

IV. MAIMONIDES AND SPINOZA

Introductory: The Problems of a Monistic Logic

IF the problem of the voluntaristic logics, as exemplified by Descartes, is how from the particular to arrive at a whole; then the problem of the intellectualist logics is how from the whole to arrive at the parts. To the one it is the induction of the infinite which is the difficulty; to the other the deduction of the finite. To explain the existence of the finite is, of course, impossible. Such is the fact of nature, or, as Maimonides phrased it, the will of God; and it would be no more use asking why the infinite has expressed itself in the finite than to ask why a square does not possess the properties of a circle, or why the details of a ceremony are not other than in fact they are.¹ The 'why' is, however, distinct from the 'how'. If we ask 'why', we can only say 'Quia ei non deficit materia';² but if we ask 'how', we are asking not for the reasons of the existence of the finite, which only a mind outside of the finite system could grasp; but for the way in which the various finite entities group themselves together, and by this grouping produce the characteristic features of the finite world.

The answer to this second question, the question 'How?' is found readily in, and indeed springs immediately out of, the original premiss. If Nature is one, then whatever is, is a part of Nature, and from this fact all human problems arise. The clash and disharmony in practical life, which produce all the phenomena of evil; the conflicts and insufficiency of intellectual life which are the source of the phenomena

¹ Spinoza, *Ep.* LXXVIII, p. 251, and *Guide*, III, cap. 26, p. 311.

² *Eth.* I, Appendix (end); cf. *Guide*, III, cap. 25: 'The Creator's intention was to give existence to all beings whose existence is possible' (p. 309).

of error ; all arise from the fact that in one way or another, man, refusing to recognize his finite character, seeks to arrogate to himself the privileges of the infinite. Knowledge (and it is in the problem of knowledge that the question arises most vividly) is not for ' parts ' of Nature, but only for Nature itself. To understand things as in reality they are, we should have to be as God is. But, since man is not God, complete understanding is for him an impossibility. We are, however, men, and our interests lie with the finite. It becomes, then, precisely the problem of ethics to show how the infinite may be brought into the finite life, or how, from the other point of view, the finite may be brought to recognize its place in and relation to the infinite. And so we have the curious paradox that both Maimonides and Spinoza, who alike, and with the most uncompromising frankness, deny categorically the absolute validity of moral values,¹ yet devote all their energies to the investigation of what is good for man. Since however, goodness is not in God (because it is absurd to suppose that God has aims outside of Himself), nor again in man (because man is a natural being, part of a Nature which knows nothing of final ends) ;² it can only lie in the relation between the two, consisting, indeed, primarily in the recognition of that relation and in the deepening of its understanding.³ The doctrine that man is a part of Nature, therefore, is the essential

¹ e. g. *Short Treatise*, I, cap. 10 ; *Eth.* IV, pref. and 64 cor. ; *Guide*, I, cap. 2 (from which the ' explanation ' of the Paradise story in *Eth.* IV, 68 sch., is taken bodily, cf. Pollock, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-2). ' Ulterius erravit [Maimonides], ' remarks the author of the *De Erroribus Philosophorum* (*loc. cit.*, § 12), ' circa humanos actus, ponens fornicationem non esse peccatum in iure naturali.'

² Above, cap ii, § 2, p. 49, § 3, p. 60 (for Spinoza) ; below, cap. iv, § 6, p. 136 (for Maimonides).

³ ' Probi, hoc est, [ii] qui claram Dei habent ideam . . . improbi, hoc est, [ii] qui Dei ideam haud possident.' *Ep.* XXIII, p. 106, cf. *Ep.* XIX end. ' Those who have succeeded in finding a proof for everything that can be proved, who have a true knowledge of God so far as a true knowledge can be attained, and are near the truth wherever

complement to the doctrine that Nature is one. And just as the latter springs from the conviction of the unity and validity of knowledge, so the former works itself out into an ethical system only in and through the conviction of the attainability of knowledge. There is in fact from the absolute point of view no such thing as good and evil, only true and false ; and such meaning as we can give to ethical right and wrong is to be sought through the gateway of a theory of logic.

§ 1. *The Problem of Error in Spinoza. Intellect and 'Imaginatio'*

The partial knowledge of the finite is called by Spinoza *Imaginatio*. The meaning of the words 'finiteness' and 'part' is illustrated in the well-known simile of the 'worm in the blood' contained in a letter to Oldenburg, and is defined with more professedly scientific exactness in the excursus on physics in the second book of the *Ethics*.¹ Its importance in Spinoza's general philosophical outlook is evident from the many times he refers to it.² For our purpose it is necessary to show that the part it plays is not an insignificant or incidental one, but that it penetrates deep into every department of his thought ; so deeply, indeed, that if it be taken away his whole metaphysic would become incoherent, and fail as an account of the world in which we live.

The self-dependent existent of which alone being may be predicated, which we have seen to be the centre of Spinoza's system, may be considered from four aspects, two absolute or infinite, two partial or finite. From the absolute aspect it is that which completely is, and that which completely is an approach to the truth is possible, they have *reached the goal.*' *Guide*, III, 51 (p. 385).

¹ *Ep.* XXXII ; *Eth.* II, Lemma 7 sch., inserted between props. 13 and 14.

² e. g. *S.T.* II, cap. 18, p. 115, and cap. 24, p. 140 ; *Cog. Met.* II, 9, § 3 ; *Tr. Pol.* II, § 5 ; *Theol.-Pol.* III, § 9, IV, § 3 ; *Epp.* XXX, XXXII ; *Eth.* IV, 2-4, and App., caps. i, 6-7.

known; from the finite aspect it is that which is, and is known, more or less, and that with reference to which man is, and knows, more or less. We may summarize the characteristics of these aspects somewhat as follows:

To be is to be-one, and there is only one One. It is only the whole which, in the full sense of the word, is. This whole which is, is under infinite attributes in infinite ways, the whole being a system, not an agglomeration. A 'part'—if one can speak of a part, and strictly one cannot—only 'is' in the whole. Its essence or reality lies in this inherence.

This whole or totality of being is God as Reality, *deus sive natura*.

To be is to be-for-thought; 'essence' is 'objective' in 'idea'. But just as to be can be predicated only of the One as a whole, so to be-known can be predicated only of the One as a whole. Knowledge of a part as a part is not knowledge. Knowledge is of essence, and essence is inherence in the whole.

This ideal of Knowledge, the reflection of the ideal of Being, is God as Known, i. e., God as He knows Himself, or God as *intellectus*.

Within the whole there are partial 'points of view'. What we call 'finite' things are points of view of the whole, parts torn from their context. The more detached they are, the less they may be said to be; the more closely knit, the more they may be said to be. To be 'closely knit' in the whole is to hold a place which cannot be interchanged with any other, i. e., to be completely individual; and to be thus completely individual is to possess (or be possessed by) the whole in an unique and essential way. Such a finite thing torn from the context of the whole is man. To his 'point of view' therefore (viewing it for the moment statically), things (including of course himself) may be said to 'grow into' being and knowledge, that is, to be apprehended more and more as a manifestation of the whole.

God is here (from the point of view of man) the *intelligibile*, that which becomes known, or that which progressively is.

But man too, like other finite things, may knit himself further into the context of the whole. The more he knows, the more he is. The more he knows of the essence of things (himself included), the more essential a place he takes within the whole as Being and Known. Indeed by self-affirmation through knowledge he can attain the elevation at which it is all one to say that man thinks God or God thinks Himself in man.

This progressive clarification, as it were, of the mind of man, is, therefore, God as *intelligens*—that which gradually becomes knowing.

We have then the fourfold view of the whole or God, as Being, as Known, as growing-into-being, and as growing-into-knowledge.¹ From the point of view of human life, clearly the last two are the more important, and it was to throw light on them and their relation to the first that the treatise *On the Improvement of the Understanding* was composed. If we follow its argument, we may see the way in which Spinoza arrived at the thought which in its perfected form is presented in the *Ethics*.

The 'verum bonum et sui communicabile', he tells us, which alone can give complete emotional satisfaction, and which must be eternal and infinite in order that all can share in it without rivalry or pain, is the 'knowledge of the union which mind has with the whole of nature'. It can be attained, however, 'only if we deliberate on the matter thoroughly', and therefore all our powers must be concentrated on method.² That there is such a *summum bonum* cannot be doubted; indeed, it is demanded by the very nature of our mind.³ The problem is, how it can be known. We are led to consider the

¹ The significant references are *Eth.* II, 7 sch., and II, 11 cor.

² *D.I.E.*, §§ 1-16.

³ § 42; cf. §§ 47-8 and *Eth.* IV, 36 sch.: 'non ex accidenti sed ex ipsa natura rationis oriri ut hominis summum bonum omnibus sit commune, nimirum quia ex ipsa humana essentia quatenus ratione definitur, deducitur.'

various types of knowledge and their several values and methods.¹

The highest of the forms of knowledge is *per solam essentiam rei*; its instrument, the clear idea. Truth needs no sign. It is not the understanding of the causes of a thing *ab extra*, but the apprehension of the internal quality, the essence, by virtue of which it is. Reality and knowledge are the same thing. The real is the known, the most real—the *ens perfectissimum*—the most known. Knowledge and reality are inseparable, and just as reality is independent of the external, so is the knowledge of reality. That which is known is real: that which is real is known.²

But if to be known is to be real, how can there be such a thing as error? If the real as a complete whole is, and is for knowledge; then as everything that is, is real, so everything that is known is true. But then there cannot be such a thing as doubt, error, or fiction. Thought is identical with Being; to be-in-thought is to be. Within the real and within the real-as-known, i. e., within the knowledge of the real, everything eternally must be and is. Mistake or fraud is impossible. Probability has no significance beyond our ignorance. If it had, life would be chance, and Science, with the 'happiness' which it brings, a cheat.

We can now understand the peculiar insistence of Spinoza on the *idea ficta* and the problem of possibility. It occupies the very first section of the first part of 'the method'. If thought is the same as Being, fiction cannot be the product of thought, because if it could we should have to admit that the chimaera or any other absurdity exists, i. e., predicate of reality that which is inconsistent with it. And if we are going to allow fictions (i. e., thought 'unreal' in some way)

¹ §§ 18–29.

² §§ 35–8 and §§ 69–70. Cf. *Eth.* II, def. 4 and 29 sch.; and I, 30 sch. ('id quod in intellectu objective continetur debet necessario in natura dari').

to be affirmed indiscriminately, we cannot prevent 'real' thought being denied indiscriminately. And indeed so we find it to happen with regard to the supreme case. That God exists is the first and eternal truth. But men have doubted God's existence, because they have not understood what is meant by God: 'they feign something they call God which is not in harmony with the nature of God.' Hence it is the inability to distinguish fiction from truth that has led to the denial of the first and eternal truth which is the basis of all knowledge. It is therefore of fundamental importance to discover the origin of fiction and to distinguish it from truth.¹

As a preliminary we must dismiss a current theory—that of the Cartesians. There is no such thing as a freely creative 'faculty of fiction' which 'by its own power creates sensations or ideas which do not belong to things' as if it were a 'kind of indeterminate God'.² Such an explanation would be worse than useless, for how should we be able to distinguish such fictions from true ideas? The truth is that fiction *is* a product of thought. In a sense it does 'belong to' things; and there is no harm in it so long as we recognize in what way it does so belong. It is not a 'simple' idea containing naturally the 'reflection' of its object, but an artificial composition of fragments, as it were, thrown together confusedly. 'It never makes anything new or affords anything to the mind; . . . only such things as are already in the brain or imagination are recalled to the memory . . . For example, speech and tree are recalled to the memory at the same time, and when the mind confusedly attends to both without distinction, it thinks of a tree speaking.'³

This explanation, however, only opens the door to a far greater difficulty. 'Thought is responsible for fiction'; but if so, of what value is thought? We start with the assumption

¹ §§ 50-4 with Spinoza's notes: cf. *Eth.* II, 47 sch. 'Possibility' is discussed in *Cog. Met.* I, caps. 1 and 3, and *Eth.* I, 33 sch.

² § 59-61.

³ § 57, n. 1: cf. *Eth.* II, 47 sch.

that thought can, and will, bring us to truth, but are now faced with the fact that it brings us to error. And here the peculiar difficulty of Spinoza's general position is revealed. In order to account for error, he is pledged not to call in the will; but if he does not call in the will, it would seem that he must sacrifice the universal validity of thought. But if he sacrifices the validity of thought, he relinquishes the very core of the whole system. He is therefore bound by the very nature of the case to find a non-intellectual origin for the ideas which bear no guarantee of truth. The solution is given in the concluding section of the first part of the treatise. We learn that the ideas in question arise from the *imagination* 'as affected by individual and corporeal things', and that the imagination is definable as 'certain fortuitous and unconnected sensations . . . which do not arise from the power of the mind, but from external causes, according as the body, sleeping or waking, receives various motions'.¹ The conditions of error then are individual bodily images brought together 'fortuitously', i. e., not in accordance with the order of the mind; and their composition into the false idea is due not to the will of the individual, but to the determining influence of environmental facts.

If we follow out this conception, we see how it harmonizes with its general philosophical context. The sensations which make up the imagination arise from 'external causes'; but since everything proceeds from God, the external causes too must have a 'thought side' in Him. But if so, our thought, which sees them as external, can be only a partial manifestation of the thinking of God. Hence what is the corporeal imagination and the corporeal order to the individual man, is really the manifestation of God through other men or things.²

¹ §§ 82-4.

² 'Si de natura entis cogitantis est, uti prima fronte videtur, cogitationes veras sive adaequatas formare, certum est *ideas inadaequatas ex eo tantum in nobis oriri*, quod *pars sumus alicuius entis cogitantis*

But the order of God is the 'order of the mind'. In so far, therefore, as a man can transmute the order of the imagination into the order of the mind, that is, cease to be a merely 'passive' recipient of sensation; he is so far understanding things as God, achieving the 'union with the order of nature as a whole' which is the goal of the efforts of man. We have here, then, in the logical treatise, and as a direct consequence of the problem presented by the fact of error, and more particularly the fictitious idea, the whole doctrine of the *Ethics* with regard to the adequate or internally-self-dependent, and inadequate or externally-dependent, ideas, with its fundamental distinction between the order of the mind and the order of sense presentation,¹ which is nothing less than the world of things and human beings in which we live.

For our purpose it is important to emphasize the general nature of the solution offered. Man errs because he is not all thought; and he is not all thought because thought is something bigger than he, and works not only through him, but through other men and things as well. This 'inverted' thought, as it were, is what Spinoza calls imagination, and it owes its origin to the physical fact that man is only a part of the whole, and a part which is worked upon strongly by the other parts. If we turn to the argument, it is clear that its pivot is the opposition between imagination and intellect. It is with regard to the *imagination* that the soul is passive, not active, as it is in thought. It is the *imagination* which produces the conventional and dangerous errors that extension must be local and finite. It is because things which we easily *imagine* are clearer to us that our vocabulary is misleading (being framed to suit the *imagination*), and we find negative *cuius quaedam cogitationes ex toto, quaedam ex parte tantum, nostram mentem constituunt.*' § 73: cf. *Eth.* II, 11 cor. and 28 dem.

¹ § 91; cf. e. g. *Eth.* II, 10 sch. 2; 18 sch.; 26 cor.; 29 sch.; IV, 4 and dem.; V, 10; V, 39 dem.; and *Ep.* VI, where the order of 'natura in se' is opposed to that of 'natura prout ad sensum humanum relata' (pp. 22 and 25).

names bestowed on what are really positive ideas, and positive names on what are really negative ideas. It is to the *imaginatio*, therefore, that we owe the false positive.¹

Now all these characteristics are the facts of the world we know. The logical errors which it is the aim of the treatise *On the Improvement of the Understanding* to remove have their origin in the corporeal imagination; and the corporeal imagination, with its faulty order, its false positive, its bad vocabulary, and misleading arguments, is the product of the buffetings upon man of the external universe of which he is physically a part. The necessary preliminary, therefore, to the discovery of truth, is to learn to distinguish between the true idea of the intellect as it works through its own activity, and the false ideas which arise from the passive acceptance of the external world. 'The true method', then, we find Spinoza writing to a zealous correspondent,² 'lies solely in the cognition of the pure intellect, in the acquisition of which it is *primarily necessary* to distinguish between *intellect and imagination*.'

§ 2. 'Imaginatio' and the Problem of Attributes in Spinoza

Imagination is the lowest stage in human knowing, and at this stage knowledge so-called expresses itself in the form of the imaginal attribute. The atheist, as we saw, learned to deny God because 'he had not understood what was meant by God'. But these misunderstandings, which lead to the corrupt idea of God, are due to the corporeal imagination. Men apply their 'mutilated', 'inadequate', and 'partial' ideas to that which is beyond partial reasonings. 'They con-

¹ §§ 87-90 and 91 note. Cf. *Eth.* I, 15 sch.; II, 40, sch. I; II, 47 sch.; IV, 62 sch.; *Ep.* XII.

² *Ep.* XXXVII; cf. *Eth.* II, 49 sch. ('lectores moneo ut accurate distinguant inter ideam sive mentis conceptum et inter imagines rerum quas imaginamur').

found His intellect with that of man, and His power with the power of kings.'¹

Spinoza, therefore, takes up the problem at the point where it was dropped by Maimonides. Maimonides had shown that no attribute drawn from human analogy could be applied to God; Spinoza, accepting the demonstration, seeks for attributes not derived from human analogy. To both thinkers it is the anthropomorphic description which is anathema and must be swept away; but whereas Maimonides stops with the bare affirmation of a positive essence, Spinoza seeks to determine the very nature of positiveness. 'The more attributes I attribute to any thing,' he writes to De Vries, 'the more I am compelled to attribute to it existence: ' but hastens to add, 'that is to say, I conceive it more really,²—the opposite of which would be true if I were treating of a Chimaera.'

That this is the true history of the Spinozistic attribute may be seen by a study of its development in the Spinozistic text. The trend of the whole early discussion of attributes in the *Cogitata Metaphysica*, which, indeed, follows closely, often verbally, on Maimonides, is to show that if we retain them we must understand them in a way not drawn from human conceptions: God is one—but not in the sense of being one of a class; God is 'good'—but only by analogy and looking to our standards; God is 'living'—if by life we are content to understand nothing but His essence by which He persists.³

¹ *Cog. Met.* II, 3, § 7, and *Eth.* II, 3, sch.; cf. *Theol.-Pol.* VI, § 58, 'Omnes enim qui aliquantulum supra vulgum sapiunt, sciunt Deum non habere dextram &c. . . . Haec inquam ii sciunt qui res *ex perceptionibus puri intellectus* iudicant, et non prout imaginatio a sensibus externis afficitur ut vulgus solet quod *ideo* Deum corporeum et imperium regium tenentem imaginatur. . . .'

² 'Magis sub ratione veri.' *Ep.* IX, p. 34.

³ *Cog. Met.* I, 6, § 2, § 7, § 10; II, 6, § 3; cf. *Guide*, e. g. I, 52, p. 71 ('even the term "existence" is applied to God and other beings homonymously'); 57, p. 80 ('The accident of unity is as inadmissible as the accident of plurality'). For the classification of *Cog. Met.* II, 11, §§ 3-4, cf. *Guide*. I, 53, p. 74 (above, p. 75). The very example of

Now, if we turn to the scholium of the seventeenth proposition of the first book of the *Ethics*, in which the conventional attributes of God come up again for consideration, the same general criticism is given, centring round the same use of the word 'attribute'. Any attribute drawn from human analogy must be disallowed with regard to God. It would seem, then, that we are faced again with the Maimonidean dilemma, and in our flight from error are driven into the arms of nothing.

This would be true if the imaginational were the only class of attribute possible. But, so Spinoza tells us, and that in his very earliest treatment of the question,¹ there is, as a fact, another class altogether. The attributes normally attributed by men to God are, as Maimonides saw, either 'extraneous denominations' or 'descriptions of His activity'. But, apart from and beyond these classes, there is the 'proper' attribute, 'through which we come to know Him as He is in Himself'. The application of the new doctrine is immediate and far-reaching, because it enables at once the positing of extension as an attribute of God. The well-known objections to this doctrine² are relevant only when extension is understood as the divisible and material corporeality of the *imagination*. We may, indeed must, concede, however, the admissibility of the *intellectual* conception of indivisible extension.³

a homonym employed in *Cog. Met.* II, 11, § 3 ('nec scientia Dei cum scientia humana magis convenit quam canis signum coeleste cum cane qui est animal latrans') and repeated in *Eth.* I, 17 sch., is that given by Maimonides in his *Introduction to Logic*, cap. 13. [It would appear to have been conventional, cf. Steinschneider, *Hebräische Uebersetzungen*, p. 55, n. 68.]

¹ *Short Treatise*, I, cap. 2, pp. 30-31.

² *Guide*, I, 35, p. 50; II, Introduction, Prop. VII, p. 146.

³ *S.T.*, p. 27f. Cf. *Princ. Phil. Cart.* I, 9 sch. In *Ep.* XII and *Eth.* I, 15 sch. it is made clear that the cause of the misunderstanding is the substitution of the 'abstractions' of the corporeal imagination for the pure ideas of the intellect: 'Si quis tamen iam quaerat, cur nos ex natura ita propensi simus ad dividendam quantitatem: ei

The imaginal attributes, then, go to make way for the intellectual—infinite in number, though two only are known to us ; and Spinoza may well have considered himself safe from the charge of atheism which had been advanced against Maimonides for his denying human knowledge of God.¹ But it was not so. A God indescribable in imaginal terms will never be recognized by the majority of mankind. ' You say ', writes his friend Boxel,² ' that you deny human attributes of God in order not to confuse the nature of God with that of man. So far, I approve. We do not perceive the way in which He wills and understands, considers, sees and hears. But if you deny categorically the existence of these activities and the validity of our highest thoughts of God, and affirm that they are not in God, even in the " eminent " and metaphysical sense ; then I do not understand your God—*tuum Deum ignoro*—nor what you mean by the word.' And Spinoza can only point out, in reply, the old truth which he had learned from Maimonides : any imaginal attribute has significance only in relation to the ascriber ; and there is no more objective reality in the human descriptions of God advanced by Boxel than there would be in a mathematical description given, say, by a triangle, if it happened to be articulate. An idea and an image are not the same. We cannot form an image of God, but we can have an intellectual idea of Him, howbeit incomplete.³

respondeo quod quantitas duobus modis a nobis concipitur, abstracte scilicet sive superficialiter, prout nempe ipsam *imaginamur*, vel ut substantia, quod a *solo intellectu fit*.'

¹ Cf. the quotation from Makrizi in Renan, *Averroës* ³, p. 42.

² *Ep.* LV, p. 198.

³ *Ep.* LVI, p. 202 ; cf. *S.T.* II, cap. 22, p. 133 : ' I do not say that we must know Him just as He is or adequately, for it is sufficient to us to know Him to some extent.'

§ 3. 'Imaginatio' and the 'Deliverance of Man' in Spinoza. 'Scientia intuitiva' and Immortality

The passage to the intellectual idea of God is the theme of the *Ethics*. The servitude of man lies in the fact that he is necessarily a part of nature, and necessarily bound to imagination. The liberty of man lies in the fact that he can rid himself, to a certain extent, of imagination. The end of man is to know,¹ and knowledge proceeds through the negating of imaginal thought. The whole system of human standards—good and evil, right and wrong—are void of any absolute value, because they are drawn from human analogies based on human needs and experience ; but if they are to have any meaning at all—and such meaning can only be relative to human life—we must set up some fixed standard of life by reference to which they may be secured some stability.² But since the aim of life is knowledge, our only absolute is the search for knowledge. All that helps to knowledge is good ; all that stands in the way of knowledge, bad. Moral, as well as logical, defects are due to the fragmentary outlook. The only way to rid ourselves of them is to rise above the fragmentary outlook and attain a more comprehensive vision.³

The gradual growth of things from the imaginal 'point of view' into knowledge proceeds upwards through the generalizations of science, though it is not completed at

¹ *Eth.* II end ; IV, 26, 28, 52 dems. and App., caps. 4-5.

² *Eth.* IV, pref.

³ 'Vir fortis hoc apprime consideret, nempe quod omnia ex necessitate divinae naturae sequuntur, ac proinde quicquid molestum et malum esse cogitat et quicquid praeterea impium, horrendum, iniustum et turpe videtur, ex eo oritur quod res ipsas perturbate mutilate et confuse concipit ; et hac de causa apprime conatur res, ut in se sunt, concipere et verae cognitionis impedimenta amovere ut sunt odium, ira, invidia, irrisio, superbia, et reliqua huiusmodi.' IV, 73 sch. That the motive of the *Ethics* is the conception of morality as an 'applied logic' is the theme of M. Brunschvicg's volume on Spinoza.

that stage. The highest knowledge is not knowledge of a general law. As we have seen, knowledge *per essentiam rei* is knowledge of the individual. To understand as God understands we must proceed with the least possible abstraction, and try to apprehend the concrete actuality of the individual thing within the indivisible whole of Being.¹ Knowledge, therefore, is not the offspring of a union between imagination and thought. It is intellect alone which is the source of knowledge. Thought is different in kind from perception.² Thought is active, perception passive. Thought is not pictorial, and where you have a picture you have not thought.³ We rise to thought, then, not through imaginal perception, but by ridding ourselves of imaginal perception. But to say that we 'rise to' thought is inaccurate. It is thought which comes down to us when we free the way by removing the misunderstandings from which we suffer through being inevitably a part of nature. It is indeed thought which comes to itself.⁴

¹ *D.I.E.* §§ 55, 75-6, and 93; *Eth.* II, 44 cor. II, dem. and V, 36 sch.; *S.T.* II, c. 6, p. 50 ('God, then, is the cause of and providence over particular things only'); and *Ep.* XIX, p. 67: 'Deus res non abstracte novit', with its obverse, 'Quo magis res singulares intelligimus eo magis Deum intelligimus.' (*Eth.* V, 24.) (Cf. Joachim, *Study*, pp. 264 ff.)

² *D.I.E.*, § 84; *Eth.* V, 28 and dem.

³ *Eth.* II, 48 sch., 49 sch., second paragraph; II, def. 3 expl.; 43 sch.

⁴ This account would seem to hold even of the *Short Treatise*, in spite of its well-known doctrine of the passivity of thought. The statement that knowledge is 'a direct revelation of the object itself to the understanding, not the consequence of something else, but immediate' (II, cap. 22, p. 133) is only an exaggerated way of expressing the (anti-Cartesian) idea that the will has no power to interfere with it (cf. Wolf's note, p. 221). And so Spinoza can write quite consistently in II. 15, of 'truth as revealing itself and also what is false' (p. 103); and, in the following chapter (p. 109), of the understanding as being 'passive, an awareness in the soul of the essence and existence of things, so that it is never we who affirm or deny something of a thing, but it is the thing itself that affirms or denies, in us, something of itself'. If thought and reality are the same, it makes little difference

By ridding himself of the passive imagination a man becomes more active and individual. The nature and duration, however, of the individuality so acquired must be carefully noted, because it would seem at first sight that it would be, from the point of view of the individual, loss of individuality. Indeed, Spinoza seems to go out of his way to deny the existence of an individual 'soul';¹ and in any case memory, the indispensable adjunct of personality as we understand it, is simply a physical phenomenon.² Yet the doctrine of degrees of reality, applicable ontologically, ethically, and psychologically,³ suggests how differentiation within the whole may be conceived. The differentiation is conscious,⁴ not, however, dependent on memory, but of the nature of an 'immediate feeling', which, in the highest degree, is the beatitude of perfection itself. In this state life is intellectual purely, the 'eyes of the mind' being the 'demonstrations themselves'.⁵

whether we speak in terms of the autonomy of the one or of the other.

¹ Man, like other things, is simply a 'balance of motion and rest', and liable to redistributions which appear to us as 'alternations of personality' or the phenomena of birth and death (*Short Treatise*, II, Pref. notes 8-10, pp. 63-4; *Eth.* IV, 39 and sch.).

² *Eth.* II, 18; V, 21.

³ *Eth.* II, 13 sch.; *Ep.* XXIII, pp. 105-6; *Eth.* III, 57 sch.

⁴ 'Vita et gaudium' = 'idea sive anima eiusdem individui', and differs in different men according to their 'essentia' (III, 57 sch.); but the 'essentia' has an eternal place in God (V, 22), in whom therefore 'sentimus experimurque nos aeternos esse' (V, 23 sch.).

⁵ V, 23 sch.; cf. *Theol.-Pol.* XIII, § 17 ('res indivisibiles et quae solius mentis sunt objecta'—the reference is to God—'nullis aliis oculis videri possint quam per demonstrationes'). The possibility of pure memory, advanced by Descartes (*Letters*, vol. iii, p. 626) to meet the problem of survival of personality—'je trouve en nous une memoire intellectuelle qui est assurément indépendante du corps'—is not accepted in *D.I.E.* § 82 and § 83 note; and it would seem that Leibniz' criticism (*Réfutation Inédite*, p. 58), 'ratio sine imaginatione et memoria est consequentia sine praemissis', would be unescapable. Already, however, in *Eth.* II, 18 sch., in which memory is explained, it is made clear that the order of the intellect, which is distinct from physical

The highest type of knowledge, made way for by the removal of imagination, the 'eternal' knowledge, that is, which brings a timeless satisfaction to the mind, is the knowledge of things 'in God' as 'real or true'.¹ The more we learn to know things 'in God' the more we love Him, or, He loves Himself.² Only now can we understand the nature of the *scientia intuitiva*—it is the knowledge of God as God knows Himself, and in which we participate in proportion as we perceive our inherence in Him as Knower and Known.³ 'Immortality' in the popular⁴ sense has no meaning. Eternity, perfection, individuality, is independent of what we call 'this' life. In so far as a man rids himself of imagination or the partial point of view, he achieves his immortality. The *ordo ad intellectum* is; the *ordo ad naturam*, or the order of imagination, is not. The logical contrast between intellect and imagination pursues us even in the question of the final destiny of man.⁵

It is clear, then, from Spinoza's own words, and from a general consideration of his system as a whole, how fundamental to his thought is the conception of imagination. To it we owe his resolution of the logical problem of the nature of error; of the theological problem of the attributes of God; of memory, is real. It is this 'order' which does not 'perish' with the body, because it has nothing to do with the body. 'Nam mens non minus res illas sentit quas intelligendo concipit quam quas in memoria habet.' *Eth.* V, 23 sch.

We have interesting testimony of Spinoza's conception in the record of a conversation between Tschirnhausen and Leibniz (ap. Stein, *Leibniz und Spinoza*, p. 283): 'Putat nos morientes plerorumque oblivisci et ea tantum retinere quae habemus cognitione quam ille vocat intuitivam quam pauci norint.'

¹ V, 27; 29 sch.; 33 sch.

² V, 32, and 36.

³ V, 36 sch.; 38 dem. and sch.; 39 sch. It will be noted that the quantity of the 'immortal' part of mind depends on the amount of knowledge acquired.

⁴ V, 41 sch.

⁵ 'Pars mentis aeterna est intellectus per quem solum nos agere dicimur; illa autem quam perire ostendimus est ipsa imaginatio.' V, 40 cor. The word 'illaesa' in V, 38 dem. end, is significant.

the ethical problem of the aim of human life; and of the metaphysical problem of the soul and its immortality. Now if it be true, as has been asserted,¹ that 'in the Spinozistic philosophy there are few differences from Descartes which cannot be traced to the necessary development of Cartesian principles', we should expect to find the source of this fundamental idea in Descartes. But the most cursory examination of the ways in which Descartes treats these various problems shows at once that, whatever his solutions may be, they are not those of Spinoza. He recognizes that 'man is a part of nature',² but develops the doctrine in the physiological sense only. He seeks for the origin of error, but finds it in the indeterminism of man.³ The religious opinions which he defended and considered it the chief merit of his philosophy that it enabled him to defend, were those of the dominant Church;⁴ and he would seem to have contributed little to a positive theory of ethics beyond the apophthegm *bene vixit bene qui latuit*.⁵ Since, however, the word *imaginatio* occurs often in

¹ By Edward Caird: article *Cartesianism* in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (ed. XI, p. 121, col. 1), reprinted in vol. ii of his *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, Maclehose, 1892.

² e. g. 'Superest adhuc una veritas cuius cognitio mihi videtur admodum utilis nempe quod . . . cogitare debeamus non posse quempiam per se solum subsistere et re vera nos esse ex partibus Universi unam, et potissimum unam ex Terrae partibus huius videlicet politiae, societatis, familiae, quicum domicilio sacramento nativitate conjuncti sumus; Totius autem cuius pars sumus, bonum privato bono debet anteponi; attamen cum modo et ratione,' &c. (*Ep.* I, 7, p. 16).

³ Above, pp. 30-1; and Spinoza's criticism (*Ep.* II).

⁴ Above, p. 28, n. 1.

⁵ *Ep.* II, 76, p. 249 (to Mersenne). The point of cleavage between Descartes' 'Passions of the Soul' and the fourth book of the *Ethics* lies, as usual, in the conception of the power of the will. In Descartes' ethics, as in his logic, the will is supreme, and has absolute power over our emotions, a point of view against which the whole of Spinozism is one long protest, from the *Short Treatise* (e. g. II, cap. 5, p. 80, l. 8-18) to the *Tractatus Politici* (e. g. II, § 6; X, § 9). The very significant addition of Spinoza to his quotation (in *Eth.* V, pref. ♪ from

his works, it will be worth while to trace its usage in some detail, in order to exhibit once again the characteristic peculiarity which makes our general problem so complex. For in this case, as in so many other cases, of apparent dependence of Spinoza on Descartes, the words really belong to and originate in the great Aristotelian tradition, and so are common to all post-Aristotelian thinkers; ¹ the ideas, however, are not found in Descartes at all, but are found in their plainest and most avowed form in Maimonides.

§ 4. *The uses of 'Imaginatio' in Descartes*

To Descartes imagination is primarily a psychological fact. It is defined as the 'particular effort of mind' which calls up a mental picture, and which is distinguishable from intellection only by the object of its interest. 'In pure intellection the mind in some manner turns on itself, and considers some of the ideas which it possesses in itself; in imagining it turns towards its body and sees there something conforming to an idea which has been either intellected by it or perceived by the senses.'² When, however, Descartes, in the Treatise on the 'Passions of the Soul',³ comes to investigate its psychological character more closely, he does not make it clear either what process is involved, or what are its determining conditions. If the object corresponding to the image may or may not be real; if in the calling up of the image the will may or may not be exercised; if in the framing of the image the 'animal spirits' may or may not pass through the proper channels; then it would seem that a scientific account the 'Passions of the Soul' ('commotiones animae quae . . . N.B. producuntur'—see Van Vloten's editions) sums up the whole point in two letters.

¹ This is brought out very clearly in the essay of Prof. J. Guttmann, *Spinozas Zusammenhang mit dem Aristotelismus in Judaica Festschrift zu Hermann Cohen* (Cassirer, 1912), p. 516.

² *Med.* VI, p. 73: 14-20.

³ Articles 19-12, 26.

of imagination is impossible. The crucial difficulty, however, occurs in the third Meditation, where the very existence of God is at stake. The word 'idea', we are told,¹ properly applies to thoughts which are 'as it were images of things'. . . thoughts such as those of a man, or a chimaera, the heavens, or an angel, or God'; and any idea or image in itself is just as true as any other. Imagining, therefore, would seem to be an essential function even of the 'pure' intellect, seeing that the very idea of God is only a thought in so far as it is an image.

This statement was seized on with avidity by his materialistic critics; Hobbes, in particular, being rejoiced to find confirmation of his suspicion that God was either corporeal or non-existent.³ As often, Descartes' replies are not satisfactory or consistent with the original affirmation—a fact which would present matter for surprise were it not for the revelations of a letter to Clerselier. The obvious objection to the ontological argument, Descartes says, is that an idea might be held to comprehend a chimaera, and that, therefore, to admit the argument from idea to reality would involve admitting the reality of the chimaera.⁴ Now the chimaera is a product not of 'intellect' but of 'imagination'. One way, therefore, of meeting the objection is to affirm that any idea, whether of the imagination or of the intellect, involves reality. For this reason, Descartes goes on to say, he brought together in the *Meditations* the product both of intellection and of imagination within the confines of the one word 'idea'. The existence of God and that of the chimaera now stand or fall together, and both God and the chimaera (the latter in a certain sense only) exist. Descartes, then, defends the argument for the existence of God by the device of admitting the reality of the

¹ *Med.* III, p. 37: 3-6.

² 'Tanquam rerum imagines.'

³ *Obj.* III, pp. 178-81, cf. the remarks of Gassendi (V, pp. 265-8 and 329). For Hobbes' materialistic doctrine of God see the passages collected in Lange, *History of Materialism*, Book I, Part III, cap. 2, last note.

⁴ Cf. Leibniz' comment above, p. 38, n. 2.

chimaera ; and that is only effected by deliberately turning thought into an image, and allowing any image the validity of thought.¹

If for dialectical purposes, however, Descartes is willing to confuse imagination with intellect, in his private correspondence he severs them completely. Here he acknowledges the inconclusiveness of the arguments of the *Discourse* for the existence of God, but excuses himself on the ground that 'judgements resting on the senses or imagination, not from pure intellect, are necessarily false or uncertain'.² But this confining of strict proof in metaphysics to the pure intellect, as opposed to the imagination, leads us to still greater difficulties when we remember the more technical use of the word. The one science which has achieved apodeictic certainty, and which is to be the model for all the sciences, including metaphysics, is precisely that science which without the aid of imagination would lose its peculiar character. The 'schematizing' imagination, as it was afterwards called, is for Descartes an essential factor in mathematical investigation, and yet it is precisely this same imagination which is the bane of metaphysics.³ And this opposition between the imaginative and the speculative, which is none other than the opposition between

¹ 'Cum esset mihi animus argumentum pro Dei existentia ducere ex idea sive cogitatione quam de illo habemus, existimavi debere me primo distinguere nostras omnes cogitationes in certa quaedam genera ut observarem quatenam sint illa quae possunt decipere; atque ostendendo vel ipsas chimaeras nullam in se habere falsitatem illorum opinioni irem obviam qui ratiocinationem meam repudiare possent, eo quod ideam quam de Deo habemus in numerum chimaerarum referant.' *Ep.* I, 119, p. 381. For the Cartesian chimaera cf. above, p. 113.

² ' . . . hanc materiam melius tractare non poteram, nisi fuse explicando falsitatem aut incertitudinem omnium iudiciorum a sensu aut imaginatione pendentium et deinde ostendendo quatenam sunt illa quae non pendent nisi ab intellectu puro et quam evidentia sint et certa.' (*Ep.* I, 112, p. 362, to Mersenne.)

³ ' . . . ea enim ingenii pars, imaginatio nempe, quae ad Mathesim maxime inuvat, plus nocet quam prodest ad Metaphysicas speculationes.' (*Ep.* II, 33, p. 130, to Mersenne.)

mathematics and metaphysics, comes out again most interestingly in the famous passage in which he describes his way of life: 'I spend only a very few hours a day', he writes, 'in those thoughts which exercise the imagination; and only a very few a year in those which exercise the pure intellect.'¹ Now 'the thoughts which exercise the imagination' are those which relate to mathematics; the 'thoughts which exercise the pure intellect' are those which relate to metaphysics.

It is, of course, true that all these various usages correspond to psychological facts, and some, indeed, were to find fruitful treatment at the hands of Descartes' successors. It is, however, important to note that they hold no integral part in the system, and vary in accordance rather with the needs of the moment than with any fundamental underlying conception. When we turn to Spinoza, we find precisely the opposite case. Imagination has a definite meaning with a definite place in the whole system. Introduced from its very heart, it is the instrument for the resolution of its primary difficulties, including, as we have seen, not only the logical problem of error and the ethical problem of evil, but the metaphysical problem of man's final end and immortality. To us it is natural to look to the pages of Maimonides for an explanation of this peculiar use. Since the principle on which it depends, that nature is one whole of which man is a part, is, as we saw, derived from Maimonides, it is not unnatural to suppose that the working out of the principle in the detail of its practical application is to be found in Maimonides as well.

¹ 'Et certe possum ingenue profiteri, praecipuam quam in studiis meis secutus sum regulam et quam puto mihi prae ceteris profuisse in cognitione nonnulla comparanda, fuisse, quod paucissimas singulis diebus horas iis cogitationibus impenderem quae imaginationem exercent; per annum autem paucissimas iis quae intellectum solum; reliquum vero tempus sensibus relaxandis et animi quieti dederim; imaginationis vero exercitiis annuero etiam colloquia seria, illudque omne quod attentionem poscit.' (*Ep.* I, 30, p. 62-3.)

§ 5. *The Grades of Natural Knowledge in Maimonides. 'Imaginatio' and the Problem of Error. Prophecy and 'Scientia Intuitiva'*

To Maimonides all things in the created universe are composed of 'matter' and 'form', the doctrine being saved from a dualism by the consideration that the distinction is not physical, but logical.¹ Man, being a part of the created universe, is also composed of matter and form. This fact is unsurmountable, and conditions all knowledge. Pure form or God cannot be known by man, because man, even the highest, retains a 'material' element. There are natural limits to human knowledge, because man cannot know anything beyond the material universe of which he is a part.²

The lowest stage in knowledge, if it can be called knowledge at all, is the perceptive knowledge of the ordinary man who is bound down to the immediate facts of his corporeal environment and the prejudices of convention. There are, however, two higher stages. The first is the stage of the scientist; the second, that is to say, the highest of all, is the stage of the prophet. In this doctrine the significance of the 'triplicity' of the *Guide* which we had occasion to note before,³ stands revealed. The ordinary man (and with him the theologian); the scientist and Aristotelian philosopher (who is at war with the theologian); the prophet, who is one with the true metaphysician; are representatives of these three stages of knowledge. Each stage and each class has its opinions on all the great problems—the being of God; the origin of the universe; the structure of created things. These particular problems are discussed in the first portion of the *Guide*, and we have followed

¹ *Guide*, I, 72 (p. 114); II, 1 (p. 151); II, 17 (p. 180); III, 8 (p. 261). The fundamental character of this position has been shown by Dr. D. Neumarck in, e. g., *Toldoth Ha-Ikharim*, vol. ii, cap. vii.

² *Guide*, I, caps. 31-4; cf. above, p. 94, n. 1.

³ Above, p. 68.

them in their order and general outline. The second portion deals with the character of these stages themselves. The second half of the second book gives the general theory, under the name of the theory of prophecy; while the third and last book is concerned with a discussion of its ethical consequences, in the course of which is given an apologia for the commandments of the Pentateuch, and a treatment of the problems of evil, providence, and the end of man. The *Guide*, then, presents a complete and homogeneous whole, and its central core is the theory of knowledge.

The key is supplied by an earlier chapter, that on God as the unity of *intellectus*, *intelligens*, and *intelligibile*.¹ Intellect, we learn, is nothing apart from that which it 'intellects' by its action; and the 'intellected' is nothing apart from the action of the intellect. In God, who is intellect always in action, these two are identical with Himself. For, being pure intellect, He does not pass from 'potency' to 'actuality' as man does, but is always 'actual'; His understanding, therefore, which is His essence, and the objects of His understanding, are one. The origins and destiny of this theory are well known,² but it is essential to note its specific limitations. The proposition is true only in the case of the purest intellection, which *ex hypothesi* is impossible to man. Man can only hope to enjoy it intermittently,³ and that only when he achieves the severance of his thinking from 'the representative faculty—the reproduction of a material image in *imagination*'.⁴

For in direct contrast to the intellect stands the corporeal imagination: 'The intellect analyses and divides the component parts of things; it forms abstract ideas of them;

¹ I, 68.

² See the concluding page of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, where the famous passage in Book Λ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is transcribed as the last word of his own philosophy.

³ *Guide*, Introduction, p. 3 (cf. Arist. *Metaph.* Λ , c. xi, § 7).

⁴ I, 68, end, p. 102.

represents them in their true form as well as in their causal relations; . . . distinguishes that which is the property of the genus from that which is peculiar to the individual—and determines whether certain qualities of a thing are essential or non-essential. Imagination has none of these functions. It only perceives the individual, the compound in that aggregate condition in which it presents itself to the senses; or it combines things which exist separately, joins some of them together and represents them all as one body . . . Hence it is that some imagine a man with a horse's head, with wings, &c. This is called a fiction . . . it is a thing to which nothing in the actual world corresponds. Nor can imagination in any way obtain a purely immaterial image of an object . . . Imagination yields, therefore, no test for the reality of a thing. . .'

This interesting passage¹ goes on to give examples of things which, though impossible to the imagination, are yet intellectual truths; or which, though possible to the imagination, are in fact demonstrably fictions. Possibility is only another name, then, for compatibility with intellectual demands. That we cannot imagine such a phenomenon as that presented by the antipodes or by the results of certain mathematical theorems, has nothing at all to do with their real existence. Any argument, therefore, drawn from the imagination is to be rejected at once.

When we remember the place of this polemic, its importance is manifest. It occurs in the chapters devoted to the criticism of the Kalam, i. e., of the theological, or lowest, stage of human intelligence. That the whole theory is systematic and fundamental, not merely an *ad hoc* assumption, is evidenced by the

¹ I, 73, note to tenth Prop. (p. 130). Maimonides' special treatise on psychology, the so-called Eight Chapters, in which the points noted in the following pages receive systematic treatment, is available in Latin translations (e. g. in the *Porta Mosis* of Pococke) and in an English version by Gorfinkle (Columbia University Press, 1912). There is a monograph by Scheyer, *Das Psychologische System des Maimonides* (Frankfurt, 1845).

fact that it is woven into the whole texture of the *Guide*, a cursory examination of which shows how deeply the distinction has penetrated. If we look at the cases in which it comes into greatest prominence, it is interesting to observe that they all have reference to the nature of God. Thus it is the imagination that makes difficult the conceptions of the *incorporeality of God*, 'because those who do not distinguish between objects of the intellect and objects of the imagination' are unable 'to form a notion of anything immaterial'¹; of the *simplicity of God*, because 'every existing material thing is necessarily imagined as a certain substance possessing several attributes'²; of the *complete infinity of God*, because 'with every additional positive assertion you follow your imagination and recede from the true knowledge of God'³; or, finally, of the *eternity of God*, the doctrine, that is, 'that there is no relation between God and time and space; for time is an accident connected with motion'⁴ and therefore a part of the world of imagination.

It is, then, the imagination of man which stands in the way of his understanding of God; but that is only another way of saying that it stands in the way of knowledge. To say that the imagination cannot understand God, means, from the logical point of view, that it is unable to grapple with the nature of possibility. It is the imagination which is willing to accept any theory, 'whether the reality corresponds or not'; the imagination which, in order to substantiate its prejudices, will reject 'logical method' and 'demonstrated results'. It is, then, the intellect to which we must turn, and on which we must rely; and the mark of the intellect is precisely that it

¹ I, 49, p. 66; cf. I, 26, p. 35.

² I, 51, p. 69.

³ I, 59, p. 84.

⁴ I, 52, p. 71; II, 13, pp. 171-2. All these points reappear, of course, in Spinoza, cf. e. g. *Eth.* I, 8, 13, 15, and 33 sch. 2; II, 44 cor. II dem., 47 sch., and above, pp. 114 ff. *Ep.* XXXV gives an almost identical list, indivisibility being substituted for incorporeality.

possesses the power of understanding what law is, or, in Maimonides' phrase, the nature of the 'necessary, the possible and the impossible'.¹

With this distinction in our minds, we are ready to be led to the third and highest type of knowledge. Of the three stages of mind, the prophetic, the scientific, and the imaginative, the first is a higher fusion of the other two, and combines organically the characteristics of both. Whereas imagination is individual and corporeal, and the intellect is universal and incorporeal, the prophetic 'conceives ideas which are confirmed by reality, and are as clear as if deduced by means of syllogisms'; it 'passes over intermediate causes' and 'draws inferences quickly' and is thus enabled 'to foretell a future event with such clearness as if it were a thing already perceived by the senses'.² Prophecy is therefore an immediate, super-inferential, and individual yet non-corporeal intuition, apprehending directly through essence, not indirectly by means of relations, and is the nearest approach of man to God, and of man's knowledge to God's knowledge. Through it man achieves the highest metaphysical truths, i. e., apprehends God 'as nearly as man can without becoming God'

In other words, Maimonides understands prophetic knowledge to partake of the *a priori* character of the knowledge of God, and therefore to be with it distinct in kind from the *a posteriori* knowledge of ordinary humanity, which, even in the higher stage represented by scientific thought, is still dependent on the empirical collection of data. This distinction is illustrated by an analogy drawn from the different knowledges of the workings of a clock possessed by the watchmaker and an external observer. In the one case, the working follows the knowledge, in the other the knowledge follows the working.³ Whatever one may think of the idea as applied either to man or

¹ I, 73, note to tenth prop., pp. 130-1. Cf. (for Spinoza) above, p. 112.

² II, caps. 37-8; cap. 48, p. 249.

³ III, cap. 21. Cf. Joel, *Lévi-ben-Gerson* (Breslau, 1862), pp. 56-7.

to God, and indeed it is common enough in the history of thought, it seems that we must recognize in it the source of the doctrine of *scientia intuitiva* in Spinoza. The *scientia intuitiva* is the reflection in the mind of the essence of a thing, as it manifests the essence of God who 'willed' it into being in accordance with His own nature. It, therefore, is God's knowledge, because His will and knowledge are identical with His essence. But such knowledge clearly cannot be discursive, proceeding from part to part, like our ordinary logical thought, still less fortuitous and fragmentary like the presentations of the imagination. It is an intuition of the part in its inherence in the whole.¹

By prophecy, then, as by *scientia intuitiva*, things are seen in their essential natures. But the growth into Knowledge is not a phenomenon in vacuo. It involves for the knower an ascent in the scale of humanity. By knowing more and better, man becomes more characteristically man. We must turn, then, to the ethical consequences of this logical doctrine.

¹ Cf. 'Since God is a first cause of all other things . . . the knowledge of God is and remains before the knowledge of all other things . . .' S.T. II, 5, p. 81. 'Si intellectus ad divinam naturam pertinet, non poterit uti noster intellectus posterior (ut plerisque placet) vel simul natura esse cum rebus intellectis, quandoquidem Deus omnibus rebus prior est causalitate; sed contra veritas et formalis rerum essentia ideo talis est quia talis in Dei intellectu existit objective.' *Eth.* I, 17 sch. 'Hoc (=tertium) cognoscendi genus procedit ab adaequata idea essentiae formalis quorundam Dei attributorum ad adaequatam cognitionem essentiae rerum.' II, 40, sch. 2. The discursive character of human thought is due to its physical limitations: 'Omnia simul concipere res est longe supra humani intellectus vires' (*D.I.E.*, § 102, cf. § 13).

§ 6. 'Imaginatio' and the 'Deliverance of Man' in Maimonides. *The Theory of Intellectual Immortality*

The process of training is described in the last chapters of the *Guide* under the heading 'How the perfect worship God': 'My son, so long as you are engaged in studying the mathematical sciences and logic, you belong to those who go round about the palace in search of the gate; . . . when you study physics you have entered the hall; and when after completing the study of natural philosophy you master metaphysics, you are in the innermost hall and are with the king in the same palace. You have attained the degree of the wise men who include men of different grades of perfection. . . . There are some who direct all their mind towards the attainment of perfection in metaphysics, devote themselves entirely to God . . . in the study of the universe. . . . These form the class of prophets.'¹ It will be noted that, in this passage, the 'natural' character of prophecy is clearly defined. The theory of prophecy is a theory of knowledge naturally acquired,² but the 'knowledge' is not at the intermediate, discursive level of logic, but at the ultimate, synoptic level of metaphysics. The first stage, that of imagination, is long since transcended.

If we ask what is the nature of the ascent from the point of view of logic, the answer is, through the removal of 'barriers' or 'screens' put into the way by the corporeal imagination.³ The highest human wisdom is separated from the divine by at least one 'screen', that of corporeality, because so long as man is man he cannot but be liable to a minimum of corporeal

¹ III, cap. 51, p. 385.

² 'Uterius erravit [Maimonides] circa prophetiam credens hominem se posse sufficienter disponere ad gratiam prophetiae et quod Deus non eligit in prophetando quemcumque hominem singularem sed illum qui se aptat ad talia; unde visus est velle divinam providentiam dependere ab operibus nostris.' (*De erroribus philosophorum*, XII, § 8.)

³ III, cap. 9.

experience. It is only the very highest human wisdom, however, which is separated from God by one screen only. For all lower grades the screens are many, and increase in number the lower the grade. They take the forms of the positive fictions of the imagination, which can be dispelled only by the negations effected by the intellect. These positive fictions are of course nothing else but the attributes of the theologians; and it is only through the negative criticisms of the non-imaginational intellect that an approach is possible to the non-imaginable ideal.

With the attributes goes the problem of evil. Just as there is no absolute good, so there is no absolute evil. The error of the pessimists lies in their considering their own, or human troubles in general, as the centre of things. But man is a part of the universe, and therefore must be judged together with the whole of the universe. To give the verdict for pessimism on the evidence of personal sorrows is the supreme conceit of anthropocentricity.¹ Many things are evil to man, but man has no right to set himself up as the ultimate standard. The fundamental error of the imagination lies in its setting up of such 'final ends'. Teleological explanations, in the conventional sense at any rate, must be banned, because, like other values, they are personal and imaginative, and therefore untrue. The doctrine of the unity of nature must be accepted in the full and deep sense that 'the universe does not exist for man's sake, but each being exists for its own sake'²; and

¹ III, caps. 10-12. These passages became the subject of a battle-at-arms between Leibniz and Bayle. Cf. Theodicee III, Nr. 262-3, ap. Guttman (*Moses ben Maimon*, vol. i, pp. 228-9).

² III, caps. 13-14, following on the discussion of evil, caps. 10-13. For Spinoza see *Eth.* I, App., and IV, pref. ('... ut... nullius finis causa existit, nullius etiam finis causa agit... Causa autem quae finalis dicitur nihil est praeter ipsum humanum appetitum...'). The opinion that 'Deum omnia propter hominem fecisse, hominem autem ut ipsum coleret' is derided by Maimonides (III, 13, p. 274) as well as by Spinoza (*Eth.* I, App., p. 217).

this doctrine carries with it the corollary for logic, that 'we must accommodate our opinions to things, not things to our opinions'.¹

As if to emphasize the fact that the 'negations' must be made 'by proof' and not by 'mere words', i. e., that the 'revelation', though 'natural', and therefore not 'mystic' in the sentimental sense, is attainable only through the exercise of the logical faculty, Maimonides adds a final word. Throughout life 'it is the intellect which emanates from God unto us that is the link that joins us to God. You have it in your power to strengthen that bond, if you choose to do so, or to weaken it gradually till it break, if you prefer this. It will only become strong when you employ it in the love of God and seek that love. . . . When we have acquired a true knowledge of God, and rejoice in that knowledge in such a manner that whilst speaking with others or attending to our bodily wants, our mind is all that time with God; when we are with our heart constantly near God, even whilst our body is in the society of men; when we are in that state which the Song on the relation between God and man poetically describes in the following words: "I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh"—then we have attained not only the height of ordinary prophets, but of Moses our teacher, of whom Scripture relates "and Moses alone shall come near before God. . . ."² It is through education in logic that character is acquired, and the character, once acquired, persists.

For knowledge is not a passive deposit, as it were, in the mind, but an active agent, influencing the character of the mind. To speak more accurately, it is only by becoming an active agent that the mind can acquire knowledge at all. God, as we have seen, is the unity of *intellectus*, *intelligens* and

¹ I, 71, p. 110, in the discussion of the Kalam, cf. Spinoza, e. g. *Ep.* XIII, p. 50 (a criticism of Descartes and Bacon), and *Theol.-Pol.* VI, § 34.

² III, 51, pp. 386-7.

intelligibile, and therefore in so far as man knows God, God may be said to know man, and, since 'divine Providence is connected with divine intellectual influence', to care for man. Except in the case of mankind, God's knowledge and care is not for the individual but for the type, but that is because the individual members of the type are not true individuals at all. Man, however, has it in his power to evolve individuality, and the greater the individuality attained (that is, the truer the ideas he achieves, or, the more his mind becomes that of God) the greater is the providence of God for him. God may be said to know or care for man in the exact proportion and degree in which man knows and cares for (or loves) God; therefore the knowledge and love of God for man and the knowledge and love of man for God are strictly commensurate terms. Indeed, they are almost interchangeable; because, 'when he does not meditate on God, when he is separated from God, then God is also separated from him'.¹

This connexion between God and man is fixed at, and remains unaltered after, the death of the body. 'Their knowledge of God', we read, 'is strengthened when death approaches; their intellect remains then constantly *in the same condition*, since the obstacle is removed that at times had intervened between the intellect and the object of its action, and it continues for ever in that great delight.'² The 'absorption' in God which in life was commensurate with the amount of knowledge acquired of Him, continues unaltered and un-

¹ See the whole theory of Divine Providence, III, caps. 17-18. The important points are: 'Providence can only proceed from an intelligent being . . . those creatures therefore which receive part of that intellectual influence will become subject to the action of Providence in the same proportion as they are acted upon by the Intellect.' p. 288. 'Only individual beings have real existence, and individual beings are endowed with Divine Intellect; Divine Providence therefore acts upon these individual beings.' p. 290. Cf. the remarkable passage in III, cap. 51, pp. 388-9, containing the 'excellent idea' which occurred to him while writing.

² III, 51, p. 391.

interrupted after life. 'Immortality' depends on individuality, and individuality on knowledge; and knowledge is precisely the negating of the fictions of the imagination.

That this theory of 'intellectual immortality'¹ is strikingly similar to that of Spinoza is not a matter for surprise, seeing that it arises immediately from premisses which are common to both. The principal difficulty in the way of understanding it lies in the fact that since it is only the 'actualized' soul which persists, and since the 'actualized' soul is neither more nor less than the sum of acquired knowledge, it would seem that no differentiation is possible between the various actualized souls, the 'sum of knowledge' being presumably impersonal and the same for all alike. Even if we allow that mere 'demonstrations'² may be held to survive the physical mind in which they were achieved, we have yet to understand how the 'demonstrations' of one mind may be kept distinct from the 'demonstrations' of another. Memory, we are told, by Maimonides³ as well as by Spinoza, may persist apart from the body; but how, one may well ask, can any one memory survive independently of any other?

The problem is made even more difficult if we remember the implications of the very conception of enumeration. Number and materiality are inseparable,⁴ but the immortalized soul, particularly if equated with a 'sum of demonstrations', is nothing if not immaterial. It would seem that we are driven to some form of 'monopsychism', either in the psychological sense that the individual souls return to the one

¹ I am at a loss to understand why Joel (cf. Pollock, *Spinoza*, p. 271) thought it necessary to go to Gersonides for this theory. See the excursus of Asher Crescas to his commentary on *Guide*, I, 70; Shem Tob on *Guide*, I, 74, arg. 7; and Euchel on *Guide*, II, Intr., prop. 16.

² Above p. 122 with n. 5.

³ 'His learning remaineth with him,' goes a Talmudic saying, 'and he enjoys both this world and the world to come.' And Maimonides explains, 'In works on Metaphysics it has been shown that such knowledge, i. e., the perception of the Active Intellect, can never be forgotten. I, 62, pp 92-3. ⁴ ὅσα ἀριθμῶ πολλά, ὕλην ἔχει, Arist. *Met.* Δ 8, § 18.

and undifferentiated world soul,¹ or in the logical sense that 'an adequate idea, when once thought, forms a permanent addition to the stock of scientific knowledge in the world'.²

The hint for a possible solution of the problem is given us in the sixteenth of the propositions of the philosophers which form the introduction to the second part of the *Guide*. Here we learn that 'purely spiritual beings, which are neither corporeal nor forces situated in corporeal objects, cannot be counted, *except when considered as causes and effects*' ; and this same caveat is repeated in the three places in which the proposition is used.³ The reason is clear. In the theory of the system of *natura naturata* developed by the Arabic philosophers on the basis of various passages of Aristotle, the Spheres which go to make up the descending scale of the planetary system have corresponding to them immaterial Intelligences, each one of which is derived from that immediately superior.⁴ We must assume, therefore, as a fact of the created universe, that a causal series of differentiated spiritual beings is possible.

Now the lowest of these Intelligences is the Active Intellect which is operative in any effort of human thought, and with which rank the actualized souls of men.⁵ We may, then, conceive of these souls being arranged in the same way as are the differentiated Intelligences, that is, in accordance with their degree of reality or of actualization (which depends, of course, on the quantitative sum of knowledge which they have acquired), and in relation to one another as causes to effects. This system of Intelligences running parallel with the system of material things (the whole being comprehended within the infinite and indivisible thought of the one God), is not very far

¹ Munk's note to *Guide*, I, 74, p. 434, n. 4.

² A. E. Taylor: 'The Concept of Immortality in Spinoza's *Ethics*', *Mind*, April 1896, p. 164.

³ *Guide*, I, 74, p. 138; II, 1, p. 151; 4, p. 158.

⁴ *Guide*, II, caps. 4-6. The sources are given in Munk, vol. ii, p. 51, n. 4, and in the second volume of Dubem's *Système du Monde*.

⁵ *Guide*, II, cap. 4, p. 158.

removed, as Professor Pearson has reminded us, from the dual series in the universe presented to us in the metaphysic of Spinoza.¹ But the similarity becomes more striking still in its further consequences, for the conception that the actualized souls of men form, as it were, eternal links in the causal chain of Intelligences (a conception which Maimonides himself suggests only to reject)² does, as a fact, reappear in the scholium in which Spinoza sums up and concludes his doctrine of immortality: 'From this and from other propositions', he says, 'it is clear that our mind, in so far as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so to infinity; so that they all together make up the eternal and infinite intellect of God.'³

That this state cannot be imagined is, of course, no argument against its existence, because it is avowedly the imagination which prevents man from comprehending the immaterial. And herein, from our immediate point of view, lies the most significant point of all. However we are to understand Maimonides' account of immortality (and the problem is intricate, and has given rise to much discussion), one point in it stands out as clearly as it does in the account given by Spinoza. Every man, so long as he thinks at all, is, in some, if an infinitesimal, degree, 'immortal', although compared

¹ In *Maimonides and Spinoza* (above, p. 102, n. 4), with reference to the cosmology of the *Strong Hand*. It will be noted that the motive of this strange theory is the fundamental assumption that 'the source of intellect must itself be pure intellect' (II, 4, p. 158), or 'that which produces form must itself be abstract form' (II, 12, p. 169). Cf. the second 'axiom of the philosophers', II, 22, p. 192: 'Things are not produced by other things at random; . . . a form cannot emanate from matter, nor matter from form.'

² 'That which remains of Zaid [after his death] is neither the cause nor the effect of that which is left of Amir.' I, 74, p. 138. The doctrine, however, seems to be accepted, though somewhat obscurely, in the earlier *Strong Hand*, I, 2, §§ 3-6, 4, §§ 8-9; V, 8, §§ 2-3.

³ *Eth.* V, 40 sch.; cf. Joachim: *Study*, p. 309.

with the metaphysician, the completely uninstructed is 'like the beasts that perish'. The greater the place allowed to the imagination, the less is left to the intellect, and the smaller is the sum of knowledge acquired; the smaller the sum of knowledge acquired, the less is the degree of individuality attained, and the lower is the grade achieved in eternity; but whether the grade achieved be high or low, it is achieved in and during this life, and through the throwing off of the trammels of the imagination.

With the doctrine of intellectual immortality we may leave this peculiar though highly suggestive theory. Whatever may be thought of its intrinsic value, it sets the coping stone on our general thesis. To meet the one fundamental problem of all systems of philosophy Spinoza specifically rejected the solution offered by Descartes and adopted that offered by Maimonides. The account of reality given by Spinoza and Maimonides we saw earlier to be the same, but any account of reality is incomplete without an account of appearance. A theory of truth cannot stand without a theory of error; a theory of good without a theory of evil; a theory of the infinite without a theory of the finite. This integral portion of any coherent account of the universe, in its characteristic form, in the face of similar opponents, and with the same implications in every field of human speculation, we now see to have been taken over verbally by Spinoza from Maimonides. '*Praeclare distinguit Maimonides*', we may well then agree with Leibniz, '*inter intellectionem et imaginationem*'.¹

¹ Curiously enough, this is Leibniz' final note to the *Guide*.

CONCLUSION

WITH this striking instance of detail our study comes to a close. Enough has been said to indicate the necessity of revising the conventional judgement that there was one unitary development in European philosophy from Descartes, through Spinoza and Leibniz, to Kant. Descartes and Spinoza represent two distinct poles of thought, examples of which may be found in every age. That the characteristic doctrine of Descartes was enunciated many centuries before by the Arabic theologians seems to be due not to a mechanical transference of ideas, but to an identity of intellectual needs. But be that as it may, the essential conflict between Descartes and Spinoza is found already clearly and definitely developed in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, and where Spinoza rejected the lead of Descartes, he not only followed that of Maimonides, but based his rejection on Maimonides' arguments, often, indeed, on his very words. 'A vast amount of learning and ingenuity', writes Principal Caird,¹ 'has been expended on the question of Spinoza's supposed obligations to Maimonides, Chasdai Crescas, and other distinguished philosophic writers of his own race . . .' but 'their occasional coincidences are such only to the ear.' In the light of the foregoing it seems clear that the 'supposed obligations' are something more than 'occasional coincidences'; and if we throw our minds back over the course which we have followed, we will appreciate how integral a place they occupy in the totality of Spinozism. We have watched the monism of Spinoza grow in the various stages of its natural development, and traced them back one by one to their analogue or origin in Maimonides. In some cases the principles involved are patent to the most casual reader; in others they are concealed by the historic termino-

¹ *Spinoza*, pp. 60, 69, (ed. 1910). Many similar judgements might be collected, cf. e. g. Pollock, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Kuno Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 262 f.; Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

logy in which they are expressed. All can understand the significance of the doctrine of the omnipresence of law in the organic unity of nature ; few see in the discussions anent the attributes of God the philosophical principle of relativity, or in the theory of the different grades of knowledge the essential basis of any monistic metaphysic. But whether the issues at stake are clear to the modern reader or not, Maimonides and Spinoza speak throughout with one voice.

My aim in this essay has been historical in a somewhat narrow sense and will have been realized if I have been enabled to set these giants of thought in their true connexion with one another. I may be permitted, however, to add a word with regard to the wider interest and significance of the argument. The position of Spinoza in the history of European thought is, it is generally acknowledged, peculiar. Neglected, except for purposes of execration, during his own lifetime and the following century, his work first met with recognition, howbeit over-extravagant, in the circles of the post-Kantian idealists, and had to wait for the last fifty years to gain its proper appreciation. This remarkable fact, which has prompted at least one historian of the problems of philosophy to treat of Spinoza after Kant, seems to stand in need of some special explanation. We cannot understand the historical place of a thinker, as M. Duhem reminds us,¹ unless we can determine not only his 'reading' but also his 'readers'; and in the case of Spinoza we have to account for the fact that his 'readers' were very few until a century and a half had elapsed after his death. In the light of the account which I have given it may be suggested that the Cartesian tradition had to reach its culmination in Kant before Spinoza could be 'read'; just as the attitude which he maintained in its regard was due to the work which he had early 'read' himself. Until Kant had worked out the logic of the pluralistic individualism of

¹ *Études sur Léonard de Vinci*, vol. i (Paris, 1906), Préf. pp. 6-7.

Descartes there was no room for the monism of Spinoza ; and the monism of Spinoza is a direct derivative of the characteristic form which the monotheistic idea, in opposition to the current mythological pluralism, had assumed in the mind of Maimonides. The *Guide for the Perplexed*, therefore, is the key not only to the growth of Spinoza's system in Spinoza's own mind, comprising as it does both his own positive philosophy and the grounds of its opposition to and rejection of Cartesianism, but also to the peculiar history of the influence which it exerted upon the course of European speculation. The long line of thinkers who from Albert and Aquinas drew consciously and directly from the inspiration of the *Guide*, are succeeded by all those who during the past century have drunk from the well of Hegel.