

THE GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED

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With an Introductory Essay by

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*Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation
that keepeth faithfulness may enter in¹*

CHAPTER 1

Image [*selem*] and likeness [*demuth*]. People have thought that in the Hebrew language *image* denotes the shape and configuration of a thing. This supposition led them to the pure doctrine of the corporeality of God, on account of His saying: *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*² For they thought that God has a man's form, I mean his shape and configuration. The pure doctrine of the corporeality of God was a necessary consequence to be accepted by them. They accordingly believed in it and deemed that if they abandoned this belief, they would give the lie to the biblical text; that they would even make the deity to be nothing at all unless they thought that God was a body provided with a face and a hand, like them in shape and configuration. However, He is, in their view, bigger and more resplendent than they themselves, and the matter of which He is composed is not flesh and blood. As they see it, this is as far as one can go in establishing the separateness of God from other things. Now with respect to that which ought to be said in order to refute the doctrine of the corporeality of God and to establish His real unity—which can have no true reality unless one disproves His corporeality—you shall know the demonstration of all of this from this Treatise. However, here, in this chapter, only an indication is given with a view to elucidating the meaning of *image* and *likeness*.

Now I say that in the Hebrew language the proper term designating the form that is well known among the multitude, namely, that form which is the shape and configuration of a thing, is *to'ar*. Thus Scripture says: *beautiful in form* [*to'ar*] | *and beautiful in appearance*;³ *What form* [*to'aro*] *is he of?*⁴ *As the form* [*to'ar*] *of the children of a king.*⁵ This term is

1. Isa. 26:2. 2. Gen. 1:26. 3. Gen. 39:6. 4. I Sam. 28:14. 5. Judg. 8:18.

also applied to an artificial form; thus: *He marketh its form* [*yeta'arehu*] *with a line, and he marketh its form* [*yeta'arehu*] *with a compass*.⁶ Those terms⁷ are never applied to the deity, may He be exalted; far and remote may this thought be from us. The term *image*, on the other hand, is applied to the natural form, I mean to the notion in virtue of which a thing is constituted as a substance and becomes what it is. It is the true reality of the thing in so far as the latter is that particular being. In man that notion is that from which human apprehension derives. It is on account of this intellectual apprehension that it is said of man: *In the image of God created He him*.⁸ For this reason also, it is said: *Thou contemnest their image*.⁹ For *contempt* has for its object the soul, which is the specific form, not the shape and configuration of the parts of the body. I assert also that the reason why idols are called *images* lies in the fact that what was sought in them was the notion that was deemed to subsist in them, and not their shape and configuration. I assert similarly with regard to the scriptural expression: *images of your emerods*.¹⁰ For what was intended by them was the notion of warding off the harm caused by the *emerods*, and not the shape of the *emerods*. If, however, there should be no doubt concerning the expressions *the images of your emerods* and *images* being used in order to denote shape and configuration, it would follow that *image* is an equivocal or amphibolous term applied to the specific form and also to the artificial form and to what is analogous to the two in the shapes and configurations of the natural bodies. That which was meant in the scriptural dictum, *let us make man in our image*,¹¹ was the specific form, which is intellectual apprehension, not the shape and configuration. We have explained to you the difference between *image* and *form*, and have explained the meaning of *image*.

As for the term *likeness* [*demuth*], it is a noun derived from the verb *damoh* [*to be like*], and it too signifies likeness in respect of a notion. For the scriptural dictum, *I am like a pelican in the wilderness*,¹² does not signify that its author | resembled the pelican with regard to its wings and feathers, but that his sadness was like that of the bird. In the same way in the verse, *Nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto it in beauty*,¹³ the likeness is with respect to the notion of beauty. Similarly the verses, *Their venom is in the likeness of the venom of a serpent*¹⁴ and *His likeness is that of a lion that*

6. Isa. 44:13.

7. The plural conforms to the Arabic text. However, as far as one can see, the sentence has in view only one term, namely, *to'ar*.

8. Gen. 1:27.

9. Ps. 73:20.

10. I Sam. 6:5.

11. Gen. 1:26.

12. Ps. 102:7.

13. Ezek. 31:8.

14. Ps. 58:5.

is eager to tear in pieces,¹⁵ refer both of them to a likeness in respect of a notion and not with respect to a shape and a configuration. In the same way it is said, *the likeness of the throne, the likeness of a throne*;¹⁶ the likeness referred to being in respect of elevation and sublimity, not in respect of a throne's square shape, its solidity, and the length of its legs, as wretched people think. A similar explanation should also be applied to the expression: *the likeness of the living creatures*.¹⁷ Now man possesses as his proprium something in him that is very strange as it is not found in anything else that exists under the sphere of the moon, namely, intellectual apprehension. In the exercise of this, no sense, no part of the body, none of the extremities are used; and therefore this apprehension was likened unto the apprehension of the deity, which does not require an instrument, although in reality it is not like the latter apprehension, but only appears so to the first stirrings of opinion. It was because of this something, I mean because of the divine intellect conjoined with man, that it is said of the latter that he is *in the image of God and in His likeness*, not that God, may He be exalted, is a body and possesses a shape.

CHAPTER 2

Years ago a learned man propounded as a challenge to me a curious objection. It behooves us now to consider this objection and our reply invalidating it. However, before mentioning this objection and its invalidation, I shall make the following statement. Every Hebrew knew that the term *Elohim* is equivocal, designating the deity, the angels, and the rulers governing the cities. *Onqelos the Proselyte*, peace be on him, has made it clear, and his clarification is correct, that in the dictum of Scripture, *And ye shall be as Elohim, knowing good and evil*,¹ the last sense is intended. For he has translated: *And ye shall be as rulers*.

After thus having set forth the equivocality of this term, we shall begin to expound the objection. This is what the objector said: It is manifest from the clear sense of the biblical text that the primary purpose with regard to man was that he should be, as the other animals are, devoid of intellect, of thought, and of the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. However, when he disobeyed, his disobedience procured him as its necessary

15. Ps. 17:12. 16. Ezek. 1:26. 17. Ezek. 1:13.

1. Gen. 3:5.

consequence the great perfection peculiar to man, namely, his being endowed with the capacity that exists in us to make this distinction. Now this capacity is the noblest of the characteristics² existing in us; it is in virtue of it that we are constituted as substances. Now it is a thing to be wondered at that man's punishment for his disobedience should consist in his being granted a perfection that he did not possess before, namely, the intellect. This is like the story told by somebody that a certain man from among the people disobeyed and committed great crimes, and in consequence was made to undergo a metamorphosis,³ becoming a star in heaven. This was the intent and the meaning of the objection, though it was not textually as we have put it.

Hear now the intent of our reply. We said: O you who engage in theoretical speculation using the first notions that may occur to you and come to your mind and who consider withal that you understand a book that is the guide of the first and the last men while glancing through it as you would glance through a historical work or a piece of poetry — when, in some of your hours of leisure, you leave off drinking and copulating: collect yourself and reflect, for things are not as you thought following the first notion that occurred to you, but rather as is made clear through reflection upon the following speech.⁴ For the intellect that God made overflow unto man and that is the latter's ultimate perfection, was that which *Adam* had been provided with before he disobeyed. It was because of this that it was said of him that he was created *in the image of God and in His likeness*. It was likewise on account of it that he was addressed by God and given commandments, as it says: *And the Lord | God commanded, and so on.*⁵ For commandments are not given to beasts and beings devoid of intellect. Through the intellect one distinguishes between truth and falsehood, and that was found in [*Adam*] in its perfection and integrity. Fine and bad,⁶ on the other hand, belong to the things generally accepted as known,⁷ not to those cognized by the intellect. For one does not say: it is fine that heaven

2. *ma'ānī*. The term has many meanings and often, as in this passage, cannot be satisfactorily translated.

3. The Arabic verb sometimes designates a particular kind of transmigration.

4. The word may also refer to the scriptural story, but the translation given in the text is somewhat more probable.

5. Gen. 2:16.

6. These two terms, rather than good and evil, have been chosen because the Arabic text does not use here the two most common terms (*al-khayr wa'l-sharr* employed earlier in this chapter) denoting the two notions in question, but rather has *al-ḥasan* and *al-qabīḥ*.

7. The expression, "the words (the things) generally accepted as known," render the Arabic term *al-mashhūrāt*, which is used as a translation of the Greek *endoxa*.

is spherical, and it is bad that the earth is flat; rather one says true and false with regard to these assertions. Similarly one expresses in our language the notions of truth and falsehood by means of the terms *emeth* and *sheqer*, and those of fine and bad by means of the terms *tov* and *ra*^c.⁸ Now man in virtue of his intellect knows *truth* from *falsehood*; and this holds good for all intelligible things. Accordingly when man was in his most perfect and excellent state, in accordance with his inborn disposition and possessed of his intellectual cognitions—because of which it is said of him: *Thou hast made him but little lower than Elohim*⁹—he had no faculty that was engaged in any way in the consideration of generally accepted things, and he did not apprehend them. So among these generally accepted things even that which is most manifestly bad, namely, uncovering the genitals, was not bad according to him, and he did not apprehend that it was bad. However, when he disobeyed and inclined toward his desires of the imagination and the pleasures of his corporeal senses—inasmuch as it is said: *that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes*¹⁰—he was punished by being deprived of that intellectual apprehension. He therefore disobeyed the commandment that was imposed upon him on account of his intellect and, becoming endowed with the faculty of apprehending generally accepted things, he became absorbed in judging things to be bad or fine. Then he knew how great his loss was, what he had been deprived of, and upon what a state he had entered. Hence it is said: *And ye shall be like Elohim knowing good and evil*;¹¹ and not: *knowing the false and the true, or apprehending the false and the true*. With regard to what is of necessity, there is no good and evil at all, but only the false and the true. Reflect on the dictum: *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked*.¹² It is not said: *And the eyes of them both were opened, | and they saw*. For what was seen previously was exactly that which was seen afterwards. There had been no membrane over the eye that was now removed, but rather he entered upon another state in which he considered as bad things that he had not seen in that light before. Know moreover that this expression, I mean, *to open*,¹³ refers only to uncovering mental vision and in no respect is applied to the circumstance that the sense of sight has been newly acquired. Thus: *And God opened her eyes*;¹⁴ *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened*;¹⁵ *Opening the ears, he heareth not*¹⁶—a verse that is analogous to its dictum, *That have eyes to see and see not*.¹⁷ Now concerning

8. In Hebrew. 9. Ps. 8:6. 10. Gen. 3:6. 11. Gen. 3:5. 12. Gen. 3:7.
13. Used in the verse. 14. Gen. 21:19. 15. Isa. 35:5. 16. Isa. 42:20.
17. Ezek. 12:2.

its dictum with regard to *Adam* — *He changes his face and Thou sendest him forth*¹⁸ — the interpretation and explanation of the verse are as follows: when the direction toward which man tended¹⁹ changed, he was driven forth. For *panim*²⁰ is a term deriving from the verb *panoh* [*to turn*], since man turns his face toward the thing he wishes to take as his objective. The verse states accordingly that when man changed the direction toward which he tended and took as his objective the very thing a previous commandment had bidden him not to aim at, he was driven out of the *Garden of Eden*. This was the punishment corresponding to his disobedience; it was *measure for measure*. He had been given license to eat good things and to enjoy ease and tranquillity. When, however, as we have said, he became greedy, followed his pleasures and his imaginings, and ate what he had been forbidden to eat, he was deprived of everything and had to eat the meanest kinds of food, which he had not used as aliment before — and this only after toil and labor. As it says: *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and so on; In the sweat of thy brow, and so on.*²¹ And it explains and says: *And the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground.*²² And God reduced him, with respect to his food and most of his circumstances, to the level of the beast. It says accordingly: *And thou shalt eat the grass of the field.*²³ And it also says in explanation of this story: *Adam,*²⁴ *unable to dwell in dignity, is like the beasts that speak not.*²⁵

Praise be to the Master of the will whose aims and wisdom cannot be apprehended! |

CHAPTER 3

It is thought that in the Hebrew language the meanings of the words *figure* [*temunah*] and *shape* [*tabnith*] are identical. This is not the case. For *tabnith* is a term deriving from the verb *banoh* [*to build*], and it signifies the build and aspect of a thing; I mean to say its shape, for instance, its being a square, a circle, a triangle, or some other shape. Accordingly it

18. Job 14:20.

19. The Arabic word derives from a root from which the usual word for "face" is likewise derived.

20. The Hebrew word for "face." 21. Gen. 3:18-19. 22. Gen. 3:23. 23. Gen. 3:18.

24. Or: man. 25. Ps. 49:13.

When refuting the doctrine of divine attributes, we have already explained that every attribute by which God is described in the books of the prophets is an attribute of action.⁹ Accordingly He is described as *hasid* [one possessing loving-kindness]¹⁰ because He has brought the all into being; as *ṣaddiq* [righteous]¹¹ because of His mercy toward the weak—I refer to the governance of the living being by means of its forces; and as *Judge*¹² because of the occurrence in the world of relative good things and of relative great calamities, necessitated by judgment that is consequent upon wisdom.¹³ The *Torah* uses all three terms: *Shall the Judge of all the earth*;¹⁴ *Ṣaddiq [righteous] and upright is He*;¹⁵ *And abundant in ḥesed [loving-kindness]*.¹⁶ In interpreting the meaning of these terms, it was our purpose to prepare the way for the chapter that we shall bring after this one.

CHAPTER 54

The term *wisdom* [*hokhmah*] is applied in Hebrew in four senses. | It is applied to the apprehension of true realities, which have for their end the apprehension of Him, may He be exalted. It says: *But wisdom, where shall it be found? and so on.*¹ It says: *If thou seek her as silver, and so on.*² This usage is frequent. The term is applied to acquiring arts, whatever the art might be: *And every wise-hearted among you*;³ *And all the women that were wise-hearted.*⁴ It is applied to acquiring moral virtues: *And teach his elders wisdom*;⁵ *Is wisdom with aged men?*⁶—for the thing that is acquired through mere old age is a disposition to achieve moral virtues. It is applied to the aptitude for stratagems and ruses: *Come, let us deal wisely with them.*⁷ According to this meaning it says: *And fetched thence a wise woman*,⁸ meaning thereby that she had an aptitude for stratagems and ruses. In this sense it is said: *They are wise to do evil.*⁹ It is possible that the

9. Cf. I 53 and 54.

10. A word deriving from the same verbal root as *ḥesed*.

11. A word deriving from the same verbal root as *ṣedaqah*.

12. *Shophet*, a word deriving from the same verbal root as *mishpat*.

13. The Arabic word for "judgment" (*ḥukm*) derives from the same verbal root as the Arabic word for "wisdom" (*ḥikma*).

14. Gen. 18:25. 15. Deut. 32:4. 16. Exod. 34:6.

1. Job 28:12.

2. Prov. 2:4.

3. Exod. 35:10.

4. Exod. 35:25.

5. Ps. 105:22.

6. Job 12:12.

7. Exod. 1:10.

8. II Sam. 14:2.

9. Jer. 4:22.

BK III, ch. 54
(last chap. in book)

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meaning of *wisdom* in Hebrew indicates aptitude for stratagems and the application of thought in such a way that the stratagems and ruses may be used in achieving either rational or moral virtues, or in achieving skill in a practical art, or in working evil and wickedness. It has accordingly become plain that the term *wise* can be applied to one possessing the rational virtues, to one possessing the moral virtues, to everyone skilled in a practical art, and to one possessing ruses in working evil and wickedness. According to this explanation, one who knows the whole of the Law in its true reality is called *wise* in two respects: in respect of the rational virtues comprised in the Law and in respect of the moral virtues included in it. But since the rational matter in the Law is received through tradition and is not demonstrated by the methods of speculation, the knowledge of the Law came to be set up in the books of the prophets and the sayings of the *Sages* as one separate species and wisdom,¹⁰ in an unrestricted sense, as another species. It is through this wisdom, in an unrestricted sense, that | the rational matter that we receive from the Law through tradition, is | demonstrated. All the texts that you find in the [scriptural] books that extol wisdom and speak of its wonder¹¹ and of the rarity of those who acquire it — *Not many are wise*;¹² *But wisdom, where shall it be found? and so on*;¹³ and many other texts of this kind — treat of that wisdom which teaches us to demonstrate the opinions of the *Torah*. This is also frequent in the sayings of the *Sages*, *may their memory be blessed*; I mean that they set up the knowledge of the *Torah* as one separate species and wisdom as another species. They, *may their memory be blessed*, say of *Moses our Master*: *He was father in wisdom, father in the Torah, father among the prophets*.¹⁴ And with reference to its dictum concerning *Solomon*, *And he was wiser than all men*,¹⁵ they say: *Not [wiser] than Moses*;¹⁶ for the dictum, *than all men*, means: than his contemporaries. Therefore you will find that it mentions *Heman and Khalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol*,¹⁷ who were celebrated then as wise men. The *Sages, may their memory be blessed*, mention likewise that man is required first to obtain knowledge of the *Torah*, then to obtain wisdom, then to know what is incumbent upon him with regard to the legal science of the Law — I mean the drawing of inferences concerning what one ought to do. And this should be the order observed: The opinions in question should first be known as

10. It is not quite clear whether Maimonides uses here the Hebrew word *hokhmah* or the Arabic word *hikma*, spelled in the same way. The Arabic word also connotes "philosophy." The Hebrew word may also have this connotation, and if Maimonides used it here, he undoubtedly had this connotation in mind.

11. Or: its strangeness. 12. Job 32:9. 13. Job 28:12. 14. B.T., Megillah, 13a.

15. I Kings 5:11. 16. B.T., Rosh Hashanah, 21b. 17. I Kings 5:11.

being received through tradition; then they should be demonstrated; then the actions through which one's way of life may be ennobled, should be precisely defined. This is what they, *may their memory be blessed*, literally say regarding man's being required to give an account with respect to these three matters in this order. They say: *When man comes to judgment, he is first asked: Have you fixed certain seasons for the study of the Torah? Have you ratiocinated concerning wisdom? Have you inferred one thing from another?*¹⁸ It has thus become clear to you that, according to them, the science of the *Torah* is one species and wisdom is a different species, being the verification of the opinions of the *Torah* through correct speculation. After we have made all these preliminary remarks, hear what we shall say:

The ancient | and the modern philosophers have made it clear that the perfections to be found in man consist of four species. The first and the most defective, but with a view to which the people of the earth spend their lives,¹⁹ is the perfection of possessions—that is, of what belongs to the individual in the manner of money, garments, tools, slaves, land, and other things of this kind. A man's being a great king also belongs to this species of perfection. Between this perfection and the individual himself there is no union whatever; there is only a certain relation, and most of the pleasure taken in the relation is purely imaginary. I refer to one's saying: This is my house; this is my slave; this money is mine; these are my soldiers. For if he considers his own individual self, he will find that all this is outside his self and that each of these possessions subsists as it is by itself. Therefore when the relation referred to has been abolished, there is no difference between an individual who has been a great king and the most contemptible of men, though nothing may have changed in any of the things that were attributed to him. The philosophers have explained that the endeavor and the efforts directed by man toward this kind of perfection are nothing but an effort with a view to something purely imaginary, to a thing that has no permanence. And even if these possessions should remain with him permanently during the whole of his life, he would by no means thereby achieve perfection in his self.

The second species has a greater connection than the first with the individual's self, being the perfection of the bodily constitution and shape—I refer to that individual's temperament being most harmonious, his limbs well proportioned and strong as they ought to be. Neither should this species of perfection be taken as an end, for it is a corporeal perfection and does not belong to man qua man, but qua animal; for man has this in common with

18. B.T., Shabbath, 31a.

19. Or: mutually destroy each other.

the lowest animals. Moreover even if the strength of a human individual reached its greatest | maximum,²⁰ it would not attain the strength of a strong mule, and still less the strength of a lion or an elephant. The end of this perfection consists, as we have mentioned, in man's transporting a heavy burden or breaking a thick bone and in other things of this kind, from which no great utility for the body may be derived. Utility for the soul is absent from this species of perfection.

The third species is a perfection that to a greater extent than the second species subsists in the individual's self. This is the perfection of the moral virtues. It consists in the individual's moral habits having attained their ultimate excellence.²¹ Most of the *commandments* serve no other end than the attainment of this species of perfection. But this species of perfection is likewise a preparation for something else and not an end in itself. For all moral habits are concerned with what occurs between a human individual and someone else. This perfection regarding moral habits is, as it were, only the disposition to be useful to people; consequently it is an instrument for someone else. For if you suppose a human individual is alone, acting on no one, you will find that all his moral virtues are in vain and without employment and unneeded, and that they do not perfect the individual in anything; for he only needs them and they again become useful to him in regard to someone else.

The fourth species is the true human perfection; it consists in the acquisition of the rational virtues — I refer to the conception of intelligibles, which teach true opinions concerning the divine things. This is in true reality the ultimate end; this is what gives the individual true perfection, a perfection belonging to him alone; and it gives him permanent perdurance; through it man is man. If you consider each of the three perfections mentioned before, you will find that they pertain to others than you, not to you, even though, according to the generally accepted opinion, they inevitably | pertain both to you and to others. This ultimate perfection, however, pertains to you alone, no one else being associated in it with you in any way: *They shall be only thine own, and so on.*²² Therefore you ought to desire to achieve this thing, which will remain permanently with you, and not weary and trouble yourself for the sake of others, O you who neglect your own soul so that its whiteness has turned into blackness through the

20. Literally: finality and end.

21. The Arabic word *fadila*, translated "excellence," is the singular of the word translated in the preceding sentence as "virtues."

22. Prov. 5:17.

corporeal faculties having gained dominion over it—as is said in the beginning of the poetical parables that have been coined for these notions; it says: *My mother's sons were incensed against me; they made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*²³ It says on this very same subject: *Lest thou give thy splendor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.*²⁴

The prophets too have explained to us and interpreted to us the self-same notions—just as the philosophers have interpreted them—clearly stating to us that neither the perfection of possession nor the perfection of health nor the perfection of moral habits is a perfection of which one should be proud or that one should desire; the perfection of which one should be proud and that one should desire is knowledge of Him, may He be exalted, which is the true science. *Jeremiah* says concerning these four perfections: *Thus saith the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.*²⁵ Consider how he mentioned them according to the order given them in the opinion of the multitude. For the greatest perfection in their opinion is that of *the rich man in his riches*, below him *the mighty man in his might*, and below him *the wise man in his wisdom*. [By the expression, “the wise man in his wisdom,”] he means him who possesses the moral virtues; for such an individual is also held in high esteem by the multitude, to whom the discourse in question is addressed. Therefore these perfections are arranged in this order. The *Sages, may their memory be blessed*, apprehended from this *verse* the | very notions we have mentioned and have explicitly stated that which I have explained to you in this chapter: namely, that the term *wisdom* [*hokhmah*], used in an unrestricted sense and regarded as the end, means in every place the apprehension of Him, may He be exalted; that the possession of the treasures acquired, and competed for, by man and thought to be perfection are not a perfection; and that similarly all the actions prescribed by the Law—I refer to the various species of worship and also the moral habits that are useful to all people in their mutual dealings—that all this is not to be compared with this ultimate end and does not equal it, being but preparations made for the sake of this end. Hear verbatim a text of theirs dealing with all these notions; it is a text in *Bereshith Rabbah*. It is said there: *One scriptural dictum says: And all things desirable are not to be compared unto her.*²⁶ *Another scriptural dictum says: And all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.*²⁷ The

23. Song of Songs 1:6.

24. Prov. 5:9.

25. Jer. 9:22–23.

26. Prov. 8:11.

27. Prov. 3:15.

*expression, things desirable, refers to commandments and good actions; while, things thou canst desire, refers to precious stone and pearls. Neither things desirable nor things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.*²⁸ Consider how concise is this saying, how perfect is he who said it, and how he left out nothing of all that we have mentioned and that we have interpreted and led up to at length.

As we have mentioned this *verse* and the wondrous notions contained in it, and as we have mentioned the saying of the *Sages*, *may their memory be blessed*, about it, we will complete the exposition of what it includes. For when explaining in this *verse* the noblest ends, he does not limit them only to the apprehension of Him, may He be exalted. For if this were his purpose, he would have said: *But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me*, and have stopped there; or he would have said: *that he understandeth and knoweth Me that I am One*; or he would have said: *that I have no figure*, or *that | there is none like Me*, or something similar. But he says that one should glory in the apprehension of Myself and in the knowledge of My attributes, by which he means His actions, as we have made clear²⁹ with reference to its dictum: *Show me now Thy ways, and so on.*³⁰ In this *verse*³¹ he makes it clear to us that those actions that ought to be known and imitated are *loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness*. He adds another corroborative notion through saying, *in the earth*³² — this being a pivot of the Law. For matters are not as the overbold opine who think that His providence, may He be exalted, terminates at the sphere of the moon and that the earth and that which is in it are neglected: *The Lord hath forsaken the earth.*³³ Rather is it as has been made clear to us by the Master of those who know: *That the earth is the Lord's.*³⁴ He means to say that His providence also extends over the earth in the way that corresponds to what the latter is, just as His providence extends over the heavens³⁵ in the way that corresponds to what they are. This is what he says: *That I am the Lord who exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth.*³⁶ Then he completes the notion by saying: *For in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*³⁷ He means that it is My purpose that there should come from you *loving-kindness, righteousness, and judgment in the earth* in the way we have explained³⁸ with regard to the *thirteen attributes*: namely, that the purpose should be assimilation to them and that this should be our way of life. Thus the end that he sets forth in this *verse* may be stated as follows:

28. Genesis Rabbah, XXXV in *fine*.

29. Cf. I 54.

30. Exod. 33:13.

31. Jer. 9:23 is referred to.

32. Jer. 9:23.

33. Ezek. 9:9.

34. Exod. 9:29.

35. In the singular in Arabic.

36. Jer. 9:23.

37. Jer. 9:23.

38. Cf. I 54.

It is clear that the perfection of man that may truly be gloried in is the one acquired by him who has achieved, in a measure corresponding to his capacity, apprehension of Him, may He be exalted, and who knows His providence extending over His creatures as manifested in the act of bringing them into being and in their governance as it is. The way of life of such an individual, after he has achieved this apprehension, will always have in view *loving-kindness, righteousness, and judgment*, through assimilation to His actions, may He be exalted, just as we have explained several times in this Treatise. |

This is the extent of what I thought fit that we should set down in this Treatise; it is a part of what I consider very useful to those like you. I hope for you that through sufficient reflection you will grasp all the intentions I have included therein, with the help of God, may He be exalted; and that He will grant us *and all [the people of] Israel, being fellows*, that which He has promised us: *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*³⁹ *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*⁴⁰

AMEN

*God is very near to everyone who calls,
If he calls truly and has no distractions;
He is found by every seeker who searches for Him,
If he marches toward Him and goes not astray.*

*

The Third Part

HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH THE HELP OF GOD
AND WITH ITS COMPLETION THERE HAS BEEN COMPLETED
THE GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED

39. Isa. 35:5. 40. Isa. 9:1.