



Jewish Mediaeval Philosophy and Spinoza

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this unnatural forcing soon, however, makes itself apparent when temptations and difficulties have to be faced, and such men will not unfrequently be found to have failed in the end for want of those very qualities which their zeal for perfection had taught them to despise.

These then are the two opposite dangers between which we have to steer our course. The ultimate effect of each is one and the same, and moral progress is almost equally retarded by them. Every fresh advance of knowledge is teaching us better how to avoid them. We learn gradually, and often as the result of bitter experience, how life can be made to yield the greatest increase of moral power, and how the opportunities of action which it affords can be turned to the best account.

We come to see that there is a value and use as means to perfection in many things which at first sight seem utterly purposeless, and we learn more and more, as time goes on, the changing conditions of time and place on which this value depends. We see that if rightly used there is a power for good in all created things, and that every motive and impulse of man's nature can be made to assist in the work of his final glorification, and in bringing about that state of things when love of right alone shall rule him.

To what purpose our moral energies are destined to be put if they shall ever have completed their present task and vanquished and subdued all inferior motives, we cannot even pretend to guess; but, if we believe that there is a real positive purpose underlying the work of the Deity in the universe, and that he is not merely engaged in removing difficulties of his own creation, it is only natural to hope that when we have brought our powers into harmony with his will we shall be allowed to employ them in the furtherance of his work.

THOMAS THORNELY.

V.—JEWISH MEDIÆVAL PHILOSOPHY AND SPINOZA.

THE ancient Jews cannot be said to have been a philosophic people. Their function in the world's history was religious rather than speculative, while philosophy was a later growth among them, and did not spring up till after the prophetic intuition had become dim, and the race had felt the influence of foreign surroundings. Despite their national exclusiveness, the Jews have always shown a wonderful power of assimilating the

conceptions of others.¹ They brought new ideas away with them from Egypt and from Babylon; and when Greek conquest along with Greek culture broke the outer wall of Judaism, and Jew met Greek in the market-place of Alexandria, Hebrew religion received a fresh impress from the spirit and methods of Athenian thought.

But the time was not yet ripe for a Judæo-Greek philosophy, and Philo's system was soon forgotten by his countrymen. The Jews had to be driven from their fatherland, and their temple had to be destroyed, before they could look on doctrine as taking the place of the old external bonds of national unity.² Moslem religion and power had to be founded before they both saw the necessity and had the opportunity of wedding their doctrine to speculation. The necessity was to defend their own against a rival system; the opportunity lay in the scientific movement introduced by the Caliph Almamun (reigned at Bagdad, 813-33), and the translations from Aristotle and Neo-platonic writers executed under his direction.³ The Jews participated in this movement, and Aristotelianism neglected in the land of its birth was perpetuated by them and their Moslem rulers. Drawing from the same sources, and busied very much with the same questions, these two Semitic races carried on the work of philosophy together, till the sudden extinction of Arabic culture⁴ left the Jews to follow out the results alone, and to hand them on to the Christian Scholastics.

Upon the Jewish thinkers three chief influences were at work: that of Aristotelianism, which soon became the predominant philosophy; that of Neo-platonism, which almost entirely moulded some systems, and left traces perhaps upon all; and that of the Hebrew Scriptures and the mass of traditional interpretation by which they were overlaid. According as one or other of these influences gained the ascendancy, Jewish philosophers⁵ may be divided into schools.

¹ Cf. Eisler, *Vorlesungen über die jüdischen Philosophen des Mittelalters*, II. 2.

² Cf. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, V. 155.

³ For an account of these see Munk, *Mélanges de phil. juive et arabe*, pp. 313 ff.

⁴ Cf. Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, 3me éd., p. iii.

⁵ Among them may be mentioned: Saadia (called in 928 to be Gaon or 'bearer of dignity' in the Jewish College at Sura in Babylonia), Ibn Bachja of Saragossa (11th century), notable for his defence of the divine unity, Ibn Daud (1110-80), in whom Peripateticism had already become supreme, Moses ben Maimun or Maimonides (born at Cordova, 1135, died in Egypt, 1204), called by Graetz the "intellectual king of Judaism," and Levi ben Gerson or Gersonides (1288-1340). The Neo-platonic influence is shown

It would of course be impossible to give a full account here of the problems they dealt with. But, as an attempt to reconcile the philosophic with the religious standpoint, much of the most important speculation of all the schools circled round the two questions: (1) What is the nature of God? or, how are we to harmonise the notional unity of Greek philosophy with the personal unity of the God of the Jews? (2) What is God's relation to the world—Is He its transcendent cause, or immanent essence, or the source from which it emanates? and how can the doctrines of the philosophers on these points be made to agree with the Biblical history of the Creation? To these two questions the different schools of thought gave varying answers.

On both of them the progress of thought manifested by the Aristotelian and Neo-platonic schools tended to a fuller appreciation of Greek speculation, and an emptier conception of Jewish religion. And though a modern Jew thinks that the Aristotelian philosophy acted "like a refreshing morning wind, cooling the close and sultry atmosphere of faith,"¹ the boasted reconciliation of the two forces was only brought about by the reduction of one of them to the other, and it need hardly be said that it was not philosophy that gave way.

(1) The most striking example of this reduction of Judaism to philosophy is shown in the treatment of the divine attributes. Not only the Peripatetic school but those also who may be classed as Neo-platonists agreed in denying that the attributes ascribed to God even by the sacred writers really belonged to Him. This denial of the attributes, which is of Alexandrian origin and has been traced to the Book of Wisdom,² found its fullest development in the doctrine of "negative attributes" borrowed by Maimonides from Ibn Sina.³ Certain qualities

most plainly by Ibn Gebirol of Malaga (born 1021), the Avicbron of the Scholastics, by Ibn Zaddik of Cordova (1080-1148), and by Abraham Ibn Esra (1088-1167), the Biblical commentator, as well as by the authors of the *Sohar* and other Kabbalistic works. The ruling philosophies were criticised from an orthodox point of view by Jehuda Halevi of Old Castile (born 1086), and by Don Chasdai Creskas of Saragossa (1340-1410), with whom and his pupil, Joseph Albo (1380-1440), Jewish mediæval philosophy may almost be said to close.

¹ Sachs, *Religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*, p. 188.

² Munk, *Mélanges*, p. 465.

³ Cf. Weil, *Phil. religieuse de Lévi-ben-Gerson*, p. 199. Maimonides's doctrine of the attributes was opposed by Gersonides (*Ibid.*, pp. 121 ff., 202 ff.). In other respects, however, the latter adopted the theories of the Arabian Aristotelians to a greater extent than any previous Jewish thinker. Cf. the points mentioned by Munk, *Mél.*, pp. 318-9, with Weil, *Phil. rel.*, pp. 230 ff., 114, and 35 ff. Gersonides maintained the eternity of matter, and limited the knowledge of God to genera, but rejected the Averroistic doctrine of the active intellect.

called the essential attributes had held a doubtful place in earlier systems. "God," says Saadia, "has assured us by His prophets that He is one, living, powerful, and wise,"¹ though these qualities are not distinguishable from His essence which is only known to us in its unity.² But Maimonides argues that, by asserting qualities essential to God's nature and existence, we deny His unity, while, by asserting qualities not necessary to His existence, we deny His immutability.³ God, he contends, is indefinable because not composed of genus and difference, and "there can be no true relations between God and His creatures, since the characteristic of two notions in relation is complete reciprocity."⁴ All predicates applied to the Deity are thus but so many ways of expressing what we do *not* know of Him; and "the true way of denoting God is by the negative attributes which can communicate nothing as to the nature of their object."⁵ We cannot affirm a perfection, we can only deny an imperfection. All we can know of God is His necessary existence. "This," says Kaufmann,⁶ "is the beginning and end of Maimonides's theology." His altar is erected ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ.

The personal God of the Jews is thus reduced to the unreal abstraction of indeterminate and indeterminable being, and the νοῦς ποιητικός or higher intellect of man, which, according to Maimonides, has for its object the knowledge of God,⁷ is yet unable to apply to Him any of those categories which alone render cognition possible. This idea of God—Neo-platonic in nature and in its historical origin—is, however, not without relation to the Jewish creed; and the divine unity taught by the latter had only to be accentuated in an abstract one-sided way to result in a denial of the divine attributes.

The tendency of the Christian Schoolmen was to follow an opposite but scarcely more satisfactory course. Developing in an uncritical manner the fuller conception of God furnished by their religion, they avoided the empty abstraction of qualityless Being only to land themselves among the contradictions of a God defined as the most real being and substratum of all positive attributes. Spinoza's view of God is related both to the Chris-

¹ Eisler, *Vorl.* I. 7; Kaufmann, *Gesch. d. Attributenlehre in der jüd. Religionsphil. des Mittelalters*, 1877, p. 15.

² Kaufmann, *Gesch. d. Attr.*, p. 29.

³ Cf. Franck, *Dict. des sciences phil.*, 2me éd., p. 1032a.

⁴ *Moreh Nebuchim*, I. 52., Buxtorf's Latin transl., p. 81; cf. Kaufmann, *Gesch. d. Attr.*, p. 388; Eisler, *Vorl.* II. 43.

⁵ Kaufmann, *Gesch. d. Attr.*, pp. 429-30.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 471; cf. Eisler, *Vorl.* II. 46.

⁷ Cf. Franck, *Dict.*, p. 999 b.

tian and to the Jewish idea. With the former he defines God as possessed of infinite attributes¹; with the latter he rejects all ascription to Him of human or other qualities which exist in a determinate manner and therefore partake of negation.

It was against this denial of the attributes that Creskas directed his criticism, arguing that, though the attributes of God do not exist in Him as many, He is not a mere qualityless Being, since notional plurality is not inconsistent with real unity.²

(2) With regard also to God's relation to the world, Creskas attacked the positions of the other two schools. Though almost all the Jewish philosophers admitted the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, the admission was made rather out of compliment to faith than as a result of speculation. The views of Maimonides on the subject are essentially Aristotelian, although he not only admits this doctrine but also introduces Neo-platonic elements into his system. The Deity, according to him, is separated from the universe³ as well as from human cognition, and though not Himself in contact with the sphere of the heavens, is yet "the author and cause of the first intelligence that moves the first sphere"⁴. God, he holds, is the world's transcendent cause.

On the other hand both Ibn Gebirol and the Kabbalists substitute an emanational doctrine for this theory of transcendence. In Gebirol's system, the supreme being with its essential attribute,⁵ the Divine Will or Creative Word,⁶ first produces the simple substances⁷—universal matter and form,⁸ universal intellect compounded of these, the three universal souls (intelligent, vital, and animal), and nature, the lowest of these simple substances, a force above the corporeal world, producing and governing it.⁹ According to the Kabbala again, the qualityless En-soph or Infinite first manifests itself in the macrocosm or Adam Kadmon (the protoplast of the universe)—which, like Ibn Gebirol's 'nature,' has been compared to the 'natura naturans' of Spinoza, and from which proceeds the world of emanation with its ten potencies or Sephiroth, and thence the three worlds of creation, formation, and making, of which the human soul partakes.¹⁰

Against these Kabbalistic hypostases as well as against Peripate-

¹ *Eth.* I. def. 6.

² Joël, *Don Chasdai Creskas*, p. 31.

³ *Moreh*, I. 72., p. 147.

⁴ *Moreh*, II. 4, p. 197; cf. I. 72, pp. 141, 145-7.

⁵ *Extraits de la Source de Vie*, V. 67 (translated by Munk, *Mél.*, pp. 6-148).

⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, III. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, III. 21.

⁹ Munk, *Mél.*, p. 228.

¹⁰ Cf. Franck, *Diet.*, p. 852a, Munk, *Mél.*, pp. 492 ff.; Graetz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, VII. 78 ff.

tic abstractions, Creskas attempts a critical defence of the orthodox view, upholding the doctrine of the creation of the world and of its constant dependence on God.¹ Whether the creation took place in time or was from all eternity is, he holds, a matter of secondary importance. The point to be emphasised is the divine creative activity, not the period of its exercise,² though "the full truth is the traditional that God created at a definite time".³

The different doctrines of God and His relation to the world held by the various Jewish schools of thought are now apparent. The Aristotelian or leading school denied the divine attributes, and looked upon God as the world's transcendent cause. The thinkers more influenced by Neo-platonism also denied the divine attributes, but regarded all that exists as proceeding from the primal source by a series of emanations. The critical or reactionary school—at any rate, as represented by Creskas—affirmed the existence of attributes in the Deity, and, while asserting the absolute creation of the world, held that God is in all its parts bearing and sustaining it.⁴ With each of these schools Spinoza's system has been, at one time or another, brought into connexion; but there were influences at work on the Jew of Amsterdam which gave his thought a different cast from theirs.

The Jewish philosophy of the middle ages had at least one point in common with the whole of mediæval thought. It was a scholastic rather than an original system; its problem was given to it from without, not worked out by it from within. But Spinoza is the determined foe of the scholastic presuppositions both of Jews and Christians, and in him philosophy, banished from the synagogue without being admitted into the church, seeks an independent footing in thought.

Spinoza was thus in a radically different position from that of his Jewish predecessors. Their problem was to reconcile the philosophy of the schools with the creed of the synagogue; but his task was a different one. What might have been the case had the Rabbinical college dealt otherwise with him, or had he been easier to deal with, we cannot tell. But the ban that cut him off from his people placed him at the head of modern philosophy. He rid himself of the presuppositions of Rabbinical tradition, as Descartes had rejected the assumptions of Christian Scholasticism—and for the same reason: he would accept nothing as true which he could not clearly and distinctly see to be true. He assimilated the Cartesian philosophy, removed its inconsistencies, and resolved its dualism into a higher unity.⁵

¹ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 24. ² *Ibid.*, p. 67. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 70. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵ Cf. Hegel, *Gesch. d. Phil.* iii. 411: "Spinozismus ist Vollendung des Cartesianismus".

But this view of Spinoza's philosophy as an original advance on lines laid down by Descartes has been by no means the only theory of the historical origin of his thought. Already, in his own century, a critic spoke of his system as having "arisen from the Jewish, though neither quite at one with it nor very different from it;"¹ and, within recent years, the attempt has again been made to trace his philosophy to Hebrew sources. It is worthy of note, however, that, whereas he was formerly spoken of as a pupil of the Kabbala, modern critics seek to affiliate him to Creskas and his Aristotelian opponents. And circumstances have of late arisen which have been thought to favour this opinion.

On the one hand, the recent important researches into Jewish mediæval philosophy carried out by Munk, Joël, Graetz, Eisler and Kaufmann have brought into notice many points of similarity to Spinozistic doctrines previously unknown. On the other hand, the discovery and publication in 1862 of a lost treatise of Spinoza's—the *Tractatus brevis de Deo et homine ejusque felicitate*—has cast a new light on the growth of his philosophy. In the *Ethica* we must, so to speak, read his system, as he says reason regards its objects, "sub quadam aeternitatis specie"; but from the *Tractatus brevis* we are enabled to some extent to see how it gradually arose in the mind of its author.

From the development of thought exhibited by this treatise, and from his own intimate acquaintance with the literature of his people, Dr. Joël of Breslau has attempted to show that the impulse for Spinoza to transcend Cartesianism and the material for the new metaphysical system he formed were received from his Jewish predecessors.² The same view is adopted by Dr. Ginsberg,³ Spinoza's most recent editor, and has of late begun to be talked of as a point established. It may be worth while, therefore, to examine the grounds on which it rests.

There can be no doubt of the importance of the *Tractatus brevis* for tracing the historical sources of Spinoza's thought. It is, in all probability, the earliest at any rate of his esoteric works that we possess, and it covers the same ground as the later *Ethica*. A comparison of these two works shows that they agree

¹ J. G. Wachter, *Der Spinozismus im Judenthumb* (1699), part III. p. 2.

² Joël, *Zur Genesis der Lehre Spinoza's mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des kurzen Tractats* (1871), pp. 2-5; *Don Chasdai Creskas' religionsphilosophische Lehren in ihrem geschichtlichen Einflusse dargestellt* (1866), pp. 71-5. In the collected edition of these and other papers, by Dr. Joël (*Beiträge zur Gesch. d. Phil.*, 2 vols., Breslau, 1876) the paging of the separate issues is retained.

³ *Ethik des Spinoza im Urtexte*, Einl. pp. 31, 37. A brief statement of some of Dr. Joël's positions is given in Mr. F. Pollock's article, "Notes on the Philosophy of Spinoza," MIND X.

both in the premisses on which they build and in their ultimate conclusions, and that their differences are such as might naturally be looked for between the first statement of a new philosophy and its matured expression. Both show that Spinoza was working on Cartesian lines, but in both he has already adopted the distinctive points of his own theory. The definition of God and His necessary existence, the impossibility of there being two substances of the same kind, or of one substance producing another—the propositions from which the leading conclusions of his system necessarily follow,—as well as his distinctive ethical positions of good and evil as mere *entia rationis*, and of the strict determinism of the will;—all these points which we rightly look upon as marking off the Spinozistic philosophy from the Cartesian are already found in the *Tractatus brevis*. It differs from the *Ethica* less in the propositions proved than in the proofs it gives for them.¹ The earlier work is more concerned in defending its positions dialectically against ordinary or opposed views, while it is the chief aim of the later exposition to bring every particular doctrine to the unity of system, and to make each proposition depend by strict deduction on what precedes, leaving all necessary references to other theories to be dealt with in scholia or appendices. The mathematical method is almost foreign to the one treatise; the other is an “*ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*,” in which Spinoza discusses God and the human mind, the nature and strength of the affections, and the actions and desires of men “just as if the question were of lines, planes or solids”.²

But, although the two works differ in no important point of doctrine, the development and application of the new theories adopted are less consistently carried out in the earlier and shorter discussion. And while every trace of hesitation or inconsistency has disappeared from the *Ethica*, statements irreconcilable with its fundamental positions may still be found in the preliminary sketch.

Were the theory of Dr. Joël and others correct, we might expect these points of divergence between the two works to betray the Jewish origin of Spinoza's thought. But it is not so. For in the *Tractatus brevis* he is nearer Descartes than he is in the *Ethica*, as will be made apparent by considering the chief points in which the two expositions differ.³

¹ Contrast *Tract. brevis*, I. 1 with *Eth.* I. 12, and *Tr. br.*, I. 2 with *Eth.*, I. 6; cf. Trendelenburg, *Hist. Beiträge zur Phil.*, III., 314, 357.

² *Eth.* III. praeft., ed. Ginsberg, p. 161.

³ These points are mentioned by Sigwart, *Spinoza's neuentdeckter Tractat* (1866), p. 96, and by Trendelenburg, *Beiträge*, III. (1867), p. 361.

(a) If in the *Tractatus brevis*, he speaks of mind and body as acting on one another,¹ whereas, in the *Ethica*, they are shown to be completely distinct from, though they completely correspond with, each other,² it is because he has not yet got rid of Descartes' conception of the soul as moving the animal spirits from its seat in the pineal gland.³ (b) And if in the former work he still seems to regard knowledge as passive,⁴ though he afterwards identified action and intellectual cognition,⁵ this is but the obverse side of the same theory, according to which the soul is not only able to produce or direct the motion of the animal spirits, but is also the recipient of impressions from without.⁶ (c) If, lastly, the doctrine of final causes has left its traces in more than the language of the *Short Treatise*,⁷ and the "ens summe perfectum"⁸ has not yet yielded its place to the "ens absolute infinitum,"⁹ it is because the exclusion of the conception of ends, not only from physics, as had been done by Descartes, but from philosophy altogether, has not yet been fully carried out.

But in all these points Spinoza's thought has already implicitly adopted the advanced position, to which Descartes himself may be said to have shown the way. (a) The complete correspondence of idea and reality, as already stated in the *Tractatus brevis*,¹⁰ points beyond the theory of their interaction. For this latter hypothesis is utterly inconsistent with the view that extension and thought are the two attributes of the one substance, having nothing in common with each other,¹¹ and had only seemed defensible even to Descartes by an appeal to the omnipotence of God.¹² (b) But if mind cannot act on body in the production of motion, it may be shown in the same way that body cannot act on mind by the production of thought. And Dr. Joël has

¹ *Tr. br.*, II. 19.

² *Eth.*, III. 2, II. 7.

³ Descartes, *De passionibus animæ*, I. 34, 43, etc.

⁴ *Tr. br.* II. 15, ed. Van Vloten (1862), p. 159, ed. Sigwart (1870), p. 99, II. 16, ed. Vloten, p. 167, ed. Sigwart, p. 105.

⁵ *Eth.* IV. 24, dem: "Nos eatenus tantummodo agimus, quatenus intellegimus."

⁶ Descartes, *De pass.*, I. 34, 43, &c.; Spinoza, *Tr. br.*, II. 19, ed. Vloten, p. 185, ed. Sigwart, p. 117.

⁷ See *Tr. br.* II. 24; cf. Trendelenburg, *Beiträge*, III. 365.

⁸ See *Tr. br.*, I. 2, 4, 6; cf. Descartes, *Princ. phil.* I. 17, 18.

⁹ *Eth.* I. def. 6; *Epist.* 64, ed. Ginsberg, p. 178; also *Ep.* 41: "perfectionem in τὸ εἶναι et imperfectionem in privatione τοῦ εἶναι consistere; cf. Trendelenburg, *Beiträge*, III. 327, II. 50.

¹⁰ *Tr. br.*, II. 20, n.3.

¹¹ *Tr. br.* II. 20, ed. Vloten, p. 197, ed. Sigwart, p. 125.

¹² Cf. *Med.* vi. p. 45; *Resp. Sectæ*, pp. 166-7 (ed. of 1663).

drawn attention to a passage in the *Tractatus brevis*,¹ in which Spinoza anticipates his later theory of the activity of intellect. Joël,² indeed, seeks to explain the description of intellect as 'passio,' by a reference to Creskas. But the reference is altogether superfluous. For in the passages in which Spinoza speaks of intellect as passive, he is following the doctrine of Descartes,³ and when he looks upon it as active, he is still indebted for his theory, and even for his language, not indeed to Descartes, but to a Cartesian manual.⁴ (c) Lastly, the doubt that Descartes had cast on the teleological view of man as the final end of creation leads even in the *Tractatus brevis*⁵ to the separation of the ends of nature from the ends of man, and to the denial of any final cause outside the divine laws, and results in the *Ethica*⁶ in Spinoza's discarding from philosophy altogether the notion of final cause which Descartes had banished from physical science as "plane ridiculum et ineptum".⁷

A point in the *Tractatus brevis* to which attention has been drawn is the prominence given to the notion of Nature; and Prof. Sigwart has expressed the opinion⁸ that not only does it "appear as an independent point of departure beside the notions of God and substance," but that "in the development of the treatise . . . the proposition 'God is the one substance' proceeds first from this 'Nature is God'."

But while this notion is certainly more conspicuous in the *Tractatus brevis* than in the *Ethica*, it does not occur in the first letter to Oldenburg (1661), the earliest of Spinoza's writings on the subject of whose date we can be certain. Yet from the

¹ I. 2. ed. Vloten, p. 33, ed. Sigwart, p. 23.

² *Zur Genesis der Lehre Spinoza's* (1871), p. 62.

³ *De pass.*, I. 17, where the term "passiones" is applied to "omnes species perceptionum sive cognitionum quae in nobis reperiuntur".

⁴ As I have not seen this fact noticed in any discussion on the subject, it may be well to quote the passages referred to. In *Tr. br.*, I. 2, Spinoza speaks of "the intellect which, as the philosophers say, is a cause of its own conceptions," and, being a "causa immanens," has not the imperfection of passivity. In Adrian Heereboord's *Εμπνευητα Logica* (on which, as Trendelenburg has shown, the discussion in *Tr. br.* I. 3 is founded), Lib. I., c.xvii., ed. 4, 1660, p. 117, "causa immanens" is defined as that "quae producit effectum in se ipsa. Sic dicitur intellectus causa suorum conceptuum". Cf. F. Burgersdicii, *Institutiones Log.* (1626) Lib. I., c.xvii., p. 89: "At cum anima nostra intelligit, aut appetit aliquid, dicitur causa immanens suorum conceptuum, aut affectuum, quos intelligendo et appetendo format." Heereboord, it may be noticed, also so far agrees with the Cartesian position as to speak of intellect as in a sense passive: "Intelligere est quoddam pati".—*Meletemata phil.*, ed. ultima, 1665, I. 169a.

⁵ II. 24, ed. Vloten, p. 215, ed. Sigwart, pp. 136-7.

⁶ I. App. ⁷ *Princ.* III. 3; cf. I. 28.

⁸ *Spinoza's neunentdecker Tractat*, p. 17.

three propositions¹ laid down in that letter, and afterwards placed first in the second chapter of the *Tractatus brevis*, coupled, as the writer says they are to be coupled, with the definition and existence of God—the burden of the first chapter of the same treatise—the conclusion is obvious enough that no substance can exist outside of God, that He is the one substance. And this is proved without the intervention of the notion ‘nature’. It is true that ‘nature’ enters in the next proposition of the *Tractatus brevis*² apparently as an independent notion, not so much deduced from ‘substance’ or ‘God’ as an expression for the totality of the real with which the one substance must be identified. But it is only in the first dialogue,³ too uncertain in date and relation to the rest of the treatise to serve as the foundation of an argument, that the unity and infinity of nature seem to be established on an independent basis. So far as the main line of reasoning is concerned, ‘nature’ holds a secondary rather than a primary place.

Admitting, however, its independence in Spinoza’s thought, and the importance of its identification with the notion of God, we have still to ask whether it can be traced to Jewish sources. Spinoza has been supposed to be largely indebted to the Kabbala,⁴ and Wachter tried almost to identify his system with the *Sha’ar Hashemaim* or *Porta Caelorum* of Abraham de Herrera (Irirra). But it is inexact to say that both regard God and nature as the same. That is true of Spinoza alone; for, in the Kabbala, nature is not the En-Soph, but proceeds from it by a series of emanations.⁵ The source from which all things spring is not one of their number, nor all of them together, but infinitely above them all. In the Kabbala, God is the transcendent source of the emanations from which the world arises, whereas in Spinoza He is the immanent cause or essence of the universe.

It is true that, in one place,⁶ Spinoza speaks of God as “causa emanativa,” but Trendelenburg has shown that, throughout the whole discussion in which this expression occurs, he is referring

¹ The corresponding propositions of the *Ethica* are I. 5, 6, 8.

² I. 2, ed. Vloten, p. 23, ed. Sigwart, p. 16.

³ Cf. Sigwart, *Spinoza's neu. Tr.*, pp. 17 ff., and German ed. of the *Tr. br.*, Prolegg, pp. xxxvii. ff. The latter of these passages seems in agreement with what is said above.

⁴ J. G. Wachter, *Der Spinozismus im Judenthumb*, part III., p. 60; F. H. Jacobi, “Briefe über die Lehre des Spinoza,” *Werke*, IV., i. p. 56.

⁵ Cf. *Porta Caelorum*, Latin transl., 1678, Diss. I., c. 4, §§ 8-16: “principium sine principio . . . non est Natura”; §§ 18-19: “omnia etiam emanasse ab Uno simplici et perfecto; et omnia ad unitatis naturam aspirare et agi.”

⁶ *Tr. br.* I. 3, ed. Vloten, p. 53, ed. Sigwart, p. 35.

at each step to Heereboord's *Logie*,¹ in which a "causa emanativa" is defined as that "a qua res immediate ac sine ulla actione media, emanant," and in which "non est causalitas distincta ab ejus existentia"—evidently the only sense in which such a phrase could be used by Spinoza.

It may be said, however, that the general *natura naturata* of Spinoza corresponds to the Adam Kadmon or primitive man, which, according to the Kabbala, is the first manifestation of the En-Soph. But the Adam Kadmon is one and individual, itself an emanation, and the source of all other emanations, whereas the general *natura naturata* of Spinoza consists of the modes (motion in matter, and intellect in thought) immediately and eternally depending on the divine attributes, the particular modifications of which are individual things.² This *natura naturata* is called in the *Tractatus brevis* the Son of God, His first effect and creature; and in the expression "filius Dei" there may indeed be a reference to Kabbalistic as well as to Neoplatonic or Christian ideas; but it is not like the Adam Kadmon set up as the macrocosm, to which the microcosm ought to assimilate.³ In this, and in other passages,⁴ it is true, Spinoza has not quite shaken off the traditional doctrine of creation; but it could not have been Kabbalistic influence that induced him to retain it, since it was the object of the Kabbala to substitute the notion of emanation in its stead.

It may indeed be the case that some of the anticipations⁵ of isolated propositions in Spinoza to be found in the *Porta Caelorum* or other such works were not without effect on his thought. But it is hard to believe that he derived much assistance from writers "at whose madness" he could "never wonder enough."⁶ Their whole tone of thought is so entirely different, and their conceptions of the relation of God and the universe so widely divergent from his, that the theory of the Kabbalistic origin of Spinoza's philosophy is pronounced by Dr. Joël to be unhistorical, and has now for the most part been relinquished.⁷ And as regards his doctrine of nature, we have Spinoza's own account of its source, in which he refers to

¹ *Εμπνεύει Logica*, I. 17, p. 114.

² *Tr. br.* I. 8, 9.

³ *Porta Caelorum*, II. 1, § 9.

⁴ Cf. *Tr. br.* I. 2 ed. Vloten, p. 23, ed. Sigwart, p. 15.

⁵ In addition to the passages quoted by Wachter (*op. cit.*, pp. 94-5), cf. *Porta Caelorum* II. 7 § 10 with *Eth.* I. 34 and App. Two of Wachter's quotations are also adduced by Graetz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, X. 181n.; cf. 183n.

⁶ *Tract. theol.-pol.* c. 9, ed. Ginsberg, p. 116.

⁷ *Creskas*, p. iv.; *Spinoza's theol.-pol. Tractat auf seine Quellen geprüft* (1870), p. xi.

the Kabbala as yielding a support more doubtful than what he claimed from Paul and all the ancient philosophers.¹

In this account Spinoza speaks as if, in his views on God and nature, he stood alone among modern thinkers, though he might have claimed the adherence of one who but a couple of generations before had discoursed of the "*Εν καὶ πᾶν*"² which in after days attracted Lessing to Spinoza. It would be out of place here to ask whether the writings of Giordano Bruno may have come into Spinoza's hands and left their mark on his works, or to pass judgment on Professor Sigwart's careful and important investigation of the question, but the similarity of much of his philosophy to the better part of the Kabbalistic speculation and the influence which the Jewish Ibn Gebirol³ exerted on his thought, bring his leading positions within the range of this paper.

Now Bruno and Spinoza agree with one another in a most important particular: both overcame the prevalent dualism of philosophy, and both overcame it in the same way—not by reducing one factor of the opposition to the other, but by resolving both into a higher unity. The dualism with which Bruno had to contend was that of matter and form, potentiality and actuality, corporeality and incorporeality, and he got beyond their opposition by pre-supposing a matter above the ordinary distinction of matter and form,⁴ something common both to the sensible and to the intelligible world, and from which corporeal and mental substance spring as from a common root. This is his conception of Nature. "The whole is in substance one."⁵

But when Spinoza goes through a similar train of reasoning, we seem able to trace, in his different way of working, the new phase the old difficulties had received from the impress of Cartesian thought. Spinoza indeed speaks of body and mind as Bruno does of corporeal and incorporeal substance, for that is the way in which the dualism presents itself to the ordinary consciousness. But this dualism is not equivalent with him, as with Bruno, to that of matter and form, potentiality and reality; for he substitutes for body and mind the notions of extension

¹ *Epist.* 21: ". . . cum Paulo affirmo, et forte etiam cum omnibus antiquis philosophis, licet alio modo; et auferem etiam dicere, cum antiquis omnibus Hebraeis." Cf. *Eth.* II. 7, sch: "quod quidam Hebraeorum quasi per nebulam vidisse videntur".

² See the *De la causa*, &c., Dial. V. init., *Opere di Giordano Bruno Nolano*, I., pp. 280 ff., ed. Wagner, 1830.

³ See especially the *De la causa*, Dial. III. and IV., *Op.* I. 251, 257, &c.

⁴ *De la causa*, Dial. III., *Op.* I. 251, where Ibn Gebirol is quoted in support of the position adopted.

⁵ *De la causa*, Dial. III. fin., *Op.* I. 264.

and thought, which, in Descartes, had formed the constitutive attributes of those two substances. And thus it happens that, in Bruno, corporeal and incorporeal substances still remain as substances, though only in a derived sense, being dependent on the world-reason which produces them, whereas, in Spinoza, body and mind, being reduced to the attributes extension and thought, are not dependent on the one substance in the sense of being produced by it, but constitute its essence. In Bruno, moreover, the two derived substances supplement one another as matter and form, and there is no hint of the Spinozistic doctrine of the complete parallelism but complete separation of extension and thought. The world-reason of Bruno, too, acts with design, whereas, in Spinoza, every trace of final cause is abolished with the possibility of the interaction of extension and thought. And we must not forget that at the head of Brunos's system, as in that of the Neo-platonists and of Ibn Gebirol, there stands above the world-reason a transcendent unspeakable God,¹ so that had this been the source of Spinoza's thought we might have expected a polemic against the unknowable entity, whose position in the philosophy of Bruno, though somewhat of a sinecure, is certainly an elevated one.

The impulse which drove Spinoza to seek for the unity of the unsolved dualism of Descartes may indeed have come from acquaintance with Bruno or with writings such as his. But there was much in Descartes himself to drive an independent thinker beyond Cartesianism. And however near Bruno may sometimes have come to Spinoza's positions, the style and manner of his thinking are so different from the latter's rigid logic, so much more akin to Neo-platonic and even Kabbalistic speculation, that one cannot help fearing that Spinoza would have attributed to the perfervid philosopher of Nola some share of the "insania" he found in the exponents of the Jewish Kabbala.

I am glad to be able to agree with Dr. Joël that the attempted derivation of Spinozism from the Kabbala is unhistorical, but when he himself turns to Maimonides and Gersonides, and to their acute critic Creskas, and seeks to find in them the material of Spinoza's thought, I cannot but think that he too often rests content with the discovery of superficial resemblances.

Dr. Joël compares Spinoza's idea of God with that of Maimonides, saying that the "former proves the unity of God exactly as Maimonides does".² But the fact is that, while Spinoza argues against compositeness of substance, Maimonides

¹ *De la causa*, Dial. II., *Op.* I. 233 ; cf. Dial. IV., *Op.* I. 275.

² *Zur Genesis der Lehre Spinoza's*, pp. 14, 19n.

attacks plurality of attributes. Both, it is true, hold that God is not in the likeness of any human personality.¹ But it is incorrect to speak of this position as if it were Spinoza's complete notion of God, for his theory has a positive side which that of Maimonides altogether wants. The former regards God as consisting of an infinity of attributes, two of which—extension and thought—are conceivable by our understanding, while, according to the latter, we can predicate nothing of God at all, lest in doing so we compromise His unity or immutability.

The theory of Maimonides is one of agnostic Deism, for he holds that God is not only separate from the world He has made,² but also inconceivable by the intellect of man,³ whereas the God of Spinoza stands at the opposite pole of thought, at once identical with the universe,⁴ and adequately cognised by the human mind.⁵ With the former theory it is difficult to reconcile the doctrine of creation in time, but with the latter it is impossible to believe in creation at all. And had Dr. Joël⁶ attended to the difference in their fundamental conceptions, he might have seen that Spinoza had not much in common here with his Jewish predecessors. For the difficulty the latter felt in the doctrine of a creation out of nothing, and the conclusion they arrived at, are quite distinct from Spinoza's position on the same question. They, regarding God as separate from the world, could not imagine how it was possible for Him to have brought into being at a definite time something that had nothing in common with Himself, and the tendency of their thought (as shown in Gersonides) was to pre-suppose a formless matter which had existed from all eternity. Spinoza, on the other hand, was so far from admitting an eternal substrate independent of God that he held there was no substantiality outside the divine essence, and thus could no longer speak of the creation of the universe, for the universe was shown to be God.

Again, we are told that Spinoza was indebted to Maimonides for his doctrine of good and evil.⁷ But the similarity between the two views is by no means so great as may appear on the surface. Both, following the account of the Fall in *Genesis*, attribute to man in his perfect condition knowledge only of the true and false.⁸ Both, too, regard *evil* as having merely a relative existence. But, according to Maimonides, it is a privation of

¹ Spinoza, *Eth.* I. 17, sch ; Maimonides, *Moreh Nebuchim*, I. 52, tr. Buxtorf, p. 81.

² *Moreh*, I. 72, p. 147.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 52, &c.

⁴ *Eth.* I. 15.

⁵ *Eth.* II. 47.

⁶ *Zur Genesis*, pp. 29 ff.

⁷ Joël, *Zur Genesis*, p. 45.

⁸ *Moreh*, I. 2, p. 4 ; *Eth.* IV. 68.

the good or of existence (a theory common to many theologians from Augustine downwards), while, in Spinoza, *good* is equally relative with evil; the one means the useful, the other the hurtful.¹ The former theory rests on the metaphysical doctrine of the excellence of all that is, "for all existence," says Maimonides, "is good";² the latter founds the distinction on a psychological analysis, according to which "good and evil are nothing positive in things themselves".³ In the one theory, evil may be called relative—*i.e.*, relative to something else that is good⁴; according to the other theory both good and evil are relative—relative, namely, to the desires of the man who calls them so. The one is an objective, the other a subjective distinction.

Maimonides and Gersonides may indeed have been in Spinoza's eye in discussing these and other questions.⁵ But he is related to them as a critic, not as a follower. With Chasdai Creskas, however, he has at least one point in common—his antipathy to Aristotelianism,—and it is to that thinker especially that Dr. Joël fancies he can trace the impulses that "made Spinoza the founder of a new system *toto coelo* different from the Cartesian".⁶

Creskas is indeed quoted with approval by Spinoza⁷ on account of having proved the existence of God without the assumption of the Aristotelians that an infinite regress of causes is unthinkable. He makes the remark too which Maimonides made before him, and Spinoza afterwards made,⁸ that in the phrase "creation out of nothing," "nothing" is not to be regarded as the recipient of the divine creative act, but merely as the denial of anything that can be a recipient. And in another place, he uses Spinoza's example of the mathematical line to illustrate the true infinite: "as little as lines arise out of points, so little can infinite exten-

¹ *Eth.* IV. def. 1, 2; *Tr. br.*, I. 10, ed. Vloten, p. 85, ed. Sigwart, p. 55.

² *Moreh*, III. 10, p. 353.

³ *Eth.* IV. praef., ed. Ginsberg, p. 220.

⁴ This is admitted by Dr. Joël, (*Creskas*, p. 42n), when he says that Maimonides held the "mere negativity" of evil. Maimonides also talks of evil as relative: "respectue et comparative ad rem aliam" (*loc. cit.*); but his doctrine is perhaps best expressed by his words, "mala omnia esse privationes". Creskas maintains against Maimonides that evil proceeds from God by way of trial or punishment, having good for its end—a view sharply distinguished from Spinoza's by making the good absolute or real. "From God only the good proceeds which exhibits itself to the good as reward, to the bad as punishment."—Joël's *Creskas*, p. 43.

⁵ For his argument against the supposed Aristotelian position that Divine Providence extends only to genera and not to individuals (*Tr. br.* I. 6, ed. Vloten, p. 69, ed. Sigwart, p. 46), he is probably indebted to Maimonides (*Moreh*, III. 18, pp. 384-5.) Cf. Trendelenburg, *Beiträge*, III. 395 (1867), Joël, *Zur Genesis*, p. 56 (1871).

⁶ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 72.

⁷ *Epist.* 29.

⁸ *Cog. met.*, II. 10, ed. Paulus, p. 126.

sion be thought of as made up of parts placed together".¹ Again when Spinoza opposes Descartes' view that God might have created things other than they are,² he may have been consciously working along the lines of both Maimonides and Creskas, who maintain that what contradicts reason is impossible for God,³ though he may also be regarded as taking a side in the Scholastic controversy as to whether intellect or will is supreme in the Deity, and may have been induced to reverse Descartes' position from Cartesian works that lay ready to hand.⁴

But Dr. Joël also holds that Spinoza borrowed from Creskas some of the most important parts of his system, such as his distinction between attributes and propria in the *Tractatus brevis*, his reference of extension to the nature of God, his denial of final causes and of the freedom of the will, and his theory of the intellectual love of God as the supreme end of man. Were all this established, such positions as the impossibility of one substance creating or producing another, and the doctrine of extension and thought as the two attributes (known to us) which constitute the essence of the one substance—certainly the leading points of Spinoza's metaphysics—as well as his whole psychological and practical theory⁵ would still remain to be accounted for; so that even thus no justification would be given to the extreme statements sometimes made, as if Spinoza had merely thrown a philosophy borrowed from the Jews into the logical moulds of Descartes.⁶ It would certainly show, however, that

¹ Joël, *Creskas*, pp. 21-2. We may also refer to Herrera (Irra), *Porta Coelorum*, III. 1, §§ 4, ff., in which the infinite "ratione quantitatis continuæ" is shown to be inapplicable to the first cause whose infinity is that of essence and perfection, of eternity and omnipresence. Descartes too distinguishes between the indefinite and the infinite, the latter only being applicable to God.—*Princ.*, I. 27.

² *Resp. Sextæ* (ed. of 1663), p. 160-1. Spinoza, *Cog. met.*, II. 9, p. 121, uses Descartes' example of the angles of a triangle.

³ Joël, *Zur Genesis*, pp. 30, 50.

⁴ Cf. Heereboord, *Mel. Phil.*, III. 314a: "Consequentur Deum non posse impossibilia, et tamen plura posse quam vult. Impossibilia diximus esse quæ implicant contradictionem. . . . Talia sunt omnia, quæ pugnant cum proprietatibus Dei, vel essentialibus vel personalibus, aut cum natura rerum."

⁵ His treatment of the emotions is admittedly founded on Descartes, but Dr. Joël asserts that the distinction of the three kinds of knowledge was anticipated by Creskas (*Zur Genesis*, pp. 62n, 64-5.) But, e.g., instead of Spinoza's intuitive cognition to which enjoyment belongs and which is different in kind from belief (*Tr. br.*, I. 2, called 'ratio' in *De int. em.* and *Eth.*), Creskas has merely belief accompanied by a feeling of joy.

⁶ Cf. Ginsberg, *Eth. d. Sp.*, Einl., p. 36: "Dieser Zusammenhang" between Spinoza and the Jewish philosophers "zeigt sich als ein so unmittelbarer und enger . . . dass die Probleme selbst durch das Studium der

Creskas played a very important part in the formation of Spinoza's thought, and furnished him not only with many of the chief problems of his philosophy, but also with the solutions of them. Whether Creskas really played that part, whether the alleged points of identity are anything more than superficial resemblances, will soon be made apparent.

In the *Tractatus brevis*, Spinoza draws an important and, for his theory, necessary distinction between the attributes of God (thought and extension), through which we cognise Him as He is, and not as working outside himself,¹ and mere 'propria' which may be ascribed to God either in relation to all His attributes (as that He is eternal, self-subsistent and infinite) or in relation to any one of His attributes (as that He is omniscient or omnipresent).² Dr. Joël tells us that "the same distinction" is to be found in Creskas, and quotes in support of his statement a somewhat obscure passage, in which the latter draws a distinction between what seem to be regarded as essential attributes—such as goodness or knowledge and infinite power,—and on the other hand, attributes due to mere "intellectual consideration," such as eternity denoting that God is not something that has become, or existence which denies His absence, or unity which opposes His compositeness or plurality.³ The latter class seems to have most similarity with what were called "negative attributes" by the Jewish philosophers. But, at any rate, it cannot be identified, as Joël seeks to identify it, with Spinoza's 'propria'; for the latter include all the attributes of Creskas, and not merely a part of them, and the description of 'nominatio externa'⁴ which Joël says⁵ corresponds to the "intellectual consideration" of Creskas, really applies to the latter's essential as well as to his negative attributes. Creskas's distinction was an attempt to rescue certain predicates from the limbo of negation into which Maimonides had banished all the divine attributes; whereas, in Spinoza, the changed point of view which looked upon extension and thought as attributes of the one substance instead of as constituting the essence of body and mind respectively, necessarily introduced an entire change into the way of conceiving both substance and attributes. God must now be the only substance, and the attributes ordinarily ascribed to Him can no

jüdischen Philosophen des Mittelalters gegeben erscheinen und dass die Bekanntschaft mit den Schriften des Cartesius nur die Form und Anlage zu der wissenschaftlichen Darstellung gewährt."

¹ *Tr. br.*, I. 2, ed. Vloten, p. 35, ed. Sigwart, p. 24; cf. Descartes, *Princ.*, I. 56.

² *Tr. br.*, I. 7, n. 1, ed. Vloten, p. 73, ed. Sigwart, p. 48.

³ *Zur Genesis*, pp. 19-20. ⁴ *Tr. br.*, I. 2. ⁵ *Zur Genesis*, p. 21.

longer be ranked as such, but must be regarded as in some sense modifications of extension and thought. Both the distinction itself and the motive for it are thus different in the two systems.

God, with Spinoza, is not different from extension as He is not different from thought. But it is in pursuance of quite another line of argument than his that a seeming ascription of extension to God is made by Creskas. "The ancients," he says,¹ "have also applied the name 'place' to the essence (form) of a thing, because it defines and limits the object both in its totality and in its parts. . . . And because God is the essence of all that exists, since He produces, defines, and limits it, therefore have the ancient doctors applied to Him the name *Makom* (place), expressing 'Praised be God' by 'Praised be Hamakom'. . . . And this is a truly beautiful comparison. For as the dimensions of the empty enter the dimensions of the bodily and its fulness, so is God in all parts of the world, is its place, for He sustains and upholds it." But Creskas never meant this as more than a comparison—a metaphorical expression for the omnipresence of God; and he holds along with it the doctrine of the creation of the world in time,² and "the origin of the corporeal from a form (a spiritual) in such a manner that the form bestows and brings forth something essentially unlike itself."³ Surely Descartes himself could hardly say more than this, that the world is in essence unlike its Creator; and it is therefore somewhat strange to hear Dr. Joël asserting that it was Creskas who induced Spinoza "to give up the Cartesian thought of God having produced a substance entirely foreign to His essence".⁴ Dr. Joël now⁵ tells us indeed that he never meant to imply that Creskas spoke of extension as an attribute of God, and that according to that philosopher the similarity of essence between God and the world consists only in this, that "the world is good of its kind, and can therefore owe its origin to the source of the good".⁶ But not only is this a similarity of essence (if it can be properly termed such) which Descartes himself would have admitted, and which cannot therefore have induced Spinoza to reject Cartesianism, but Creskas's view is also entirely outside the range of thought of Spinoza, according to whom the good does not belong to the essence of things at all—neither of God nor of the world—but only exists in the mind of man.

It is this same apparent oblivion to the radical difference between their notions of God that has led Dr. Joël to con-

¹ Joël, *Creskas*, pp. 24-5—a passage also quoted by Ginsberg in support of his theory.

² Joël, *Creskas*, p. 70.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67, cf. p. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵ *Spinoza's Theol.-pol. Tractat*, p. v.

⁶ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 73.

found Creskas's doctrine of ends with Spinoza's denial of final causes.

Dr. Joël says that on this point Spinoza is in appearance nearer Maimonides than Creskas, though in reality he is more at one with the latter.¹ Maimonides admits the notion of ends because he believes in the origin of the world in time, and it is thus in argument rather than result that his similarity to Spinoza is to be sought. Now, there is no reason for denying that the latter may have derived assistance from the discussion in the *Moreh Nebuchim*, as well as from works nearer his own time.² Both Maimonides and Spinoza oppose the proposition that all things are made for man, and he to worship God. But the former attempts to refute it by dialectical arguments,³ the latter chiefly by tracing it to its psychological origin.⁴ And as Maimonides was looking for an external end of creation, Joël thinks that his views were of less importance for Spinoza's thought than those of Creskas, by whom this stand-point had been relinquished.⁵

It is certainly true that Creskas holds we cannot ask for an end of creation outside the creation itself. "God creates," he says, "because He is good, and He loves what He has created."⁶ But to reject in this way external teleology is not tantamount to denying final cause. The ends of God are none the less His ends because they proceed from His very nature. "That God is good, and therefore willed to create," is Creskas's doctrine; but when Dr. Joël says that it means the same as this, which Spinoza might adopt, "That God is good, and therefore must create,"⁷ exception may well be taken to the statement. For, to Spinoza, "God is good" means no more than that God in the fullest sense *is*, since moral attributes do not, strictly speaking, belong to Him; whereas moral goodness is, according to Creskas, an essential attribute of God.⁸ The phrase has thus quite a different meaning for the one philosopher from what it has for the other; and for Spinoza creation has no longer any meaning whatever. He abolishes both final cause and creation, Creskas retains them both—that is the extent of their similarity.

¹ *Creskas*, p. 62; *Zur Genesis*, pp. 35, ff.

² Cf. *Eth.* I. App., p. 111: 'Et quamvis theologi, &c.' with Heereboord, *Mel. Phil.* II. 296a.

³ *Moreh*, III. 13, p. 364: "Absurdum maximum, quòd sc. omnia reliqua entia præter hominem sine certo aliquo fine creata sint, cùm finis illorum, homo nempe, sine illis omnibus esse posset."

⁴ *Eth.* I. App., p. 111. Nor has the argument on p. 111: "Hoc tamen adhuc addam, &c." any similarity to that of Maimonides.

⁵ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36; *Zur Genesis*, p. 20n.

As of the theoretic doctrine of ends, so of its practical application. "The chief end of man is," according to Creskas, "the love of God without any regard to what lies outside this love"¹—a doctrine which has been identified with the crowning point of Spinoza's system; the intellectual love to God. But the very intellectuality of this love makes Spinoza's theory essentially different from Creskas's. In the one love is constituted by knowledge, in the other cognition is but a means to the higher end of love.² Dr. Joël will have it indeed³ that, in Spinoza's "amor intellectualis Dei," the "intellectualis" comes from Maimonides, and the "amor" from Creskas. But intellect *plus* love is a very different thing from intellectual love. Creskas placed the end of man in love, and held cognition to be merely a means to it; Maimonides placed it in intellect⁴ to which moral qualities were strictly subordinate. And the one theory could not be adopted without rejecting the other, until Spinoza had first of all learned to identify intellect and love.

Nor, in Spinoza's system, can God return the love of man to Him as in Creskas's. The latter has a double point of view: that of man from which love is the only end, and that of God from which "the end of man is to be partaker of the good and of union with God, and consequently of the condition which makes this union lasting—the future life."⁵ But for Spinoza there is only *one* point of view, and "the intellectual love of the mind to God is really a part of the infinite love wherewith God loves Himself;" and in this—not in any future life—"lies our salvation and blessedness and freedom".⁶

But one point more and we have done with Creskas. "In this treatise," says Dr. Joël, referring to the *Or Adonai*, "we have the first consistent attempt to lay the foundation of religion and morals, without the assumption that man is, in the full sense of the word, a freely-acting being—an attempt which, when made by Spinoza, excited so much wonder and opposition."⁷ That Spinoza's doctrine provoked opposition is certainly true, but that it excited wonder except in the minds of the ignorant I was not aware; for since the days of the Stoics, half the schools of philosophy have accepted the theory of determinism. Creskas, it is

¹ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 61.

² Joël, *Creskas*, p. 60. ³ Joël, *Spinoza's Theol.-pol. Tr.*, pp. x, 46 ff.

⁴ *Moreh* III. 54, where (p. 530) he quotes in support of his doctrine Jeremiah, ix. 24: "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord".

⁵ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 61.

⁶ *Eth.* V. 36; cf. *Tr. br.* II. 24, ed. Vloten, p. 213, ed. Sigwart, p. 135.

⁷ *Creskas*, p. 54.

true, departed from the traditions of his race in denying free-will, which had always been a leading point in Jewish systems. Gersonides, however, had found himself able to save it only by denying an individual providence; and Creskas, agreeing with his reasoning, was unable to avoid his conclusion without sacrificing human freedom in order to retain in their fulness divine foresight and predestination. But the theological basis on which he founds his doctrine differs from the reasons which led Spinoza to a similar result.¹ For the latter argues from the nature of volition itself, that, as existence does not belong to its essence, it must necessarily have a cause, and that in willing this or that particular thing we are moved by an external cause. Nor, he adds, can we escape this conclusion by saying that the will is the cause, since, apart from individual acts, will is a mere fiction or 'ens rationis' of which it is absurd to ask whether it is free or not.²

That Spinoza's view has also its theological aspect is of course self-evident.³ But in his first attack on free-will, his arguments are founded on a psychological theory, and no attempt has been made to compare that theory with anything in Creskas. And when, on the other hand, he discusses the subject theologically, it is easy to see that he is simply carrying out the doctrine of predestination as stated by Descartes.⁴ The latter had admitted that we cannot comprehend how the free-will of man can be harmonised with divine foreordination, and it was accordingly rejected by Spinoza as unable to stand the test of distinct thinking.⁵

But if the will is thus determined, how are we to defend the distribution of reward and punishment for actions which are really beyond the control of the individual? The answers of Creskas and Spinoza to this testing question are another means of showing whether their views on the will are the same or not? Dr. Joël compares the two answers as if they were identical in principle;⁶ but they are really essentially different. Creskas says we might as well ask why one who comes too near the fire is burned, as why one who does wrong is punished; that is to say, the consequence is in both cases a result of the constitution

¹ This, as well as some of the previous arguments, is noticed by Sigwart in his edition of the *Tr. br.*, Proleg., p. xli. n. The difference between the determinism of Creskas and that of Spinoza is remarked on by Graetz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, VIII. 99n.

² *Tr. br.*, II. 16, ed. Vloten, pp. 161-7, ed. Sigwart, pp. 101-5; cf. II. 6, ed. Vloten, p. 67, ed. Sigwart, p. 45.

³ Cf. Joël, *Spinoza's Theol.-pol. Tr.*, p. v.

⁴ Cf. *Princ.*, I. 41.

⁵ Cf. *Ep.* 49.

⁶ Joël, *Creskas*, p. 50; *Zur Genesis*, p. 60.

of things, or of the decree of God. Spinoza replies that it is as lawful to punish those who cannot subdue their passions as it is to exterminate venomous snakes, or to smother a man rabid from hydrophobia.¹ Punishment, that is, is justifiable because it is useful, because it promotes the common weal and benefits society. Creskas, following out his doctrine of the divine decree as extending to every individual occurrence, discovers in it the explanation of the consequences of actions as well as of the actions themselves; while Spinoza finds in their effects upon men not only the distinction between good and evil in conduct, but also the sufficient reason for rewarding the one and punishing the other. The whole thought of Creskas runs on different lines from that of Spinoza; the orthodox defender of Judaism has little in common with the anathematised outcast from the synagogue.

What the preceding discussion has shown in detail may now be summed up in a word. The Jewish mediæval thinkers differed from Spinoza both in the problem they had to deal with and in the solutions of it they offered. Theirs was a philosophy of reconciliation guided by the spirit of compromise; in him the movement of thought was impeded by nothing outside itself. His relation to them was as much one of antagonism as Descartes' relation to Christian Scholasticism, and indeed much more so; for Descartes remained to the last on good terms with the Church, whereas Spinoza began his career by breaking with the Synagogue. And it is scarcely possible to overlook the essential differences that separate the emanational theory of the Kabbala, the deistic conceptions of Rabbinical peripateticism, or the orthodox doctrines of Creskas, from what Solomon Maimon,² followed by Hegel,³ called the acosmism of Spinoza.

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¹ *Epist.* 25.

² *Lebensgeschichte*, I. 154, Berlin, 1792—quoted by Ginsberg.

³ *Encykl.*, § 50, ed. Rosenkranz, p. 75; *Gesch. d. Phil.*, III. p. 373.