aspects of God;” see below, Commentary, ¶4. In I:71 Maimonides writes that only through philosophical methods can these three elements can be validly demonstrated and “perfect certainty” can be obtained (Pines 180–181).

77 See Ibn Rushd, *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, trans. Simon van den Bergh (Cambridge: The Trustees of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, 1987, 100–101, and Barry Kogan, *Averroes and the Metaphysics of Causation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 202–255.

78 Cf. I:71 (Pines 179–180).

79 That is, God’s existence, unity and incorporeality. Moses of Narbonne borrowed the notion of “three sublime aspects” (*sheloshah ha-derushim ha-yeqarim*) from ibn Kaspi; the ultimate source for this notion is I:71 (*ha-shalosh baqashot ha-nikhbadot ha-’aşumot*, Pines 181, ‘Even-Shemu’el 156).

80 See opening poem, Pines 5. Moses of Narbonne is pointing to the distinction between the elite and the vulgar based on the meanings found in I:14 (Pines 40).

14 [3] וּבְנָה רֹבֵב סִפְרוֹ עַל בִּיאֹר זֶה וְהִתְחִיל בְּפִרְקֵי בִּיאֹר אֲמַתַּת הַצֶּלֶם כִּי הַמּוֹבֵן מִמֶּנּוּ כּוֹלֵל הַגִּשְׁמָה לְהַמּוֹן  
 15 וְכֹאֵלוּ שְׂאֵר הָעֵינִינִים הַגִּשְׁמִיִּים חֵלֶק לֹא אִם מְשִׁיגִים לוֹ. וְגַם כֵּן בִּכְתָב אֲשֶׁר שִׁלַּח אֶל הַתְּלָמִיד הַחֲשׁוֹב עוֹרֵר  
 16 עַל הַהִקְדָּמָה אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן לְפִילֹסוֹף כִּי כִּבְר יִתְבָּאֵר מִבּוֹקֶשִׁי ר"ל מִצִּיאֹת הַשֵּׁם ית' וְאַחֲדוּתוֹ וְהִרְחַקַת  
 17 הַגִּשְׁמוֹת. וְהַהִקְדָּמָה אֲשֶׁר יִקְנֶה מִמֶּנָּה הִיא קִדְמוֹת הָעוֹלָם ר"ל הַבְּרִיאָה הַנִּצְחִית וְהַהֲנַעָה תְּמִיד.

18 [4] וְזֶהוּ אֲשֶׁר כִּיּוֹן אֵלָיו בְּאֲמָרוֹ הִנֵּה וְשֶׁאֵינִי לֶךְ אֵלֹ [כּוֹנוֹת] לְמַדְבְּרִים וְאִם הַדְּבָרִים הֵם מוֹפְתִיִּים, וְאִם לֹא  
 19 מֵאִיזָה מְלֹאכָה הֵם יִרְמוֹז בִּזְוָה כִּי רֵאוּיֹתֵיהֶם עַל חֲדוֹשׁ הָעוֹלָם אֵינֶן צוֹדְקוֹת גַּם אֵינֶן דֶּרֶךְ אֶל בְּאֹר הַשְּׁלוֹשָׁה  
 20 דְּרוּשִׁים הַיִּקְרִים בְּאֵל ית' אֵלֹא מִן הַפּוֹעֵל הַמִּיּוֹחָד לוֹ וְהוּא הַתְּנוּעָה תְּמִיד בְּמַתְנוּעָה מִמֶּנּוּ. וְהוּא {בִּיאֵר כִּי  
 21 הוּא} אֲמַנֵּם הָעִירָהוּ עַל זֶה הַחֲבוּר הַהִתְחַבְּרוּיֹת הֵם שְׁקִדְמוּהוּ עִמּוֹ, וְהוּא אֲמָרוֹ הָעִירוּנִי הַחֲבוּרִים הֵם  
 22 אֶל הַסְּכָמָה וְהֵבֵן אֲמָרוֹ אֵלֵיכֶם אֲשִׁים אֶקְרָא הָאֲמִתִּיּוֹת וְקוֹלֵי הַדְּמִיוֹנִים אֶל בְּנֵי אָדָם שֶׁהֵם הַהַמּוֹן וְשִׁית  
 23 לְבֶךְ לְדַעְתִּי.

14 והתחיל ו + (מבואר מאד) | הגשמה | בז | הגשמה | 15 אל | זו + השלם | 16 לפילוסוף] **בגה** לפלוסופים  
 | מבוקשיו] **בגדוח** מבוקשנו | 17 יקנה ממנה] **ב** {יתנה ממנו} | ו יתנה ממנה **ח** יתנה | העולם] | + ר"ל  
 חת(?) | 19 | [זה] **בגדהו** לזה | אינן] | ז אינם | 20 הפועל] **בגדוח** הפעל | .והוא] **בגדוח** וכבר ה חסר | 20-21 | (ביאר  
 כי הוא)] **בגדוח** ביאר כי הוא **ה** חסר | 21 ההתחברויות] | ד ההתחברות | ז ההתחברויות | 22 אל הסכמה] **בגדוח** חסר |  
 הדמיונים] **בגדהו** הדמיוניות **ח** הדמיוני | שהם] | **ב** חסר

[5] *It is not the purpose of this treatise to make its totality understandable to the vulgar or to beginners in speculation, nor to teach those who have not engaged in any study other than the science of the Law.* Since the *science of the Law* comprehends any science that expounds on the existence of God, on His unity, on the eradication of anthropomorphism,<sup>81</sup> and on the secrets of the divine nature – among which are *ma'aseh bereshit* and *ma'aseh merkavah* – it turns out that *those who have engaged in the science of the Law* are able to *understand the totality* of this treatise on their own. Hence, he explained what he meant by *science of the Law* by saying *I mean the legalistic study of the Law*. He also explained thereby the reason that compelled him to tie this proviso to his treatise by elaborating: *I mean the legalistic study of the Law*. The reason is as we explained earlier.

[6] [Maimonides] said: *for the purpose of this treatise and of all those like it is the science of the Law in its true sense* as God has said **surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people** [Deut 4:6].<sup>82</sup> *He must have felt distressed by the externals of the Law* and all that proceeds in the same method, which means *as he continued to understand by himself or was made to understand by someone* belonging to the ignoramuses from among the multitude of Rabbanites ... *the meanings of the above-mentioned terms, etc.* Hence he would remain in a state of perplexity and confusion as to whether he should follow his true intellect, renounce what he knew concerning the terms in question,<sup>83</sup> which is merely knowledge of imaginary knowledge, and consequently consider that he has renounced the foundations of the Law. Or he should hold fast to his understanding of these terms or to that which he believes to be his understanding of them, and not let himself be drawn on with his intellect which is speculative and glimpses the truth; rather turning his back on it and moving away from it, as if his eyes had been created facing backward and not forward.

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<sup>81</sup> These three are the “three sublime aspects” of God (see above, Commentary, ¶4)

<sup>82</sup> In II:11 the verse is interpreted to mean that “our community is a community that is full of knowledge and is perfect,” (Pines 276).

<sup>83</sup> Moses of Narbonne very briefly explains the amphibolous terms (ambigua, *mesuppaqim*) and the metaphorical (*mush'alim*) terms in his commentary on *Millot ha-higgayon*, ed. Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, “Le commentaire de Moïse de Narbonne sur la *Terminologie Logique* de Moïse Maïmonide,” *Da'at* 10 (1983), 91–92 [Hebrew].

1 [5] ואין הכונה במאמר הזה להבינם כולם להמון ולא למתחילים ביעון ולא ללמד למי שלא עיין  
 2 רק בחכמת התורה ולפי שחכמת התורה כוללת כל חכמה שתבאר מציאות האל ואחדותו והרחקת  
 3 הגשמות, וסתרי הטבע והאלהות מכלל מעשה בראשית ומעשה מרכבה, הנה מי שעיין בחכמת התורה  
 4 כבר יוכל במאמר הזה להבינו כלו [מ]אליו. בשביל זה פירש מה הנרצה אצלו הנה בחכמת התורה ואמר  
 5 ר"ל תלמודה. עוד באר מה הסבה שהצטרך לקשר מאמרו בזה התנאי והוא בארו רוצ' לומ' תלמודה וכי  
 6 הסבה היא מה שבארנו.

7 [6] ואמר כיענין המאמר הזה כולו וכל מה שהוא ממינו הוא חכמת התורה על האמת כמו שאמר ית' ואמר  
 8 רק עם חכם ונבון הגוי הגדול הזה [דב' דג]. והציקוהו פשטי התורה ומה שילך בדרכו והוא מה שלא סר  
 9 היותו מבין מדעתו או הבינהו זולתו מהמון סכלי הרבנים מעניני השמות וכו'. ונשאר  
 10 במבוכה ובהלה אם שימשך עם שכלו האמתי ושישליך מה שידעהו מהשמות ההם אשר אינם אלא  
 11 ידיעה דמיונית ויחשוב שהוא השליך פינות התורה או שישאר עם מה שהבינו ולא ימשך עם שכלו העיוני  
 12 המשקיף האמת, אך ישליכנו אחרי הגו ויטה מעליו כאלו העינים לאחור נבארו ולא לפנים.

2 שתבאר] בג שיתבאר | מציאות] בוז מציאת | 4 יוכל] ג יובדל | הזה ... פירש] ב {הזה להבינו כלו מאליו  
 בשביל זה פי' | כלן] ה חסר | כלו ... מה] ג וזהו הפי' | 6 היא] בגדוח הוא | שבארנו] בוח שבארנוהו | 9 ונשאר] ג חסר  
 10 | האמתי] ת +המשקיף האמת ה +וישליך מה שידעהו מהשמות ההם אשר אינם ה(?)וא ידיעת דמיונית. ויחשוב שהו  
 ישליך פינות המשקיף האמת התורה או שישאר עם מה שהבינו ולא ימשך עם שכלו העיוני המשקיף] | 11 ידיעה] בג חסר ז  
 ידיעת ח דעה | דמיונית] בז דמיונות | 12 הגו] בגוח גוו | העינים] ח העינים | נבראו] ח חסר | ולא] זח חסר | לפנים] ז חסר

[7] *While at the same time... considering, etc that ma'aseh bereshit is identical with natural science, and ma'aseh merkavah with divine science.* When the agent is external it is called “artificial,” as is the case for an [agent] that is external to the wood, which is acted upon to receive the form of a cabinet.<sup>84</sup> When the agent is internal it is called “natural,” as when nature acts upon the plasmatic faculty<sup>85</sup> within the sperm to bring to completion the tissue and shape of an embryo. That is why natural science is called *ma'aseh bereshit*; it means that existents come into being through a principle [*hathalah*]<sup>86</sup> residing in their substance, under the guidance of the divine intellectual nature.<sup>87</sup> Thus we say that *ma'aseh bereshit* means the act [*ma'aseh*] of **let us make** [Gen 1:26] in the beginning [*be-reshit*] and through the principle [*ba-hathalah*], which is in that substance.<sup>88</sup> As the principle lies within it, it confers motion upon the [substance] through which its existence [comes into being], and becomes separate from it since it is not a faculty distributed throughout that substance. It is termed *ma'aseh merkavah*, because the horse is subordinate to the rider, but the autonomous rider is not subordinate to the horse.<sup>89</sup>

[8] *Know that with regard to natural matters as well, it is impossible to give a clear exposition when teaching some of their principles as they are. For you know the saying of [the Sages], may their memory be blessed: ma'aseh bereshit ought not to be taught in the presence of two men.* He explains here that *reshit* means principle [*hathalah*] and that the narrative of *ma'aseh bereshit* alludes to the *exposition of some of their principles*, which are matter, form and privation; *and they too are secrets of that divine science*.<sup>90</sup> For natural and divine science [both] share in the investigation of natural principles, but whereas natural science investigates them from the perspective that they are principles of a natural existent, divine science examines them as the principles of an existent by bringing their essence to completion.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See parallel passages from Moses of Narbonne's commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* 65 n40, and in ibn Rushd, *Epitome of "Parva Naturalia,"* trans. Harry Blumberg (Cambridge: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1961), 12.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. II:6 (Pines 263–264): “God has placed in the sperm a formative force (*koah mešayyer*) shaping the limbs and giving them their configuration and ... this force is the angel.” Though the plasmatic faculty is found in the sperm, it does not use any organ as an instrument. The term “plasmatic” is found in Galen and this same faculty was qualified by Aristotle as produced by innate heat but aided by supralunary bodies. Charles Touati, *La pensée philosophique et théologique de Gersonide* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1973), 332, 343–344; *De generatione animalium* II:3 737a; Galen, *De naturalibus facultatibus* I:6, 15.

<sup>86</sup> Further on in the *Commentary* Moses of Narbonne explains that *hathalah* encompasses the efficient cause (39r).

<sup>87</sup> In his commentary on I:72, Moses of Narbonne states that that the first principle is found within every existent (Goldenthal, *Kommentar*, 17r).

<sup>88</sup> As Maurice-Ruben Hayoun points out, this comment indicates that Moses of Narbonne reads the account in Genesis in causal rather than temporal terms. See Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, *La philosophie et la théologie de Moïse de Narbonne (1300–1362)* (Tübingen: J.C. Mohr, 1989), 149.

13 [7] ויחשוב עם זה שמעשה בראשית היא חכמת הטבע ומעשה מרכבה היא חכמת האלהות.  
 14 וכשהפועל מחוץ יקרא מלאכותי כנגד שהוא חוץ מן העץ המתפעל אל קבול צורת הארון וכשהפועל  
 15 בפנים יקרא טבעי כי יפעלו הטבע בכח המצייר אשר בזרע להשלים אריגת העובר ותמונתו. ולזה  
 16 נקראת חכמת הטבע מעשה בראשית ר"ל נמצאות מתחדשות בהתחלה היא בעצמותם בהיישרת הטבע  
 17 האלהי השכלי. הנה אמרנו מעשה בראשית נרצה בו מעשה נעשה בבראשית ובהתחלה היא בעצם ההוא.  
 18 וכאשר ההתחלה היא בו במה שהוא מקנה לו התנועה אשר בו מציאותו, והוא נבדל ממנו במה שאינו  
 19 כח מתפשט בו, תקרא מעשה מרכבה כי הסוס טפלה לרוכב ואין הרוכב הנפרד טפל לסוס.

20 [8] ודע כי הענינים הטבעים גם כן אי אפשר לגלותם בלמוד קצת התחלותיהם על מה שהם בבאור. וכבר  
 21 ידעת אמרם ז"ל ולא במעשה בראשית בשנים. באר בכאן כי ראשית רצה לומר התחלה וכי ספור מעשה  
 22 בראשית ירמוז בו ביאור קצת ההתחלות שהם החומר והצורה וההעדר והם גם כן סודות מסודות  
 23 החכמה האלהית כי חכמת הטבע והאלהות כבר ישתתפו על חקירת ההתחלות הטבעיות אלא שחכמת  
 24 הטבע תחקור בהן מצד שהן ההתחלות לנמצא טבעי. וחכמת האלהות מצד שהן ההתחלות למנצא  
 25 ותשלים מהותם.

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13 ויחשוב עם זה] ד חסר | היא/היא] **בגרוח** הוא/הוא | 14 וכשהפועל/וכשהפועל] ה הפועל/ הפועל | 16–17 הטבע האלהי] **ב**  
 הטבעי האלהי | האלהי] ה חסר | 17 ההוא] **בגרוח** הוה **בו** + {ח"א פ"ע} | 18 שהוא] **וח** שהיא | מקנה] **בגרוח** תקנה ה מקרה  
 | לו] ה לא | 19 תקרא] ה ונקרא | כי] ו + {בפרק ע' מ(?) | טפל] **ב** טפיל | 21–22 ספור מעשה בראשית] ה חכמת הטבע |  
 22 ההתחלות] **ב** + {ח"א פי"ז} | שהם] **בגרוח** שהן | שהן+ {פרק י"ה מ(?) | והם] **בגרוח** והן | 23–24 והאלהות ... הטבע]  
 ז חסר | 24 שהן] **ג** שהם | ההתחלות] **ג** ההתחלה | מצד] **בגרוח** חסר

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**89** Moses of Narbonne is playing with the literal meaning of *ma'aseh merkavah*, "work of the chariot," originally a reference to the prophet Ezekiel's vision of a chariot, which he adapts to the allegory of the chariot and the rider from *Phaedrus*. The connection between the chariot of Ezekiel and Plato's chariot also appears in an anonymous commentary on the *Guide*, ms JTS 2263 (Italy, 15th century). In that commentary, the allegory of the chariot/*merkavah* is interpreted as referring to God's control of the world; God (the rider) is in control of the world (the chariot) and yet distinct from it.

**90** Cf. I:17: "now you know that the principles of the existents subject to generation and corruption are three: matter, form, and particularized privation" (Pines 43).

**91** This is a characteristically Averroistic view according to which physics and metaphysics are both concerned with the same object of study (natural substance), and are distinguished from each other by their methods or perspectives. See ibn Rushd, *Grand Commentaire (Tafsīr) de la Métaphysique: Livre Bêta*, trans. Laurence Bauloye (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 148–149, 149n1, 216.

[9] *Thereafter comes he who does not attain a degree in which his darkness is illumined through a lightning flash, which is the degree of prophecy. This means that individual has attained conjunction with the active intellect but through a polished body, which is demonstration, and through speculation generally.<sup>92</sup> But flashes and is hidden again, as if it were the **flaming sword which turned every way** [Gen 3:24], which has a ray of light and illumination but turns every way. Therefore, it says that he **stationed there the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life** [ibid]. For through thought and intellect one **takes from the tree of life, lest he should stretch out his hand** [Gen 3:22], that is, if he is able to achieve it [at all], since the flash of light is not continuous given the material cause that turns into a **flame**. For this reason, all the Sages who know by way of demonstration, possessing knowledge of God, who know the existents per se, *Rabbanites*,<sup>93</sup> submitting to religion but not as a dumb beast that is pulled along by a rope, but rather *knowers of the truth: when teaching something of this matter they would speak of it only in parables and riddles* for the reason that they are understood according to the nature of the listener.*

[10] *The men of knowledge and the sages are drawn, as it were, toward this purpose by the divine will, just as they are drawn by their natural circumstances, for the divine will decrees the order of existence and preserves natural circumstances, the forms, and all that which contributes to the welfare of society – they are all **given from one shepherd** [Eccl 12:11]. Do you not see the following fact? God, may His mention be exalted, wished us to be perfected and the state of our societies be improved by our Torah regarding actions – which is the true intended aim of the Torah. Now this can come about only after the adoption of intellectual beliefs, the first of which being His apprehension, according to our capacity at the revelation in Mount Sinai, in particular at the beginning of the Ten Commandments.<sup>94</sup>*

<sup>92</sup> Cf. ibn Falaquera, Commentary, ¶2.

<sup>93</sup> Pines (10) has this sentence as *possessing knowledge of God ('elohi) the Lord (riboni)*, based, as he explains, on the Arabic *rabb*, “the Lord.” However, it is clear from his comment that Moses of Narbonne understands the term as “adhering to rabbinic law.”

<sup>94</sup> Cf. II:33–34 (Pines 70–79), and Shaul Regev, “Collective Revelation and ‘Standing at Sinai’ in Maimonides and His Commentators: Narboni, Shem Tov, and Abravanel,” in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 9: Shlomo Pines Jubilee Volume, Part 2 (1990), 251–265 [Hebrew].

1 [9] ויש מי שלא יגיע למדרגה שיאור חשכו בה כברק שהיא מעלת הנבואה ר"ל הדבוק בשכל הפועל אבל  
 2 בגשם טהור זך והוא המופת ובכלל העיון אבל יציץ ויעלם כאלו הוא **להט החרב המתהפכת** [בר' ג, כד]  
 3 שהוא בעל לטישה והארה אבל מתהפך. לכן אמר **וישכן את הכרובים ואת להט החרב המתהפכת לשמור**  
 4 **את דרך עץ החיים** [שם] כי במחשב והשכל יקח מעץ החיים פן ישלח ידו [בר' ג, כב] אם יזכה אלא שאין  
 5 ההצצה עומדת תמיד לסבת ההיולי המתהפך <הדומה> ללהט ובעבור זה כשכוון כל חכם יודע על  
 6 דרך מופת אלהי יודע הנמצא במה הוא נמצא, רבני נכנע לדת אך לא כבהמה הנמשכת לרצועה אבל  
 7 בעל אמת, ללמד דבר מזה הענין לא ידברו כי אם במשלים וחידות יען יובנו כפי טבע המבין.

8 [10] כאלו החכמים והיודעים נמשכים אחר הענין הזה ברצון אלהי כמו שימשכום הענינים הטבעיים כי הרצון  
 9 האלהי גור סדר המציאות והתמדתו הענינים הטבעיים, והצורות ומה שמביא אל תקון הקבוץ כלם **נתנו**  
 10 **מרועה אחד** [קה' יב, יא]. הלא תראה כי השם ית' כשרצה לתתנו שלמים ולתקן עניני המוננו בתורתנו  
 11 המעשיית אשר היא התכלית המכוון בתורה בעצם אשר לא יתכן אלא אחר דעות שכליות התחלתם  
 12 השגתו ית' כפי יכולתנו במעמד הר סיני, ובפרט בראשית הדברות.

1 שיאור] ה שיאורו] בה] ד חסר] שהיא] **בגדוח** שהוא 2] והוא] **בגדוח** שהוא 1] והיא 3] וישכן] **בגדוח** +שם 5] ההצצה]  
 ו הציצה] המתהפך] **גוז** הדומה 6] מופת] **בגדוח** מופתי ד המופת 7] המבין] ו המעיין 9-8] כי ... הטבעיים]  
 ז חסר] 9 גור] ג גדר ח נגור הנמצאות +[עיין בפר' מ' מח"ב] סדר] ח סידור] והתמדתו] **בגדוח** והתמדהו] והצורות]  
 דוח +והמצוות] ומה] **בה** וזה] שמביא] ב +[כי הרצון האלהי גור סדר המציאות והתמדהו הענינים הטבעיים, והצורות ומה  
 שמביא] 11] המעשיית] ד המעשיית ז המעשיות] אשר] ד חסר] בתורה בעצם] ד בעצם בתורה 12] יכולתנו]  
 ב +המבין ח +המכוון

[11] *This, in its turn, cannot come about except through divine science, and this divine science cannot become actual except after a study of natural science. This is so since natural science is a required introduction for [divine science]; therefore God, may He be exalted, caused His book to open with ma'aseh bereshit, which is natural science. [Maimonides] had pointed you to the obscurity of these matters by saying for this reason Scripture tells you obscurely **In the beginning God created**. If he had meant that which a youth is taught at the house of his Rabbi [or: teacher, *rav*] or conforming to the way in which a poor preacher interprets it, he would not have said *Scripture tells you obscurely*. He makes that precise very emphatically.*

[12] *An example of the first kind of prophetic *meshal* is the following text: **and behold a ladder set up on the earth** [Gen 28:12]. In this text, the word **ladder** indicates the hierarchy of existence and the organization of its parts.<sup>95</sup> The words **set up on the earth** indicate the world of the elements, which corresponds to everything within the circuit of the lunar sphere. The words **and the top of it reached to heaven** indicate the world of the spheres; **and behold the angels of God** indicate the world of separate intellects. The word *ascending* indicates that they are causes **and descending** that they are caused, in a reciprocal relation.<sup>96</sup> And the words **and behold the Lord stood above it** indicate a seventh subject, which is that God is the First Cause and he is above the ladder, separate from every physical body, but not in it<sup>97</sup> – the contrary of what heretics say: **a tower whose top may reach unto heaven** [Gen 11:4].<sup>98</sup>*

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<sup>95</sup> Interpretations similar to the one offered here are also found in Samuel ibn Tibbon's *Ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim*, ch.11, and in Isaac Albalag's *Tiqun ha-de'ot*. *Sefer ma'amar yiqqavu ha-mayim*, ed. Mordekhai L. Bisliches (Pressburg: Anton Edlen von Schmid, 1837), 54; *Sefer tiqqun ha-de'ot*, ed. Georges Vajda (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1973), 82–83 [Hebrew]. In Moses of Narbonne's commentary on II:30 the ladder is identified with the entirety of Creation in the sublunar world and is identical to the tree of life. The ladder, which is the measure of *ma'aseh bereshit*, refers to "the entirety of existence, its principles and elements, rules and parts, causes and effects ... the existents, from the earth to the sky (*raqia'*), which are the measure of the ladder, since it was made from the tree of life" (Goldenthal, *Kommentar*, 41r).

<sup>96</sup> This interpretation is based on II:4–5 (Pines 255–261).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *ESQ* 286. On God as the First Cause, see I:69 (Pines 166–171). On his being above and "separate from all parts of the world," see I:72 (192–193).

<sup>98</sup> The context for the verse is the Tower of Babel. On the philosophical heresy related to the Tower of Babel, see ibn Tibbon, *Yiqqavu ha-mayim*, 173: the heretics are said not to believe in the existence of God nor in the existence of an intellect separate from matter.

13 [11] אשר לא יתכן זה אלא בחכמת האלהית ולא תגיע החכמה האלהית ההיא אלא אחר חכמת הטבע כי  
 14 חכמת הטבע פתיחה לזה בהכרח <לכן> שם פתיחת ספרו ית' במעשה בראשית אשר היא חכמת הטבע.  
 15 כבר העירוך על היות אלו הענינים סתומים כי אמרו לפיכך סתם לך הכתו' **בראשית ברא אלהים**. ואם  
 16 היה הנרצה בו מה שיבינהו הנער בבית רבו כפי מה שיפרשהו הדרשן העני לא היה אומר סתם לך הכתו'.  
 17 ומה ומאד הפליג לדקדק.

18 [12] אמנם דמיון המין הראשון ממשלי הנבואה אמרו **והנה סולם מוצב ארצה** [בר' כח, יב] פי' אמרו סולם  
 19 יורה על השתלשלות המציאות וסדר חלקיו, ואמרו **מוצב ארצה יורה על עולם היסודות** שהוא כל מה  
 20 שבתוך קשב <קבוב> גלגל הירח. ואמרו **מגיע השמימה יורה על עולם הגלגלים**, **והנה מלאכי**  
 21 **אלהים יורה על עולם השכלים הנבדלים**. ואמרו **עולים יורה על כי הם עלות ויורדים** עלולים בצירוף  
 22 ואמרו **והנה יי נצב עליו על ענין שביעי** כי הוא ית' הסבה הראשונה והוא על הסולם נבדל מכל גשם לא  
 23 בו הפך מאמר הכופרים ומגדל וראשו בשמים [בר' יא, ד].

14 פתיחה] ח חסר | בהכרח] ג חסר | <לכן>] בנח לכן דהו חסר ו לכס | אשר] ב שהיא | 15 סתומים] דהוח  
 סתומות | 16 שיפרשהו] בנ שידרשהו | 17 הפליג] ו הפלית | 18 פי' ] בדהוח כי | 19–18 פי' ... חלקיו] ג חסר | 20 קבוב>]  
 בנחח קבוב ה קשב | 21 עלות] ז עולים | ויורדים] ו +יורה על כי הם עולים | 22–23 לא בו] ד חסר | 23 מאמר] ז מאמרי |  
 בשמים] ו מגיע השמימה

[13] I have interpreted all this even though it is evident to most scholars, because there is no word that indicates the meaning of this [allegory].<sup>99</sup> Furthermore we saw that the Rabbi was to explain its meaning further on [in the *Guide*]; but what should properly be understood from this passage is what we have explained here.<sup>100</sup> *For the proximate matter of man is identical with the proximate matter of the other living beings. Proximate* – such as human limbs; and all the more what preserves [human] parts, such as substance, flesh and the humors; and even more so the remote [matter], such as the elements; and finally, that which is *in potentia*, such as first matter. *With care to avoid* is an infinitive.<sup>101</sup> **It is time to do something for the Lord, for they have broken your law** [Ps 119:126]. I interpret this to mean that were it not for [Maimonides’] true treatise, the true Torah would have been a demonstration for foul opinions and for the belief in divine anthropomorphism and corporeality of spiritual [beings].<sup>102</sup> This suffices as an allusion.

[14] *The fifth cause arises from the necessity of teaching and making someone understand. For there may be a certain obscure matter that is difficult to conceive. One has to make it understood or to take it as a premise to explain something that is easy to conceive. This notion that is easy to conceive ought by rights to be taught [before] the former matter that is obscure in the analysis of its true meaning, since one always begins with what is easier. The teacher, accordingly, will try to make somehow understood that first matter that is obscure when he mentions it so as to explain something that is easy to conceive through figurative language using any means that occur to him or gross speculation. He will not undertake to state the matter as it truly is, but rather will leave it so in accord with the listener’s imagination that the latter will understand only what he now wants him to understand by means of the comprehension of something that is easy to conceive. Afterwards, in the appropriate place, that first obscure matter is stated in exact terms and explained as it truly is.* This is similar to the subject of genus and species – [Aristotle] used it to explain the category of substance through *gross speculation*, and he uses the same genus and species later in the explanation of the true meaning of substance. The matters [as related] to the *Categories* are later analyzed within the *Metaphysics*.<sup>103</sup>

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**99** That is, Maimonides does not give any hints in the Preface as to the meaning of each element of the allegory.

**100** References to words or notions in the allegory of Jacob’s ladder can be found in I:10, I:15, II:10, II:45, III:18 (Pines 35–37, 40–41, 269–273, 395–403, 474–477). See also *Sefer ha-madda’*, *Hilkhot yesodei ha-torah*, ed. Shmu’el Rabinovitch (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1993) 7:¶3 (36).

**101** The verbal form of ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew term *vehishamer* is ambiguous: it could be read as either an imperative or an infinitive. The imperative form would suggest that the reader must be careful to avoid failing to explain anything obscure. The infinitive form connects the phrase to the preceding sentence, in Maimonides describes how he composed the *Guide*: “the diction of this Treatise has not been chosen at haphazard, but with great exactness and exceeding precision, and *with care to avoid* failing to explain any obscure point” (Pines 15).

- 1 [13] והנה פרשתי זה ואם הוא מובן לרוב המעיינים למה שבמאמרו אין מורה על ביאורו גם כי ראינו כי  
 2 הרב בעצמו פירש זולת זה בעתיד אבל מה שראוי שיובן ממנו בזה המקום הוא מה שבארנוהו. כי חמר  
 3 האדם הקרוב הוא חומר שאר בעלי חיים הקרוב כאברי האדם כל שכן המתדמי החלקים כעצם והבשר  
 4 והלחות כ"ש הרחוק כמו היסודות, כ"ש אשר בכח שהוא החומר הראשון. והשמר מקור. עת לעשות ליי  
 5 הפרו תורתך [תהלים קיט.קכו]. בארתי לולי חברו האמת כבר היתה התורה האמתית מופת  
 6 בידיעות מזהמות ובהאמתת ענינים גשמיים באל ית' וברוחניים ודי הערה.

- 7 [14] והסבה החמשית הכרח הלמוד וההבנה. והוא שיהיה שם ענין סתום קשה לציירו, יצטרך להבינו או  
 8 ללקחו הקדמה לבאר ענין קל הציור אשר הענין ההוא קל הציור צריך... בלמוד על הראשון ההוא הסתום  
 9 בדקדוק אמתתו, להיות התחלה לעולם בקל. ויצטרך המלמד שיקל בהבנת הענין ההוא הראשון הסתום  
 10 מצד שיזכור בה כדי לבאר הענין הקל הציור בהעברה על איזה דרך שיזדמן ובעיון גס. ולא ידקדק  
 11 באמתתו אבל יונח כפי דמיון השומע עד שיובן מה שירצה בו עתה להבינו באמצעיתו מהבנת הענין  
 12 קל הציור. ואחר ידקדק הענין ההוא הסתום הראשון והתבאר אמתתו במקום הראוי לו וזה כענין הסוג  
 13 והמין שילקח בבאורו במאמר העצם בעיון גס אשר הסוג והמין ילקחו אחר ביאור אמתת העצם וידקדקו  
 14 עניני המאמרות אחר כן בחכמה האלהית.

1 שבמאמרו אין] בדוח שאין במאמרו ג שאין 3 כאברי] ה באיברי האדם 1 + והקרוב 1 כעצם] ה כעצם והבשר 1 וכב(?)  
 יוד 4 והלחות] ד והליחות 1 הרחוק] 1 + שהם 1 כמו] ב שהם 1 בכח] ד + ר"ל החומר אשר הוא בכוח כי היולי הוא החומר  
 לכל הצורות בכוח כי תמיד(?) הוא אפילו(?) הצורה ומוכן לכל אחרת שאבו היה(?) עליו צורה בכוח(?) לא היה יכול לקבל  
 שום צורה אחרת] 1 החומר] הדוח ההיולי 51 בארתי] ב ביאר 1 האמת] גז האמת 1 האמתית] ד האמת 1 6 בידיעות] ד  
 בדעות 1 ובהאמתת] גהח ובהאמתת 1 8 צריך] גזו + שיוקדם ח [שיקדם] 9 בהבנת] ג הבנת 1 10 שיזכור] ח שיזכר 1 בה]  
 ח חסר 1 11 באמצעיתו] ב באמצעותו 1 12 קל] בגדוח הקל 1 ואחר] ד + כן 1 הראוי] בדוח הנאות 1 14-12 זה ... האלהית]  
 בג חסר 1 13 שילקח] בגו שלקח דהו יחקל 1 ביאור אמתת העצם] ד חסר 1 וידקדקו] ד ידקדק דוח  
 וידקדקו 14 האלהית] ח האלהות

102 Cf. ibn Tibbon, *Yiqqavu ha-mayim*, 173, where Samuel ibn Tibbon mentions the same proof-text to defend teaching subjects which the prophets and Sages had concealed. Since these subjects are now well known throughout all the other nations, the Jews find themselves denigrated and accused of ignorance.

103 In the *Categories* Aristotle sees substance through the framework of genus and species (ch. 5, 2b, 17-19), while in the *Metaphysics* the framework of inquiry is ontological.

[15] *Rabbi*, the compiler of the Mishnah, *agreed with the opinion of a certain rabbi in this one matter and therefore cited it anonymously. In that other matter he agreed with the opinion of that other rabbi and therefore cited it anonymously*, and the speakers are not identified. It is one of the conditions of contradictory or contrary statements that the subject of the two propositions be the same. However, here the subjects of the two propositions differ since the propositions are particular to [each] speaker but contradict each other, to the extent that there is no speaker to whom we can attribute the true and not the false [as well]. It is as if the true and its contradiction, the false, could be attributed to each and every [Talmudic] Sage, and generally, both affirmation and negation [as well]. Were it not for this aspect [i.e. this cause] one would not determine whether there is a contradiction here, since it says in both instances *therefore he cited it*.

[16] *[It] is a matter for speculative study and investigation* how the prophets established contradictory [positions] according to the theses<sup>104</sup> with which they engaged, for the sake of obscurity and *mashal*.<sup>105</sup> [For instance] **God led them not**<sup>106</sup> [Exod 13:17], **He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased**<sup>107</sup> [Ps 115:3]; **Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art**<sup>108</sup> [Job 35:8], **So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings**<sup>109</sup> [Jer 44:22]; **For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers**<sup>110</sup> [Ezra 8:22], a statement by the sons of the prophets<sup>111</sup>: **Peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up**<sup>112</sup> [2 Kgs 2:16]. *The Lord will*

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104 The word is the same as that used for the three “sublime aspects” of God (*derush*); see above, Commentary, ¶4.

105 What follows are Moses of Narbonne’s examples of sets of contradictory statements. The text offers only a few words from each verse, but I reproduce the entire verse in the notes below. Some of the contradictions are clear but others less so; cf. Hayoun, *Moshe Narboni* 68 n65. Below I offer some tentative statements on the substance of each contradiction.

106 **And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.**

107 **But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.** The contradiction is clear: in the first instance, God was limited by a possible change of heart on the part of the people; in the second instance, God can do anything He pleases.

108 **Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.**

109 **So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.** The contradiction here is that in the first instance, wickedness has only individual consequences; in the second, it leads to collective punishment.

110 **For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.**

- 15 [15] ראה רבי מחבר המשנה דבריו של רב פלוני בכך... וסתם לן כותיה וראה דבריו של רב פלוני בכך  
 16 וסתם לן כותיה וחסר הבעלים. והנה מתנאי הסתירה וההפך שיהיה נושא לגזרות אחד ובכאן נושאי שתי  
 17 הגזרות מתחלפים כי הם חלקיות מנאם. סותרים למה שאין מהחומרים אחד שיכלול האמת ולא השקר  
 18 וכאלו האמת וסותרו שהוא השקר יוחס על כל אחד מהרבנים ובכלל החיוב והשלילה. ולולי זה הצד לא  
 19 תחליט בזה סתירה אחר שאמר בכאן סתם לן כותיה ובכאן סתם לן כותיה.

- 1 [16] יש... מקום עיון וחקירה שהנביאים יניחו סותרים כפי הדרוש אשר יתעסקו בו בשביל העומק והמשל:  
 2 ולא נחם אלהים [שמ' יג, ז], כל אשר חפץ [תה' קטו, ג], לאיש כמדך רשעך [איוב לה, ח], ולא יוכל עוד  
 3 יי לתת [לשאת] [יר' מד, כב], כי בשתי לשאול מן המלך [עזרא ח, כב] מאמר בני הנביאים כי נשאו יי  
 4 [פן נשאו רוח יי, מל"ב ב, טז], לא ייטיב ה' ולא ירע [צפ' א, יב], והוא מאמר רבני {בדוי}. והצודק מפי  
 5 עלין לא תצא הרעה והטוב [איכה ג, לח], בראשית ברא [בר' א, א], בורה שמים ונוסיהם [יש' מב, ה],

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15-16 ראה ... אחד] ו חסר | 16 וחסר הבעלים] ז חסר | מתנאי] ב מנאם | נושא לגזרות] ח נשא הגזרה | 17  
 (מתחלפים] ד חסר ו א+ | מהחומרים] בנהוזה מהאומרים ד מאמריהם | 18 וסותרו] ג + שהוא סותרו | שהוא השקר] ו  
 + {לאמר שהוא סותר האמת והוא השקר} | על] בנהוזה אל  
 3 [לתת] בנהוזה לשאת | כי נשאו] בנהוזה פן נשאו רוח | 4 {בדוי} | בנהוזה בדוי ה חסר

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111 The speaker of the next verse is the prophet Elisha.

112 **And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.**  
 The first instance suggests that God does not intervene in human affairs arbitrarily, but the second instance implies arbitrariness.

*not do good, neither will he do evil*<sup>113</sup> [Zeph 1:12] – a rabbinic expression {a false expression}. The correct [expression] is **Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?** [Lam 3:38];<sup>114</sup> **In the beginning God created**<sup>115</sup> [Gen 1:1], **He that created the heavens, and stretched them out**<sup>116</sup> [Isa 42:5]; **Remained long [in the land]**<sup>117</sup> [Deut 4:25], **both rising up early, and sending them but ye have not hearkened**<sup>118</sup> [Jer 26:5]; **To give [every one according to his ways]**<sup>119</sup> [Jer 32:19], **[And the archers] shot at King Josiah**<sup>120</sup> [2 Chr 35:23]; **For there shall no man see me [and live]**<sup>121</sup> [Exod 33:20], **I beheld my Lord**<sup>122</sup> [Isa 6:1], **My face shall not be seen**<sup>123</sup> [Exod 33:23], **The similitude of the Lord shall he behold**<sup>124</sup> [Num 12:8]; **Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?**<sup>125</sup> [Ps 88:11]; **Thy dead men shall live**<sup>126</sup> [Isa 26:19]. There are many such examples; their intention is parabolic. Know that I included among the contradictory [statements] some in which the speakers are distinct, for the words of the prophets are the Word of God.<sup>127</sup> **Open ye the gates** by the equivocation of terms, **that the perfect nation which keepeth the truths may enter in** [Isa 26:2],<sup>128</sup> and likewise with respect to the First Principle.

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**113 And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.**

**114 Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?** The contradiction between the two is obvious from the texts.

**115 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**

**116 Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.** The contradiction is either on the account of the sentence “in the beginning,” or the lack of detail in the first instance compared to the second. If the second instance is but an amplification of the first, this is an example of contradiction due to the “fifth cause” (“one always begins with what is easier... afterwards, in the appropriate place, that obscure matter is stated in exact terms and explained as it truly is,” Pines 18).

**117 When thou shalt beget children, and children’s children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger.**

**118 To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened.** In the first instance, the result of the action is exile from the land; the second instance suggests that the people committed the idolatry and evil mentioned earlier and yet were not exiled.

**119 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.**

6 ונושנתם [דב' ד,כה], השכם ושלוח לאמר [יר' מד,ד], לתת לאיש כדרכיו [יר' לב,יט], ויורו למלך  
 7 יאשיהו [דהי"ב, לה,כג], כי לא יראני האדם [שמ' לג,כ], וארא את יי [יש' ו,א], ופני לא יראו [שמ'  
 8 לג,כג], ותמונת יי ביט [במ' יב,ח], הלמתים תעשה פלא [תה' פח,יא], יחיו מתיד [יש' כו,יט]. ורבים  
 9 עד אין מספר והכונה המשל ודע כי שאני כבר שמתי בסותרים מה שיתחלפו בו האומרים כי דברי  
 10 הנביאים דברי יי הנה. פתחו שערים בשתוף השמות ויבא גוי שלם שומרי האמתות [יש' כו,ב] וכדומה  
 11 לזה ההתחלה {בהתחלה} הראשונה.

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6 לאמר] בנזוח ולא שמעתם ה לא ירד | 10 דברי יי] בנזוח דבר יי | 11-10 פתחו ... הראשונה] גז חסר ו | פתחו ...  
 הראשונה | 10 גוי] דה + צדיק | שומרי] בדהח שומר

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**120 And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.** In the eighteenth year of his reign King Josiah reinstated the public observance of Passover at the Temple. The first instance suggests King Josiah should be rewarded for his good action; yet the second verse describes how he died in a war immediately after the festival.

**121 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.**

**122 In the year that King Uzziah died, I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple.**

**123 And I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back: but my face shall not be seen.**

**124 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?** The four last prooftexts give descriptions of seeing God while God announces that He cannot be seen.

**125 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?**

**126 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.** The contradiction is on the possibility of resurrection of the dead.

**127** This statement suggests that Moses of Narbonne included examples of the first cause of contradiction (Pines 17).

**128** Pines, 21.

## 8 Commentaries on the *Guide*: A Synthetic Conclusion

This study proposed a brief history of formal exegesis on the *Guide*. It focused on the earliest period, the most creative and free-ranging phase of commentary. Within this period, I identified six commentaries that represent different streams of commentary on Maimonides. What brings them together is an allegiance to Maimonides as a philosophical and theological authority; the received legacy of Samuel ibn Tibbon, which could be critiqued but not ignored; a shared view of the *Guide* as philosophically and religiously salvific, a manual for the achievement of perfection. The joint heritage of Maimonides and ibn Tibbon gives rise to a distinct philosophical culture rife with internal contradictions. The tension between concealment and revelation, which is ever-present in the *Guide*, takes on additional dimensions after Samuel ibn Tibbon and the impulse to defend and disseminate the text. Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, a commentary is only useful to the extent that it reveals something previously unknown to the reader. Commentaries on the *Guide* could not be entirely obtuse, but neither could they explain it all.

With these remarks in mind, I would like to point out the ways in which I consider the commentaries to constitute an anomalous tradition. I will then briefly assess how pre-modern readers of the *Guide* made use of the commentaries. Last, I will outline areas for further research on the commentaries.

### 8.1 Commentaries on the *Guide* as an Anomalous Genre

A reading of the commentary tradition reveals that it is anomalous in a number of ways. First, there is a question regarding Maimonides' addressee in the *Guide*. The *Guide* was not a text meant for a wide audience. Several times in the text Maimonides writes that his purpose is to address a few rare individuals. The *Guide* responds to the needs of a "single virtuous man while displeasing ten thousand individuals," and Maimonides "does not heed the blame of those many creatures." He eschews concern for what he contemptuously calls the "multitude." The ideal addressee of the *Guide* was considered *ab initio* to be a perplexed but exceptional individual, familiar with both Torah and philosophy. On the other hand, a commentary is conceptually an instrument of dissemination. It widens the circle of readers. A priori, it addresses itself to anyone who wishes to read the *Guide*, rather than anyone who has the requisite intellectual background to read the text.<sup>1</sup> A commentary on the *Guide* appeals precisely to those who are *not* Maimonides' ideal addressees.

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<sup>1</sup> Hence ibn Falaquera's listing of three necessary conditions for a putative reader of the *Guide*. See ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶11.

Readers of commentaries lack the ability to understand the text on their own, a *sine qua non* for a reader of the *Guide*. How, then, could Maimonideanist thinkers, among the most loyal to the *Guide*, openly and knowingly break with one of its cardinal purposes?

Second, Maimonides placed a number of controls on the dissemination of the text. Most pointedly, he employed strong language to forbid readers of the *Guide* from explaining the text to one another. He spells out the restrictions in detail. On its face, Maimonides' prohibition renders the practice of commentary on the *Guide* the philosophical-literary equivalent of a religious sin. This is implied by the language of the prohibition, where Maimonides "adjures" (*mashbia'*) the reader "by God, may He be Exalted" not to explain it. Commentators referred to the prohibition as a whole as the "adjuration" or "oath" (*shevu'ah*).

The prohibition caused no small amount of anxiety for commentators of the *Guide*. The tension is particularly pronounced among the earliest commentators, who lacked a pre-existing tradition and could not even point to a precedent. There are a number of passages within the commentaries where the exegete excuses himself for writing a commentary, and offers reasons for doing so. Among the most unusual is the one offered by Hillel ben Samuel of Verona (1220–1295) in the prologue to his commentary.<sup>2</sup> He argued the prohibition was not as stringent as it appeared since it did not follow halakhic requirements regarding the administration of oaths. Nonetheless, Hillel claimed it should still be respected since it was Maimonides' explicit intention, but he goes on to write a commentary on the preface of part II of the *Guide*. He further justifies himself by claiming that he will not reveal the deeper meaning of the text in his commentary.

This last justification reveals one of the effects brought about by the prohibition. Several commentators such as Hillel of Verona, Zerahiah Hen, and Moses of Narbonne, get around the prohibition by claiming that their commentaries will not reveal everything.<sup>3</sup> Their stated method is to give only indications and allusions to the reader rather than complete explanations. This justification mimics the *Guide*, where Maimonides similarly promises to give only indications. Casual readers will not be aware of the implications of the allusions – the deeper meaning of the text – and will miss the more radical conclusions of the *Guide*.

This leads us to a third and final aspect of the anomaly of the tradition. To a smaller or greater degree, early commentators of the *Guide* in this study all employ strategies to conceal the deeper meaning of the text while giving only indications to attentive readers.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the commentaries contain a strong element of

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<sup>2</sup> *Tagmulei ha-nefesh*, ed S.J. Halberstam (Lyck: Meqışei Nirdamim, 1874), 32b-33a.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the prologue to their commentaries in the preceding chapters.

<sup>4</sup> On esotericism in ibn Kaspi, Moses of Narbonne, and commentators of later periods, see Lawrence J. Kaplan, "Rationalism and Rabbinic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Eastern Europe: Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's 'Levush Pinat Yikrat'," Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 1975, 179–186.

esotericism, and in two ways: they identify esoteric elements in the *Guide*, and they write esoterically. Each commentator deploys esotericism in a distinct way. The indications they give readers can be explicit: for example, the explanation of the seventh cause in Moses of Salerno's commentary is clearly marked as esoteric.<sup>5</sup> They can also be implicit, such as ibn Falaquera's selective use of quotations that contradict each other, thus raising more questions.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, different commentaries emphasize different purposes for esoteric writing. The best example here is the contrast between *'Ammudei kesef* and *Maskiyot kesef*.

Why is esoteric commentary anomalous? After all, a number of medieval Jewish commentaries on Scripture could be described as "esoteric" in one way or another. The core of the anomaly, however, is not that commentary *per se* can be esoteric. The anomaly is the status of this particular text that is being commented on. In the history of Jewish exegesis, there was a long-standing tradition of esoteric commentary on sacred texts that goes back to rabbinical texts.

But until the 13th century, esoteric commentary had not been used to treat a non-sacred text such as the *Guide*.<sup>7</sup> By writing esoteric commentary on the *Guide*, commentators were implicitly treating the text as Scripture, reflecting the model of esoteric commentary with which they were most familiar. It is no small coincidence that most commentators in this study also wrote esoteric commentaries on Scripture. By treating the *Guide* as an esoteric source that requires some degree of esoteric commentary, commentators were implicitly treating the text in the same manner that Maimonides himself approached Scripture in the *Guide*.

The foregoing statements mean that the tradition of commentary on the *Guide* is unusually self-conscious, especially in its earliest stage. On the one hand, commentators were faced with factors that encourage greater disclosure. Among those we find: the demands of the literary form – a commentary is only useful to the extent that it reveals something about the text; the need to defend Maimonides and legitimize the study of the *Guide*; and the desire to disseminate a particular reading of the text against competing readings, such as Kabbalistic readings. On the other hand, the commentators had to contend with Maimonides' stringent exigency not to explain anything about the text at all.

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<sup>5</sup> See Moses of Salerno, ¶¶61–¶68.

<sup>6</sup> Note, however, that ibn Falaquera can be somewhat explicit about it as well: "For there is great danger, in relation to the majority of the people who are not suitable for [obscure subjects], to discuss them even through hints. All that I have written on this book concerns subjects that can be apprehended through scientific investigation. I will not write on anything else, save in limited measure and as necessary for my purpose." Ibn Falaquera, Prologue, ¶12.

<sup>7</sup> Note that no commentaries on Jewish philosophical treatises were written in pre-Maimonidean Spain. It is only after the earliest commentaries on the *Guide* that we see the appearance, in Christian Europe, of commentaries on texts such as Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* or Bahya ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*.

This tension puts commentators in the place of having to choose not merely what to interpret, but also how to interpret it. Commentaries on the *Guide* rarely interpret the whole of the text. Commentators choose only certain passages for interpretation, which are sometimes at odds with passages that modern readers might consider as more significant. They might choose to interpret passages that do not seem unclear to us. They might pass over in silence over what we consider as puzzling aspects of the *Guide*. This is one sense in which commentaries amount to a rewriting of Maimonides. They do not aim, on the whole, to give a global interpretation of the text. They are, instead, selective commentaries that reflect a commentator's specific purposes, purposes that are informed by the commentator's historical, intellectual and social contexts. Commentaries on the *Guide*, then, do not aim to give a dispassionate or objective sense of the text or its author in the manner we might expect from modern scholarship. Rather, they reflect individualized readings that often tell us more about the commentators themselves than they do about the *Guide*. As such, the commentaries deserve attention as texts in their own right, and not merely as subservient to the task of elucidating the *Guide*.

This study has shown that medieval commentaries on the *Guide* were far from monolithic. Even within the circle of Maimonides' staunchest defenders, there was no widely preconceived idea of how the text should be read, and perhaps more importantly, how it should be explained to others. Each of the early commentators in this study approached the intrinsic tensions of Maimonideanism in his own way. All of the commentators of the early stage subscribe to some broad outlines, such as the notion that the *Guide* contains the best resolution for the conflict between reason and revelation. But the concerns of Moses of Salerno, for instance, are not identical to those of Ibn Falaquera. The *Moreh ha-moreh* rarely discusses biblical exegesis; Moses of Salerno's commentary avoids Arabic philosophy. The two commentaries stand far apart in terms of style or thematic emphasis. They reproduce two different models for commentary, one a line-by-line commentary, the other a commentary built around lemmata (selected chunks of text). A reader of the *Guide* with Moses of Salerno's commentary is likely to gain a picture of Maimonides that is entirely different from the picture that emerges from the *Moreh ha-moreh*.

A final conclusion from this perspective returns to Maimonides' oath or *shevu'ah*. It is significant in indicating the extent to which the phenomenon of commentary on the *Guide* should not be taken for granted. It is not a foregone conclusion that a tradition of commentary would develop around the text. Had the commentators followed Maimonides' injunction strictly, no commentaries would have been written. In this sense, the project of commentaries on the *Guide* point to the independent attitude of Maimonidean scholars vis-à-vis Maimonides himself. Rather than slavish followers, Maimonidean philosophers were ready to jettison even the most strongly-worded commands of the Master, though not without trepidation.

## 8.2 Learning the *Guide* with Commentaries

Medieval and early modern readers of the *Guide* always studied the text with the commentaries, and almost invariably with more than just one commentary. The commentary tradition played an essential pedagogical role in the study of the *Guide*. Until the 19th century, Jewish study of the *Guide* always took place with the help of commentaries. Philosophical curricula included commentaries alongside the *Guide*. Printed editions of the *Guide* all bore commentaries, sometimes on the sides of the page in a layout similar to a page of Talmud (such as the 1553 Sabbioneta edition). Medieval and early modern scholars of Maimonides saw the commentary tradition as an indispensable instrument to learn and to teach the *Guide*.

The *editio princeps* of the Hebrew *Guide* was probably printed in Italy shortly before 1480.<sup>8</sup> The second edition (Venice, 1551) was published with the commentaries of Efodi and Shem Tov, and the third (Sabbioneta, 1553) added Asher Crescas' commentary to those two.<sup>9</sup> No new editions were produced until 1742 (which included the same three commentaries).

The first two printed editions thus affirmed the study of the commentaries together with the *Guide*, which had become the *de facto* manner of studying the text. However, with the exception of Moses of Narbonne's commentary, this also meant that earlier commentaries ceased to circulate and were mostly forgotten. For instance, the curriculum proposed by the philosopher-kabbalist Yoḥanan Alemanno, written in 1470s Italy, recommends study of the *Guide* with the commentaries of Moses of Narbonne, Ibn Falaquera, Efodi and of an unidentified "Joseph," as well as "ibn Kaspi's books."<sup>10</sup> Shem Tov, Efodi, and Abarbanel all draw from Ibn Kaspi as well as Moses of Narbonne. Still, prior to the printed editions of the *Guide*, the commentaries of Ibn Falaquera, Ibn Kaspi and Moses of Narbonne were cited in the course of a dispute between a philosopher and a kabbalist in 15th-century Crete.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, even though he himself relies on Moses of Narbonne's commentary, Mordekhai Jaffe recommends for his students only the printed commentaries found in the 1553 edition.<sup>12</sup> Mentions of unprinted commentaries other than that of Moses of Narbonne are quite rare after the 1550s. What is most remarkable in this context is that Moses of Narbonne's commentary continued to exert such a strong

<sup>8</sup> Steinschneider, *HÜB*, 423.

<sup>9</sup> Venice: ed Moses ben Zekhariah Ha-Kohen of Corfu, printed Alvise Bragadin, 1551. Sabbioneta: Cornelius Adelkind supervised for printer Tobias Foa, 1553. A list of print editions can be found in Bernard Blumenkranz, *Auteurs juifs en France médiévale* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1975), s.v. "Samuel ben Judah ibn Tibbon."

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280–1510: A Survey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 342.

<sup>11</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky, "The God of the Philosophers Versus the God of the Kabbalists: A Controversy in 15th Century Crete (MS. Vatican Heb. 105 and 254)," in *Studies in Jewish Manuscripts*, eds Joseph Dan and Klaus Herrman (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), 139–170.

<sup>12</sup> Kaplan, "Rationalism," 103–104

influence, and became practically canonical among commentaries on the *Guide*, despite circulating exclusively in manuscript until 1791.

What guided the decision of which commentaries to print? This is still an open question. One thread connects all the three early commentaries of Profiat Duran, Shem Tov and Asher Crescas: they largely do not require much philosophical background, if any. They are quite accessible to a large public; Crescas' commentary was in fact written for very young students.<sup>13</sup> It stands to reason, moreover, that after the expulsion from Spain and the heyday of Jewish Aristotelianism and Averroism, there was little appetite for commentaries such as the *Moreh ha-moreh* or *'Ammudei kesef*. However, this observation does not account for the continued popularity of Moses of Narbonne's commentary.

In sum, the printing of the *Guide* served to preserve and canonize some commentaries while displacing many others. This observation is limited to the Western, European study of the *Guide*. We still lack the data to study how the *Guide* was read in Byzantium, in the Near East, or in North Africa, to name but a few places where the text was popular. We also lack the data at present to assess which commentaries, if any, were studied by late-medieval and early modern Karaite scholars.<sup>14</sup>

### 8.3 Questions for Future Research

There is much about the commentaries that we do not know. This study has only touched the surface of a dynamic, multi-faceted phenomenon, primarily in its earliest period. The most immediate barrier to a study of the commentaries is one of access: the vast majority of commentaries are extant only in manuscript sources; few have been published, and fewer still have been translated into any Western language. The English-Hebrew chapters in this study are meant to be a step towards making commentaries on the *Guide* more accessible to scholars and students.

A *desideratum* in this context is a thorough history of the entire tradition. Even where only the early stage is concerned, this study does not cover a number of important commentaries. The most significant are those by Al-Tabrizi and Hillel of Verona, both of whom comment on the Preface to Part II of the *Guide*. A wide-ranging history of commentary on the *Guide* would also take into account the large mass of anonymous commentaries, many of which have survived only in fragmentary condition.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf the prologue to his commentary in *The Guide of the Perplexed in the Translation of Samuel ibn Tibbon with the Commentaries by Efodi, Shem Tov, Crescas, and Isaac Abarbanel* (Warsaw: Y.Goldman, 1872, reprinted 1960), unnumbered page.

<sup>14</sup> On the reception of Maimonides in Post-Maimonidean Karaism, see Daniel Lasker, *From Judah Hadassi to Elijah Bashyatchi: Studies in Late Medieval Karaite Philosophy* (Boston: Brill, 2008).

Important, even basic, questions remain concerning the commentaries in this study. Some such questions are historical. For instance, what was Moses of Salerno's specific role at the royal court? Unlike Jacob Anatoli, his predecessor at the court of Frederick II, Moses of Salerno was not a translator of Arabic works. It has been suggested that his works were the result of disputes with professors from the University of Naples, apparently during the reign of Manfred (1232–1266). Were such disputes connected to a display of royal power? How does the commentary, which is a record of inter-confessional study, fit into this picture?

Other questions concern the development of each commentary. There exist two, possibly three recensions of ibn Kaspi's commentaries, which were originally one long continuous commentary. A study of the recensions would give us a better idea of the development of ibn Kaspi's thought, specifically with respect to his views on esotericism. How did he decide what material should be shared with beginning readers in *'Ammudei kesef*, and what constituted the "secrets" to be reserved for *Maskiyot kesef*?

There are broader issues that merit further study. The commentaries on the *Guide* are not merely literary productions. They reflect a set of cultural practices organized around reading, disseminating, studying, and writing about the *Guide*. It is in this sense that I have referred to the commentaries as a phenomenon. For instance, who read commentaries on the *Guide*? Was such reading individual, with a teacher, in a group? What institutions, if any, provide the context for the production of the commentaries? Did the commentaries occupy a marginal place in the intellectual life of Jewish communities, or were they at the center? How do the commentaries contribute to the eventual semi-canonization of the *Guide*?<sup>15</sup>

This study is a contribution towards what I hope will become a stronger trend. The literature on Maimonides is very vast; much less has been written on the Maimonidean tradition, and less still on commentaries on the *Guide*. The sustained focus on Maimonides has displaced the study of his medieval readers and scholars, the intellectual ancestors of contemporary scholars of the *Guide*. In an incisive article, Colette Sirat once raised the question of whether we should stop teaching Maimonides.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps what is necessary is not to stop teaching Maimonides, but to turn to the Maimonidean legacy, within which are commentaries on the *Guide*.

No one disputes the place of Maimonides in the history of Jewish philosophy. However, a sort of absence characterizes the Maimonidean legacy in modernity, as if centuries of interpretation of the *Guide* never took place. With our access to the Judaeo-Arabic text, we often consider our readings of the *Guide* as somehow more scientific or rigorous than those of his European medieval readers, dependent upon the

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<sup>15</sup> On the notion of canonization through commentary, see Hans Gumbrecht, "Fill Up Your Margins! On Commentary and *Copia*," in *Commentaries = Kommentare*, ed Glenn Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 443–453.

<sup>16</sup> "Should We Stop Teaching Maimonides?" in *Paradigms in Jewish Philosophy*, ed Raphael Jospe (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 136–146.

ibn Tibbon translation. I would maintain, instead, that the history of interpretation of a text cannot be dissociated from the text itself without doing violence to the latter. To study the *Guide* without its commentaries is to study an artificial text, one that only existed in that form for a brief span of time. Us moderns do not have a direct, unmediated connection to the *Guide*. In great and subtle ways, our approaches to the *Guide* have long histories. To believe otherwise is to fall prey to our unconscious biases.

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