

- THE PROBLEM OF -
EVIL:

A MAIMONIDEAN
VIEW OF THE
DARK SIDE

אין ה"ר"ם של שאלת ה"א"ם מ"ג

חוקי ה"ק"ן
ה"א"ם

Presented by Rabbi Jeffrey Katz
א"ת נשאל אב"א
הרב שמואל בן יוסף
הכהן ז"ל

זכר'ם לבי'ד' (האני'ס)

4

כי בל-דרךיו משפט

הצור המים קשלו

- vs. -

ע'ה נ"ה:ס'

יצר אור ובורא חשך עשה שלום ובורא רע

Does Evil come from Gd?

Is Gd responsible for it?

If not → then who/what is?

- "physical" evils

- "moral" evils

In accordance with this view we explain the following passage of Isaiah: "I form the light and create (*bore*) darkness: I make peace, and create (*bore*) evil" (Isa. xlv. 7), for darkness and evil are non-existing things. Consider that the prophet does not say, I make (*'oseb*) darkness, I make (*'oseb*) evil, because darkness and evil are not things in positive existence to which the verb "to make" would apply; the verb *bara* "he created" is used, because in Hebrew this verb is applied to non-existing things, e.g., "In the beginning God created" (*bara*), etc.; here the creation took place from nothing. Only in this sense can non-existence be said to be produced by a certain action of an agent. In the same way we must explain the following passage: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing," etc. (Exod. iv. 11). The passage can also be explained as follows: Who has made man able to speak? or can create him without the capacity of speaking, i.e., create a substance that is incapable of acquiring this property? for he who produces a substance that cannot acquire a certain property may be called the producer of that privation. Thus we say, if any one abstains from delivering a fellow-man from death, although he is able to do so, that he killed him. It is now clear that according to all these different views the action of an agent cannot be directly connected with a thing that does not exist; only indirectly is non-existence described as the result of the action of an agent, whilst in a direct manner an action can only influence a thing really in existence; accordingly, whoever the agent may be, he can only act upon an existing thing.

After this explanation you must recall to memory that, as has been proved, the [so-called] evils are evils only in relation to a certain thing, and that which is evil in reference to a certain existing thing, either includes the non-existence of that thing or the non-existence of some of its good conditions. The proposition has therefore been laid down in the most general terms, "All evils are negations." Thus for man death is evil; death is his non-existence. Illness, poverty, and ignorance are evils for man; all these are privations of properties. If you examine all single cases to which this general proposition applies, you will find that there is not one case in which the proposition is wrong except in the opinion of those who do not make any distinction between negative and positive properties, or between two opposites, or do not know the nature of things,—who, e.g., do not know that health in general denotes a certain equilibrium, and is a relative term. The absence of that relation is illness in general, and death is the absence of life in the case of any animal. The destruction of other things is likewise nothing but the absence of their form.

After these propositions, it must be admitted as a fact that it cannot be said of God that He directly creates evil, or He has the direct intention to produce evil; this is impossible. His works are all perfectly good. He only produces existence, and all existence is good; whilst evils are of a negative character, and cannot be acted upon. Evil can only be attributed to Him in the way we have mentioned. He creates evil only in so far as He produces the corporeal element such as it actually is; it is always connected with negatives, and is on that account the source of all destruction and all evil. Those beings that do not possess this corporeal element are not subject to destruction or evil; consequently the true work of God is all good, since it

General Approach: Evil not created or creat-able. It's an absence of something.

power created in man, according to the concurrent belief of the Mutakallemim, together with the act created in him, according to some of them, are accidents without duration. In the instance of the pen, God continually creates one motion after the other so long as the pen is in motion; it only then ceases to move when God has created in it the accident of rest; and so long as the pen is at rest, God continually renews in it that accident. Consequently in every one of these moments, i.e., of the time-atoms, God creates some accident in every existing individual, e.g., in the angels, in the spheres and in other things; this creation takes place continually and without interruption. Such is, according to their opinion, the right interpretation of the creed that God is the *causa efficiens*. But I, together with all rational persons, apply to those theories the words, "Will you mock at Him, as you mock at man?" for their words are indeed nothing but mockery.

SEVENTH PROPOSITION.

"The absence of a property is itself a property that exists in the body, a something superadded to its substance, an actual accident, which is constantly renewed; as soon as it is destroyed it is reproduced." The reason why they hold this opinion is this: they do not understand that rest is the absence of motion; death the absence of life; that blindness is the absence of sight, and that all similar negative properties are the absence of the positive correlatives.

The relation between motion and rest is, according to their theory, the same as the relation between heat and cold, namely, as heat and cold are two accidents found in two objects which have the properties of heat and cold, so motion is an accident created in the thing which moves, and rest an accident created in the thing which rests; it does not remain in existence during two consecutive time-atoms, as we have stated in treating of the previous proposition. Accordingly, when a body is at rest, God has created the rest in each atom of that body, and so long as the body remains at rest God continually renews that property. The same, they believe, is the case with a man's wisdom and ignorance; the latter is considered by them as an actual accident, which is subject to the constant changes of destruction and creation, so long as there remains a thing of which such a man is ignorant. Death and life are likewise accidents, and as the Mutakallemim distinctly state, life is constantly destroyed and renewed during the whole existence of a living being; when God decrees its death, He creates in it the accident of death after the accident of life, which does not continue during two time-atoms, has ceased to exist. All this they state clearly.

The logical consequence of this proposition is that the accident of death created by God instantly ceases to exist, and is replaced by another death which again is created by God; otherwise death could not continue. Death is thus continually created in the same manner as life is renewed every moment. But I should wish to know how long God continues to create death in a dead body. Does He do so whilst the form remains, or whilst one of the atoms exists? For in each of the atoms of the body the accident of death which God creates is produced, and there are to be found teeth of persons who died thousands of years ago; we see that those teeth have not been deprived of existence, and therefore the accident of death has during all these thousands of years been renewed, and according to the opinion

Rambam attacks the opposing view

Main Points

- Existence vs. Privation
- what's directly created by Gd
- evil exists only in relation to another thing; no existence in its own right
 - blindness in a stone
- Real, but not directly created
- no independent meaning/existence apart from the thing which it's absent from
- have cake + eat it too
 - no other power needed (Zoroastrianism)
 - it's real + felt
 - Gd not directly creator of

In accordance with this view we explain the following passage of Isaiah: "I form the light and create (*bore*) darkness: I make peace, and create (*bore*) evil" (Isa. xlv. 7), for darkness and evil are non-existing things. Consider that the prophet does not say, I make (*'oseh*) darkness, I make (*'oseh*) evil, because darkness and evil are not things in positive existence to which the verb "to make" would apply; the verb *bara* "he created" is used, because in Hebrew this verb is applied to non-existing things, e.g., "In the beginning God created" (*bara*), etc.; here the creation took place from nothing. Only in this sense can non-existence be said to be produced by a certain action of an agent. In the same way we must explain the following passage: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing," etc. (Exod. iv. 11). The passage can also be explained as follows: Who has made man able to speak? or can create him without the capacity of speaking, i.e., create a substance that is incapable of acquiring this property? for he who produces a substance that cannot acquire a certain property may be called the producer of that privation. Thus we say, if any one abstains from delivering a fellow-man from death, although he is able to do so, that he killed him. It is now clear that according to all these different views the action of an agent cannot be directly connected with a thing that does not exist; only indirectly is non-existence described as the result of the action of an agent, whilst in a direct manner an action can only influence a thing really in existence; accordingly, whoever the agent may be, he can only act upon an existing thing.

After this explanation you must recall to memory that, as has been proved, the [so-called] evils are evils only in relation to a certain thing, and that which is evil in reference to a certain existing thing, either includes the non-existence of that thing or the non-existence of some of its good conditions. The proposition has therefore been laid down in the most general terms, "All evils are negations." Thus for man death is evil; death is his non-existence. Illness, poverty, and ignorance are evils for man; all these are privations of properties. If you examine all single cases to which this general proposition applies, you will find that there is not one case in which the proposition is wrong except in the opinion of those who do not make any distinction between negative and positive properties, or between two opposites, or do not know the nature of things,—who, e.g., do not know that health in general denotes a certain equilibrium, and is a relative term. The absence of that relation is illness in general, and death is the absence of life in the case of any animal. The destruction of other things is likewise nothing but the absence of their form.

After these propositions, it must be admitted as a fact that it cannot be said of God that He directly creates evil, or He has the direct intention to produce evil; this is impossible. His works are all perfectly good. He only produces existence, and all existence is good; whilst evils are of a negative character, and cannot be acted upon. Evil can only be attributed to Him in the way we have mentioned. He creates evil only in so far as He produces the corporeal element such as it actually is; it is always connected with negatives, and is on that account the source of all destruction and all evil. Those beings that do not possess this corporeal element are not subject to destruction or evil; consequently the true work of God is all good, since it

But even if God didn't directly create evil, didn't He create the conditions for it / foresee it?

is existence. The book which enlightened the darkness of the world says therefore, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). Even the existence of this corporeal element, low as it in reality is, because it is the source of death and all evils, is likewise good for the permanenee of the Universe and the continuation of the order of things, so that one thing departs and the other succeeds. Rabbi Meir therefore explains the words "and behold it was very good" (*tob me'od*); that even death was good in accordance with what we have observed in this chapter. Remember what I said in this chapter, consider it, and you will understand all that the prophets and our Sages remarked about the perfect goodness of all the direct works of God. In *Bereshit Rabba* (chap. i.) the same idea is expressed thus: "No evil comes down from above."

- physical vs moral evil

CHAPTER XI

ALL the great evils which men cause to each other because of certain intentions, desires, opinions, or religious principles, are likewise due to non-existence, because they originate in ignorance, which is absence of wisdom. A blind man, for example, who has no guide, stumbles constantly, because he cannot see, and causes injury and harm to himself and others. In the same manner various classes of men, each man in proportion to his ignorance, bring great evils upon themselves and upon other individual members of the species. If men possessed wisdom, which stands in the same relation to the form of man as the sight to the eye, they would not cause any injury to themselves or to others; for the knowledge of truth removes hatred and quarrels, and prevents mutual injuries. This state of society is promised to us by the prophet in the words: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb," etc.; "and the cow and the bear shall feed together," etc.; and "the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp," etc. (Isa. xi. 6 *seq.*). The prophet also points out what will be the cause of this change; for he says that hatred, quarrel, and fighting will come to an end, because men will then have a true knowledge of God. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (*ibid.* ver. 9). Note it.

- willed it for perfection of world =>

CHAPTER XII

MEN frequently think that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good things; many sayings and songs of the nations dwell on this idea. They say that a good thing is found only exceptionally, whilst evil things are numerous and lasting. Not only common people make this mistake, but even many who believe that they are wise. Al-Razi wrote a well-known book *On Metaphysics* [or *Theology*]. Among other mad and foolish things, it contains also the idea, discovered by him, that there exists more evil than good. For if the happiness of man and his pleasure in the times of prosperity be compared with the mishaps that befall him,—such as grief, acute pain, defects, paralysis of the limbs, fears, anxieties, and troubles,—it would seem as if the existence of man is a punishment and a great evil for him. This author commenced to verify his opinion by counting all the evils one by one; by

stitution of these persons, or may have developed subsequently in consequence of changes in the elements, e.g., through bad air, or thunderstorms, or landslips.

We have already shown that, in accordance with the divine wisdom, genesis can only take place through destruction, and without the destruction of the individual members of the species the species themselves would not exist permanently. Thus the true kindness, and beneficence, and goodness of God is clear. He who thinks that he can have flesh and bones without being subject to any external influence, or any of the accidents of matter, unconsciously wishes to reconcile two opposites, viz., to be at the same time subject and not subject to change. If man were never subject to change there could be no generation; there would be one single being, but no individuals forming a species.

Galen, in the third section of his book, *The Use of the Limbs*, says correctly that it would be in vain to expect to see living beings formed of the blood of menstruous women and the semen virile, who will not die, will never feel pain, or will move perpetually, or will shine like the sun. This dictum of Galen is part of the following more general proposition:—Whatever is formed of any matter receives the most perfect form possible in that species of matter; in each individual case the defects are in accordance with the defects of that individual matter. The best and most perfect being that can be formed of the blood and the semen is the species of man, for as far as man's nature is known, he is living, reasonable, and mortal.

It is therefore impossible that man should be free from this species of evil. You will, nevertheless, find that the evils of the above kind which befall man are very few and rare; for you find countries that have not been flooded or burned for thousands of years; there are thousands of men in perfect health, deformed individuals are a strange and exceptional occurrence, or say few in number if you object to the term exceptional,—they are not one-hundredth, not even one-thousandth part of those that are perfectly normal.

(2) The second class of evils comprises such evils as people cause to each other, when, e.g., some of them use their strength against others. These evils are more numerous than those of the first kind; their causes are numerous and known; they likewise originate in ourselves, though the sufferer himself cannot avert them. This kind of evil is nevertheless not widespread in any country of the whole world. It is of rare occurrence that a man plans to kill his neighbour or to rob him of his property by night. Many persons are, however, afflicted with this kind of evil in great wars; but these are not frequent, if the whole inhabited part of the earth is taken into consideration.

(3) The third class of evils comprises those which every one causes to himself by his own action. This is the largest class, and is far more numerous than the second class. It is especially of these evils that all men complain,—only few men are found that do not sin against themselves by this kind of evil. Those that are afflicted with it are therefore justly blamed in the words of the prophet, "This hath been by your means" (Mal. i. 9); the same is expressed in the following passage, "He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul" (Prov. vi. 32). In reference to this kind of evil, Solomon says, "The foolishness of man perverteth his way" (*ibid.* xix. 3). In the following passage he explains also that this kind of evil is man's own work, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have thought out many inventions" (Eccles. vii. 29), and these inventions bring the

physical evils

- negations not directly attributable to God
- in this sense-willed by God
- NOT for their own sake
- But - for perfection of world

Pl
15
7/21/68

benefits be-
perfect goodness,
The origin of the
man, and his party
by examining one
whole universe only
ion. If, therefore,
at once concludes
take into consider-
ehend what a small
For it is clear that
gards the multitude
els, the spheres and
viz., minerals and
in some individual
to became leprous
great an illness and
uch in sensuality as
nd the like. What
kind at present in
orm an infinitesimal
like to vanity" (Ps.
son of man, which
o dwell in houses of
of the bucket" (Isa.
e prophets express-
ld know his station,
xists only for him.
ls it so; that man-
ion of the universe,
ngels, there cannot
man is the highest
r elements. Man's
instinction and per-
ividual persons are
; themselves. We
rom the evils which
them to God, who
Is destruction his
ns, you who are a
his is explained by
h his way, and his
vils that befall man

by the circumstance
ossesses a body. It
re great deformities
of the natural con-

direct works of God are purely good

is existence. The book which enlightened the darkness of the world says therefore, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). Even the existence of this corporeal element, low as it in reality is, because it is the source of death and all evils, is likewise good for the permanency of the Universe and the continuation of the order of things, so that one thing departs and the other succeeds. Rabbi Meir therefore explains the words "and behold it was very good" (*tob me'od*); that even death was good in accordance with what we have observed in this chapter. Remember what I said in this chapter, consider it, and you will understand all that the prophets and our Sages remarked about the perfect goodness of all the direct works of God. In *Bereshit Rabba* (chap. i.) the same idea is expressed thus: "No evil comes down from above."

MORAL evil

- most prevalent

CHAPTER XI - 2 classes

ALL the great evils which men cause to each other because of certain intentions, desires, opinions, or religious principles, are likewise due to non-existence, because they originate in ignorance, which is absence of wisdom. A blind man, for example, who has no guide, stumbles constantly, because he cannot see, and causes injury and harm to himself and others. In the same manner various classes of men, each man in proportion to his ignorance, bring great evils upon themselves and upon other individual members of the species. If men possessed wisdom, which stands in the same relation to the form of man as the sight to the eye, they would not cause any injury to themselves or to others; for the knowledge of truth removes hatred and quarrels, and prevents mutual injuries. This state of society is promised to us by the prophet in the words: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb," etc.; "and the cow and the bear shall feed together," etc.; and "the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp," etc. (Isa. xi. 6 *seq.*). The prophet also points out what will be the cause of this change; for he says that hatred, quarrel, and fighting will come to an end, because men will then have a true knowledge of God. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (*ibid.* ver. 9). Note it.

evil
men
cause
each
other

CHAPTER XII

MEN frequently think that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good things; many sayings and songs of the nations dwell on this idea. They say that a good thing is found only exceptionally, whilst evil things are numerous and lasting. Not only common people make this mistake, but even many who believe that they are wise. Al-Razi wrote a well-known book *On Metaphysics* [or *Theology*]. Among other mad and foolish things, it contains also the idea, discovered by him, that there exists more evil than good. For if the happiness of man and his pleasure in the times of prosperity be compared with the mishaps that befall him,—such as grief, acute pain, defects, paralysis of the limbs, fears, anxieties, and troubles,—it would seem as if the existence of man is a punishment and a great evil for him. This author commenced to verify his opinion by counting all the evils one by one; by

most numerous of all -- evils, one brings on himself

evils upon him. The same subject is referred to in Job (v. 6), "For affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground."

These words are immediately followed by the explanation that man himself is the author of this class of evils, "But man is born unto trouble." This class of evils originates in man's vices, such as excessive desire for eating, drinking, and love; indulgence in these things in undue measure, or in improper manner, or partaking of bad food. This course brings diseases and afflictions upon body and soul alike. The sufferings of the body in consequence of these evils are well known; those of the soul are twofold:—First, such evils of the soul as are the necessary consequence of changes in the body, in so far as the soul is a force residing in the body; it has therefore been said that the properties of the soul depend on the condition of the body. Secondly,

the soul, when accustomed to superfluous things, acquires a strong habit of desiring things which are neither necessary for the preservation of the individual nor for that of the species. This desire is without a limit, whilst things which are necessary are few in number and restricted within certain limits; but what is superfluous is without end—e.g., you desire to have your vessels of silver, but golden vessels are still better: others have even vessels of sapphire, or perhaps they can be made of emerald or rubies, or any other substance that could be suggested. Those who are ignorant and perverse in their thought are constantly in trouble and pain, because they cannot get as much of superfluous things as a certain other person possesses.

They as a rule expose themselves to great dangers, e.g., by sea-voyage, or service of kings, and all this for the purpose of obtaining that which is superfluous and not necessary. When they thus meet with the consequences of the course which they adopt, they complain of the decrees and judgments of God; they begin to blame the time, and wonder at the want of justice in its changes; that it has not enabled them to acquire great riches, with which they could buy large quantities of wine for the purpose of making themselves drunk, and numerous concubines adorned with various kind of ornaments of gold, embroidery, and jewels, for the purpose of driving themselves to voluptuousness beyond their capacities, as if the whole Universe existed exclusively for the purpose of giving pleasure to these low people. The error of the ignorant goes so far as to say that God's power is insufficient, because He has given to this Universe the properties which they imagine cause these great evils, and which do not help all evil-disposed persons to obtain the evil which they seek, and to bring their evil souls to the aim of their desires, though these, as we have shown, are really without limit. The virtuous and wise, however, see and comprehend the wisdom of God displayed in the Universe. Thus David says, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Ps. xxv. 10). For those who observe the nature of the Universe and the commandments of the Law, and know their purpose, see clearly God's mercy and truth in everything; they seek, therefore, that which the Creator intended to be the aim of man, viz., comprehension. Forced by the claims of the body, they seek also that which is necessary for the preservation of the body, "bread to eat and garment to clothe," and this is very little; but they seek nothing superfluous; with very slight exertion man can obtain it, so long as he is contented with that which is indispensable. All the difficulties

We can ask a similar Q here -
Doesn't Gd know that, due to ignorance, man will bring these Evil's on himself + others?
And isn't Gd therefore responsible?

most numerous of all - evils, one brings on himself

270

GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

evils upon him. The same subject is referred to in Job (v. 6), "For affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." These words are immediately followed by the explanation that man himself is the author of this class of evils, "But man is born unto trouble." This class of evils originates in man's vices, such as excessive desire for eating, drinking, and love; indulgence in these things in undue measure, or in improper manner, or partaking of bad food. This course brings diseases and afflictions upon body and soul alike. The sufferings of the body in consequence of these evils are well known; those of the soul are twofold:—First, such evils of the soul as are the necessary consequence of changes in the body, in so far as the soul is a force residing in the body; it has therefore been said that the properties of the soul depend on the condition of the body. Secondly,

the soul, when accustomed to superfluous things, acquires a strong habit of desiring things which are neither necessary for the preservation of the individual nor for that of the species. This desire is without a limit, whilst things which are necessary are few in number and restricted within certain limits; but what is superfluous is without end—e.g., you desire to have your vessels of silver, but golden vessels are still better: others have even vessels of sapphire, or perhaps they can be made of emerald or rubies, or any other substance that could be suggested. Those who are ignorant and perverse in their thought are constantly in trouble and pain, because they cannot get as much of superfluous things as a certain other person possesses.

They as a rule expose themselves to great dangers, e.g., by sea-voyage, or service of kings, and all this for the purpose of obtaining that which is superfluous and not necessary. When they thus meet with the consequences of the course which they adopt, they complain of the decrees and judgments of God; they begin to blame the time, and wonder at the want of justice in its changes; that it has not enabled them to acquire great riches, with which they could buy large quantities of wine for the purpose of making themselves drunk, and numerous concubines adorned with various kind of ornaments of gold, embroidery, and jewels, for the purpose of driving themselves to voluptuousness beyond their capacities, as if the whole Universe existed exclusively for the purpose of giving pleasure to these low people. The error of the ignorant goes so far as to say that God's power is insufficient, because He has given to this Universe the properties which they imagine cause these great evils, and which do not help all evil-disposed persons to obtain the evil which they seek, and to bring their evil souls to the aim of their desires, though these, as we have shown, are really without limit. The virtuous and wise, however, see and comprehend the wisdom of God displayed in the Universe. Thus David says, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Ps. xxv. 10). For those who observe the nature of the Universe and the commandments of the Law, and know their purpose, see clearly God's mercy and truth in everything; they seek, therefore, that which the Creator intended to be the aim of man, viz., comprehension. Forced by the claims of the body, they seek also that which is necessary for the preservation of the body, "bread to eat and garment to clothe," and this is very little; but they seek nothing superfluous; with very slight exertion man can obtain it, so long as he is contented with that which is indispensable. All the difficulties

We can ask a similar Q here -

Doesn't Gd know that, due to ignorance, man will bring these Evils on himself + others?
And isn't Gd therefore responsible?

(Ps. cxix. 144); and "I the Lord speak righteousness" (Isa. xlv. 19). If you adopt this method, you will not imagine the existence of things which God has not created, or accept principles which might partly lead to atheism, or to a corruption of your notions of God so as to ascribe to Him corporeality, attributes, or emotions, as has been shown by us, nor will you believe that the words of the prophets are false; for the cause of this disease is ignorance of what we have explained. These things belong likewise to the mysteries of the Law; and although we have treated them in a general manner, they can easily be understood in all their details in accordance with the above remarks.

CHAPTER XLVIII

It is clear that everything produced must have an immediate cause which produced it; that cause again a cause, and so on, till the First Cause, viz., the will and decree of God is reached. The prophets therefore omit sometimes the intermediate causes, and ascribe the production of an individual thing directly to God, saying that God has made it. This method is well known, and we, as well as others of those who seek the truth, have explained it; it is the belief of our co-religionists.

After having heard this remark, listen to what I will explain in this chapter; direct your special attention to it more than you have done to the other chapters of this part. It is this: As regards the immediate causes of things produced, it makes no difference whether these causes consist in substances, physical properties, freewill, or chance—by freewill I mean that of man—or even in the will of another living being. The prophets [omit them and] ascribe the production directly to God and use such phrases as, God has done it, commanded it, or said it; in all such cases the verbs "to say," "to speak," "to command," "to call," and "to send" are employed. What I desired to state in this chapter is this: According to the hypothesis and theory accepted, it is God that gave will to dumb animals, freewill to the human being, and natural properties to everything; and as accidents originate in the redundancy of some natural force, as has been explained [by Aristotle], and are mostly the result of the combined action of nature, desire, and freewill: it can consequently be said of everything which is produced by any of these causes, that God commanded that it should be made, or said that it should be so. I will give you instances, and they will guide you in the interpretation of passages which I do not mention. As regards phenomena produced regularly by natural causes, such as the melting of the snow when the atmosphere becomes warm, the roaring of the sea when a storm rages [I quote the following passages], "He sendeth his word and melteth them" (Ps. cxlvii. 18); "And he saith, and a storm-wind riseth, and lifteth up its waves" (*ibid.* cvii. 25). In reference to the rain we read: "I will command the clouds that they shall not rain," etc. (Isa. v. 6). Events caused by man's freewill, such as war, the dominion of one nation over another, the attempt of one person to hurt another, or to insult him, [are ascribed to God, as] e.g., in reference to the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar and his host, "I have commended my holy ones, also I have called my heroes for my anger" (Isa. xiii. 3); and "I will send him against a hypocrite nation" (*ibid.* x. 6); in reference to Shimei, son of Gera, "For God said to him, Curse David" (2 Sam. xvi. 10); in reference

i.e., these events result from free-willed human choices, + are attributable to God only very indirectly (as Creator of human will)

So, regarding Evils due to
Man's poor moral choices

- distinguish necessity vs. natural evils
- possibility must exist if man is to be Free
 - ability to choose freely to love + serve Gd
 - ability to merit anything
 - includes ability to reject Gd + sin + bring evil on oneself + others
 - Man is directly responsible for bad moral choices, not Gd
 - this freedom is part of man's perfection
 - no necessity to choose evil

in constant darkness and have never seen light. We have explained in this sense the words: "The wicked shall be silent in darkness" (1 Sam. ii. 9), whilst those who possess the knowledge of God, and have their thoughts entirely directed to that knowledge, are, as it were, always in bright sunshine; and those who have the knowledge, but are at times engaged in other themes, have then as it were a cloudy day: the sun does not shine for them on account of the cloud that intervenes between them and God.

Hence it appears to me that it is only in times of such neglect that some of the ordinary evils befall a prophet or a perfect and pious man; and the intensity of the evil is proportional to the duration of those moments, or to the character of the things that thus occupy their mind. Such being the case, the great difficulty is removed that led philosophers to assert that Providence does not extend to every individual, and that man is like any other living being in this respect, viz., the argument based on the fact that good and pious men are afflicted with great evils. We have thus explained this difficult question even in accordance with the philosophers' own principles.

Divine Providence is constantly watching over those who have obtained that blessing which is prepared for those who endeavour to obtain it. If man frees his thoughts from worldly matters, obtains a knowledge of God in the right way, and rejoices in that knowledge, it is impossible that any kind of evil should befall him while he is with God, and God with him. When he does not meditate on God, when he is separated from God, then God is also separated from him; then he is exposed to any evil that might befall him; for it is only that intellectual link with God that secures the presence of Providence and protection from evil accidents. Hence it may occur that the perfect man is at times not happy, whilst no evil befalls those who are imperfect; in these cases what happens to them is due to chance. This principle I find also expressed in the Law. Comp. "And I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?" (Deut. xxxi. 17). It is clear that we ourselves are the cause of this hiding of the face, and that the screen that separates us from God is of our own creation. This is the meaning of the words: "And I will surely hide my face in that day, for all the evils which they shall have wrought" (*ibid.* ver. 18). There is undoubtedly no difference in this regard between one single person and a whole community. It is now clearly established that the cause of our being exposed to chance, and abandoned to destruction like cattle, is to be found in our separation from God. Those who have their God dwelling in their hearts, are not touched by any evil whatever. For God says: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God" (Isa. xli. 10). "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (*ibid.* xliii. 2). For if we prepare ourselves, and attain the influence of the Divine Intellect, Providence is joined to us, and we are guarded against all evils. Comp. "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?" (Ps. cxviii. 6). "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace" (Job xxii. 21); i.e., turn unto Him, and you will be safe from all evil.

Consider the Psalm on mishaps, and see how the author describes that

Yet, despite all these sources of "Evil,"
Man can protect himself!

- Wise preparations

- re-valuation of priorities