

CHAPTER FIVE

Teleology in Jewish Philosophy

EARLY TALMUDISTS TO SPINOZA

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Medieval and early modern Jewish philosophers developed their thinking in conversation with various bodies of literature. The influence of ancient Greek—primarily Aristotle (and pseudo-Aristotle)—and Arabic sources was fundamental to the very constitution of medieval Jewish philosophical discourse. Toward the late Middle Ages, Jewish philosophers also established a critical dialogue with Christian scholastics. In addition to these philosophical corpora, Jewish philosophers drew significantly upon rabbinic sources (Talmud and the numerous Midrashim) and the Hebrew Bible.

In order to clarify the unique as well as shared elements in the thought of medieval Jewish philosophers, I will begin this chapter with a brief study of some early rabbinic sources on the purpose of the

world, i.e., why it came to be and why it is sustained in existence. In the second section of this chapter, I will study Maimonides's critique of the veracity and usefulness of the belief in (anthropocentric) teleology, and the critical reception of his views by later philosophers. The third section will address discussions of divine teleology in Kabbalistic literature. The exposition will concentrate mostly on a specific early eighteenth-century text that is one of the most lucid and rigorous presentations of Lurianic Kabbalah. The fourth and final section will elucidate Spinoza's critique of teleology, its precise target and scope, and its debt to earlier sources discussed in this chapter.

5.1. EARLY RABBINIC SOURCES ON THE PURPOSE OF THE WORLD

Rabbinic Judaism never developed a definitive theology.¹ Consequently, it is quite common to find within this literature widely diverse and even opposed views on many theological issues. The question of the purpose of the universe (if it has any) is no exception. The following discussion is not meant to be a comprehensive presentation (and given the space limit of this chapter, cannot be), but merely an illustration of *some* tendencies within this literature.

The Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Shabbath*, records the following saying in the name Reish Lakish (a leading third-century CE Palestinian Talmudist) and R. Yehuda, the Prince (~137–~220 CE), the compiler of the Mishnah:

1 The most significant attempt to establish Jewish principles of faith was carried out by Maimonides in his "Preface to Chapter *Heleg*" and the thirteen principles delineated therein. The two most salient features of this attempt were its popular nature (i.e., it was meant to be propagated among the masses) and its colossal failure (these principles were accepted by some, explicitly rejected by many, and radically reinterpreted by others). With regard to the first feature I would only note that a common joke among Maimonides scholars is that the real question regarding these principles is whether Maimonides believed in seven or only six of his thirteen principles. Leon Roth once quipped that "dogmalessness [is] the only dogma in Judaism." I would doubt even that.

Reish Lakish said in the name of R. Yehuda, the Prince: “The world endures only for the sake of the breath [הַבֵּל פִּי הַיָּלְדִים] of school children.”²

Upon hearing this saying cited, a later Talmudist objected to his colleague, “But what about mine and yours?” i.e., does not *our* study provide sufficient reason for the world’s endurance? His colleague retorted: “Breath in which there is sin is not like breath in which there is not sin.”³ The later Talmudist stresses the absence of sin as the reason for singling out the study of *children* as the aim of the universe, though one may well suggest alternative explanations, such as the formative role of rudimentary schoolchildren’s study. A world without top scholars may still generate such scholars in a generation or two, while a world without the basic foundations of intellectual endeavor (the “breath of school children”) is likely to suffer an irrevocable loss.

An alternative explanation of the purpose of the world’s endurance appears in another Talmudic passage:

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: “Everyday a Heavenly Voice is heard declaring: ‘The whole world draws its sustenance because [of the merit] of Hanina, my son, and Hanina my son suffices himself with a *kab* of carobs from one Sabbath eve to another.’”⁴

Hanina, the son of Dosa, was a destitute early Talmudist, known for his selfless care for others. For his weekly sustenance he needed no more than a *kab* (an ancient unit of volume, less than a third of gallon) of carobs. Thus, Rav Yehuda’s statement amounts to a paradox: the

² *Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1952–), *Tractate Shabbath*, 119b. “Breath” (*Hevel*) here also means the *words* pronounced by schoolchildren.

³ *Babylonian Talmud*, *Tractate Shabbath*, 119b. Hasdai Crescas, *Or ha-Shem* [Heb.: *Light of the Lord*], ed. Shlomo Fisher (Jerusalem: Ramot, 1990, II 6 1 (p. 245 in this edition), for an interesting gloss on the last saying.

⁴ *Babylonian Talmud*, *Tractate Ta’anit* 24b. Cf. *Babylonian Talmud*, *Tractate Berakhot*, 33a.

entire universe endures for the sake of a person who needs virtually nothing. A reader who wonders about the disproportionality of the means (the sustenance of the entire universe) and the end (the sustenance of the meritorious Hanina) might expect to find partial relief in a third source, an apparent corrective of the unreasonable mismatch between means and end:

Rav said: The world was created only for Ahab, the son of Omri, and for R. Hanina, the son of Dosa. For Ahab the son of Omri *this* world, and for R. Hanina, the son Dosa, *the future* world.⁵

Notice that this passage, just like the previous one, is cited in the name of Rav.⁶ Whereas the previous passage wonders about the disproportionality of sustaining the entire world for the sake of the poor and righteous Hanina, the current passage severs any connection between our world (“this world”) and Hanina. Rather than being sustained for the sake of the poor and righteous Hanina, the son of Dosa, it turns out that our world was created, *ab initio*, for the sake of the wicked and rich king Ahab, the son of Omri. Indeed, the needs of a rich and wicked king seem to be extensive, and thus provide a far better explanation for the existence of the world than the meager needs of Hanina. Still, the last passage exposes an urgent and disturbing question: if the best explanation for the purpose of the creation of this world is to benefit the wicked Ahab, then why create this world at all? The author of the saying leaves the question unanswered.

Early rabbinic sources questioned the aims of the universe and came up with a variety of answers (some of which may well appear to us surprising). Perhaps one reason for this open exploration was a common tendency among Talmudists to reject the identification of the *natural* with the *good* (an identification which they associated with Hellenistic

⁵ Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Berakhot*, 61b. Italics added.

⁶ Rav was an early third-century CE Babylonian Talmudist.

thought).⁷ Thus, in one striking Midrash the Roman governor of Judea, Quintus Tineius Rufus, asks Rabbi Akiva whether the deeds of men are better than the deeds of God (i.e., nature). Rabbi Akiva, realizing that Tineius Rufus is really asking about the justification for circumcision, openly proclaims that the deeds of men *are* better insofar as they are able to correct and improve nature.⁸ For Rabbi Akiva, the fact that naturally men are created uncircumcised does not provide even the slightest justification for preferring that state: what is or is not natural has nothing to do with value.

5.2. MAIMONIDES'S CRITIQUE OF TELEOLOGY

Demonstrating the cunning of divine wisdom in creation has been a common topos in medieval Jewish philosophy.⁹ Most medieval philosophers endorsed the claim that the final cause is the noblest of the four Aristotelean causes.¹⁰ Still, as we will shortly see, Maimonides—by far the most influential medieval Jewish philosopher—was reluctant to employ teleological reasoning in attempting to explain the world's existence.

Saadia Gaon, an early tenth-century Babylonian rabbi, grammarian, and poet, was also the author of what could be considered the first major work of medieval Jewish philosophy, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*. Addressing the issue of the aim of creation, Saadia writes:

7 See *Midrash Rabbah im kol ha-Mefarshim*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, n.d.) (Bereshit, XI 6).

8 *Midrash Tanhuma* (Warsaw: Y.G. Munk Press), 187:3 (Tazria V, pp. 19a–b).

9 See, for example, Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari*, trans. Hartwig Hirschfeld, revised by Lisa Greenwald (Jerusalem: Sefer ve-Sefel Publishing, 2003), III 11 (pp. 127 and 131 in Hirschfeld's translation) and V 10 (pp. 236–237 in Hirschfeld). Halevi, however, notes that “we may not be aware of the use of most” things in nature (*Kuzari*, V 10 [p. 236 in Hirschfeld]).

10 See, for example, Moses Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines [henceforth: Pines], 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), III 13 (Pines 449) and Crescas, *Or ha-Shem*, II 6 (p. 226 in Fisher's edition). Avicenna, Averroës, and Aquinas endorsed this claim as well. See Robert Pasnau's contribution to this volume; Jeffrey K. McDonough, “The Heyday of Teleology and Early Modern Philosophy,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 35 (2011): 184; and Stephan Schmid, “Finality without Final Causes? Suárez's Account of Natural Teleology,” *Ergo* 2 (2015): 396.

Even though creatures are many in number, nevertheless we need not be confused in regard to which constitutes the goal of creation. . . . When we find the earth in the center of the heaven with the heavenly spheres surrounding it on all sides, it becomes clear to us that the thing which was the object of creation must be on the earth. Upon further investigation of all [of the world's] parts we note that the earth and water are both inanimate, whereas we find that beasts are irrational. *Hence only man is left, which gives us the certainty that he must unquestionably have been the intended purpose of creation.*¹¹

Judah Halevi, an early twelfth-century Spanish philosopher and physician, and an astounding poet, also argued that “it is clear that domestic animals were created for the benefit of man”¹² and that “the world was but completed with the creation of man who forms the heart of all that was created before him.”¹³ Anthropocentric teleology which suggests that the world was created for the sake of man is also present in the early writings of Moses Maimonides (1135 (1138?)–1204).¹⁴ Thus, in the preface to his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, written in his twenties, Maimonides notes: “The purpose of the world and everything that is in it, is just: a wise and good individual man.”¹⁵ Maimonides’s views on this issue will change dramatically. In the twenty-fifth chapter of the

11 Saadia Gaon, *The Book of Beliefs & Opinions*, trans. Samuel Rosenblatt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), Treatise IV, Exordium (pp. 180–181 in Rosenblatt’s translation); Saadia Gaon, *Emunot ve-Deot*, translated into Hebrew by Judah Ibn Tibbon (Constantinople, 1562), 42a–b. Italics added.

12 Halevi, *Kuzari*, V 8 (p. 231 in Hirschfeld).

13 Halevi, *Kuzari*, IV 15 (p. 201 in Hirschfeld). For Crescas too the purpose of the material world is the human race. See Crescas, *Or ha-Shem*, II 6 3 (p. 265 in Fisher’s edition).

14 For anthropocentric teleology in Aristotle, see *Politics* 1256b11–21 and Rich Cameron, “Aristotle’s Teleology,” *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 12 (2010): 1104. The latter text also addresses the Stoic endorsement of anthropocentric teleology. For early modern defenses of divinely ordained anthropocentric teleology, see Jefferey McDonough’s discussion of Robert Boyle in his contribution to the current volume.

15 Maimonides, *Haqdamot le-Perush ha-Mishnah* [Prefaces to the *Commentary on the Mishnah*] (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kuk, 1961), 77. Cf. 79–81 and Warren Zev Harvey, “Spinoza and Maimonides on Teleology and Anthropocentrism,” in *Spinoza’s “Ethics”: A Critical Guide*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 54.

third and last part of his philosophical magnum opus, the *Guide of the Perplexed*—composed in his fifties—Maimonides writes:

Know that the majority of the false imaginings that call forth perplexity in the quest for the end of the existence of the world as a whole or the end of every part of it have as their root *an error of man about himself and his imagining that all that exists exists because of himself alone*.¹⁶

The mature Maimonides clearly rejected global anthropocentric teleology (i.e., the view that man is the end of everything that is), and the elucidation of this misconception was highly significant for his conception of God and the proper role of religion. Still, even *after* the disqualification of anthropocentric teleology, the question of the aim of reality was far from settled. In the lines that follow the passage just quoted, Maimonides hints at a certain principle of plenitude according to which what was “primarily intended” in creation is “the bringing into being of everything whose existence is possible, existence being indubitably good.”¹⁷ Maimonides does not elaborate on, or motivate, the claim that existence is “indubitably good,” and notably, in *Guide* III 13, the main locus of his discussion of the purpose of reality, Maimonides does not even mention plenitude and the goodness of existence as possible explanantia of reality.

Guide III 13 begins with the following announcement:

¹⁶ Moses Maimonides, *Moreh Nevokhim* [Heb.: *Guide of the Perplexed*], trans. Shmuel Ibn Tibbon with commentaries by Efodi, Shem Tov, Asher Crescas, and Yitzhak Abravanel (Jerusalem, 1960), III 25; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* (Pines 452): “It should not be believed that all the beings exist for the sake of the existence of man. On the contrary, *all the other beings too have been intended for their own sakes and not for the sake of something else*.” Italics added. Cf. Harvey, “Spinoza and Maimonides,” 46–47. Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Process of His Reasoning*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 2:426, suggests that Maimonides’s critique of anthropocentrism is directed, at least in part, against Saadia.

¹⁷ *Guide* III 25; Pines 506. Italics added.

Often the minds of perfect men have grown perplexed over the question of what is the final end of that which exists. Now I will explain that in all schools this question is abolished.¹⁸

By “all schools” Maimonides refers here to both those who believe in the eternity of the world (e.g., Aristotle), and those who assert that the world was created in time. The primary aim of *Guide* III 13 is to show that according to *both* schools the question about the ultimate end of reality as a whole makes hardly any sense.¹⁹ Maimonides begins his argument by pointing out a few crucial premises which he believes are “clear” and “not in need of demonstration.” In order to analyze this crucial passage, I have parsed it into five sections, designated by roman numerals.

I say then that (i) in the case of every agent who acts with a purpose, the thing he has done must necessarily have some end with a view to which it has been done. According to philosophic speculation, this is clear and is not in need of demonstration. (ii) It is also clear that a thing that has been done in this way with a purpose must have been produced in time after not having existed. (iii) Among the things that are clear also belongs the fact, and this fact universally admitted, that He whose existence is necessary, who has never and will never be nonexistent, does not need an agent, as we have already made clear. (iv) And as He has not been made, no question as to the final end arises with reference to Him. For this reason, one does not ask: What is the final end of the existence of the Creator, may He be exalted?; for He is not a created thing. (v) Through these premises it has become clear that a final end can only be sought with regard to

¹⁸ *Guide* III 13; Pines 448.

¹⁹ In his canonical commentary on the *Guide* of the late fifteenth century, Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov argues that another major aim of *Guide* III 13 is to show that “man is not the aim of reality as it is thought [שאיין האדם תכלית המציאות כמו שיחשבו]” (Maimonides, *Moreh Newokhim*, part 3, p. 16b).

all things produced in time that have been made through the purpose of an intelligent being. I mean to say that with regard to that which has its beginning in an intellect, one necessarily must seek to find out what its final cause is. On the other hand, one must not, as we have said, seek the final end of what has not been produced in time.²⁰

Section (i) seems to make a relatively weak and uncontroversial claim,²¹ and so we will not dwell on it. Section (ii) asserts the far stronger and nontrivial claim according to which aim-directed action can take place (a) only in time, and (b) only if the aimed-for state does not exist yet at the time of the action. Both (a) and (b) can be challenged. We may challenge (a) by arguing that *if* one can make sense of actions that are not in time, then we should also be able to conceive of such actions as being aim-directed. In other words, the issue here seems to be the possibility of nontemporal action, and this question is orthogonal to the question of the aim-directedness of the action. Point (b) might be challenged by noting that preserving the *current* state of things seems to be an aim just as good as any other one.²² Section (iii) makes the valid argument that God whose essence *is* existence requires no agent or cause to bring him into existence.²³ From (ii) and (iii) Maimonides infers, in (iv), that insofar as God has not been produced, it is pointless to ask about the aim of God's existence since there is no final end for his existence. In section (v), Maimonides apparently attempts to infer a more general principle from (iv), namely, that one should seek an end for the existence of a thing *if and only if* the thing has been

²⁰ Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 451–452.

²¹ Unless one reads (i) as stating that all teleology is thoughtful (“have some end with a *view* to which it has been done”). I do not think such a reading is warranted.

²² Obviously, both of these objections are just first moves in debates that require further scrutiny. See the commentary of Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov (Maimonides, *Moreh Nevokhim*, part 3, p. 17a) for an attempt to answer the challenge to (b).

²³ See Maimonides, *Guide* I 61; Pines 148. Cf. Yitzhak Y. Melamed, “Spinoza’s Deification of Existence,” *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 6 (2012): 77–84.

produced in time by an intelligent being. The last claim is incompatible with Aristotle's natural, thoughtless teleology (i.e., teleology in plants and the organization of animal limbs that is not guided by a plan of an intelligent creator). The biconditional stated in (v) does not follow from (ii), and as we have already noted, the premises asserted in (ii) are questionable.

Why does Maimonides disregard—indeed deny—the possibility of natural, thoughtless teleology? As we have seen earlier in this book, one strand in Aristotle's discussion of teleological principles in nature (such as "Nature does nothing in vain") suggests that—as a heuristic device—we may conceptualize nature "as an intelligent, creative designer."²⁴ Maimonides (and virtually almost all medieval philosophers)²⁵ was reluctant to follow Aristotle on this point, and he seems to have had good reasons for this. If nature is *not* itself an intelligent, creative designer, then what is the point of (mis)conceiving nature as if there were one?²⁶

From the premises laid out in the passage I have quoted, Maimonides infers that those—like Aristotle—who believe in the eternity of the world should not seek the ultimate end of reality. Since only things produced in time have ends, and the world is eternal (i.e., has not been produced in time), it is clear that the world has no end.

For according to Aristotle's opinion, it is not permitted to ask: what is the final end of the existence of the heavens? . . . Or What is the final end of this particular species of animals or plants? For all things

²⁴ See Leunissen's contribution to this volume: "Teleology in Aristotle," section 2.5. Cf. Mariska Leunissen, *Explanation and Teleology in Aristotle's Science of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 119–121. Some commentators suggest that Aristotle's entire theory of teleology is nothing but a heuristic device (see Leunissen, *Explanation and Teleology*, 23 n. 35 and 112 n. 1).

²⁵ For a helpful discussion of Aquinas on the same issue, see Robert Pasnau's contribution to this volume.

²⁶ Thoughtless teleology that is *not* suggested as a heuristic device would most likely appear to Maimonides as a belief in an eerie magic, or miracle, that is not befitting a philosopher like Aristotle.

derive, according to him, from an eternal necessity that has never ceased and will never cease.²⁷

In fact, claims Maimonides, Aristotle's willingness to accept teleology among species, so that one species exists for the sake of another, undermines the belief in the eternity of species and provides "one of the strongest proofs for the production of the world in time."²⁸ Insofar as "purpose can only be conceived with reference to the production in time," it would make no sense to speak about the purpose of species, or reality as a whole, if either was eternal.²⁹

Maimonides has no qualms about what he calls "first finality," i.e., the view that "the end of every individual produced in time consists in the perfection of the form of the species."³⁰ However, since both the world (for Aristotle), and God (for Maimonides and Aristotle) have not been produced in time, the search for the purposes of their existence is futile, as they have none.³¹ Notice that, at least in the case of God, it is even improper to say that God's existence is the final end *of itself*. For Maimonides, God exists for the sake of no end.

Turning next to the school of those who assert that the world was created in time, Maimonides notes:

It is sometimes thought that, according to our opinion and our doctrine of the production in time of the world as a whole after nonexistence . . . it is obligatory to seek out the finality of all that exists. It is likewise thought that the finality of all that exists is solely the existence of the human species so that it should worship God.³²

²⁷ See Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 449. In Spinoza we will encounter again the claim that eternal necessity does not allow for teleology.

²⁸ See Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 449.

²⁹ See Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 449.

³⁰ See Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 450.

³¹ Or, as Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov notes: "seeking the purpose for that which has no purpose is complete folly" (Maimonides, *Moreh Nevochim*, part 3, p. 16b).

³² Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 450–451.

To begin undermining the belief in global anthropocentric teleology, Maimonides asks whether God could not have created humanity without creating all other creatures.³³ If one were to insist that every single feature of reality was necessary for the creation of man, we should—Maimonides argues—question the alleged aim of the creation of humanity, i.e., the worship of God. Clearly, God would not acquire any greater perfection by human worship.³⁴ Hence, human worship of God must aim at the perfection of humanity, rather than the perfection of God. Still, Maimonides asks:

What is the final end of our existence with that perfection? Necessarily and obligatorily the argument must end with the answer being given that the final end is: God has wished it so, or: His wisdom has required this to be so. And this is the correct answer.³⁵

Taking this cluster of questions as a genuine refutation of anthropocentric teleology, Maimonides concludes:

For this reason, to my mind, the correct view according to the beliefs of the Law—a view that corresponds likewise to the speculative views—is as follows: it should not be believed that all the beings exist for the sake of the existence of man. On the contrary, all the other beings too have been intended for their own sakes and not for the sake of something else.³⁶ *Thus, even according to our view holding*

³³ Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 451.

³⁴ Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 451.

³⁵ Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 451–452.

³⁶ Note that the last sentence seems to indicate that Maimonides rejects not only the strong claim that *all* beings are created for the sake of man, but also the weaker claim that *some* beings are created for the sake of man.

*that the world has been produced in time, the quest for the final end of all the species of beings collapses.*³⁷

A crucial link in Maimonides's argument in the last two excerpts is the assertion that God's will is the *ultimate* explanation for creation, an explanation that *cannot* be elaborated any further ("the argument must end with the answer being given"). Maimonides reasserts this point toward the end of the chapter:

Just as we do not seek for the end of His existence, so we do not seek for the final end of His volition, according to which all that has been and will be produced in time comes into being.³⁸

Remarkably, Maimonides's greatest and sharpest critic, Hasdai Crescas (~1340–1410/11) suggested that these claims of Maimonides must be interpreted in a nonliteral manner ("צריך שנפרשהו בדרך רחוק" "קצת") as merely asserting that "God has no purpose *known to us* [שאינן קצת] שם תכלית ידוע לנו".³⁹ Crescas justifies the need for this nonliteral interpretation by pointing out that, read literally, Maimonides seems to ascribe to God *arbitrary* action "which is the ultimate disadvantage for any intelligent being."⁴⁰

Crescas was not the only philosopher to be disturbed by the claims of *Guide* III 13.⁴¹ In his notes after reading the Latin translation of the

37 Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 452. Italics added. Notice that it is only the quest for *global* teleology that collapses according to the end of the current passage. I am indebted to Jeff McDonough for drawing my attention to this point.

38 Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 454–455.

39 Crescas, *Or ha-Shem*, II 6 5 (p. 271 in Fisher's edition).

40 Crescas, *Or ha-Shem*, II 6 5 (p. 272 in Fisher's edition). Indeed, in *Guide* I 58 (Pines 136), Maimonides insists that we should conceive of creation as governed "by means of purpose and will."

41 Maimonides's critique of anthropocentric teleology has also been subject to a major attack by the early sixteenth-century Kabbalist Meir ibn Gabbai, who dedicated the entire third part of his chief work, *Avodat ha-Qodesh* [*Service of the Holy*], to this issue. See Meir Ibn Gabbai, *Avodat ha-Qodesh* (Jerusalem, 2010), 123–254.

Guide (Buxtorf, Basel, 1629), Leibniz writes: “He [Maimonides] does not allow it to be said that all things are for the sake of man and man that he might worship God.”⁴² As we shall see presently, Leibniz was struck by the substantial similarity between the claims of Maimonides, the great rabbinic author, and those of Benedict de Spinoza, in his notorious appendix to Part One of the *Ethics*. Indeed, the concluding paragraph of *Guide* III 13 could be easily misattributed to the great heretic from Amsterdam.

When man knows his own soul, makes no mistakes with regard to it, and understands every being according to what it is, he becomes calm and his thoughts are not troubled by seeking a final end for what has not that final end.⁴³

5.3. DIVINE TELEOLOGY IN THE KABBALAH

The foundational text of the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition, is the Zohar [the Book of Splendor]. Traditionally, the Zohar is attributed to the second-century Mishnaic sage R. Shimeon bar Yohai. The book of the Zohar, or rather the Zoharic literature, first appeared in Spain at the end of the thirteenth century. Moshe de Leon (~1240–1305), an important rabbinic and mystical figure with a significant philosophical education, claimed to have discovered the manuscript of the book (though his widow attributed it to him), and within a very short period of time the Zohar achieved canonical status. Kabbalistic thought underwent a major transformation in the mid-sixteenth century through the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534–1572) and his disciples.

The philosophical core of mainstream Kabbalah is a system of emanation which is intended to explain and portray in great detail the

⁴² Lenn E. Goodman, “Maimonides and Leibniz,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980): 233.

⁴³ Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 456.

derivation of various layers of reality from the absolutely singular *Ein-Sof* (the infinite), the most sublime and ineffable aspect of God. The Kabbalists, just like Plotinus and the late Platonists, were deeply troubled by the problem of explaining the very first step in this process: why did the absolutely indivisible *Ein-Sof* proceed to emanate anything, and how could the first emanation be any different from the *Ein-Sof*. Some Kabbalists viewed the first act of emanation as brute grace (טַחֲסֵן). Yet many Kabbalists were not satisfied by this explanation. In this brief section I will concentrate on the discussion of divine teleology in one of the most lucid and systematic presentations of Lurianic Kabbalah.

Shomer Emunim (The Faithful, or, the Loyal Guard) was authored by the Italian Kabbalist Yoseph Ergas (1685–1730) and appeared first in Amsterdam in 1736.⁴⁴ The book is written in the form of a dialogue between two interlocutors: Sha’altiel (the one who asks about God) and Yehoyada (the one who knows God). Yehoyada is a Kabbalist, while Sha’altiel is a Talmudist, or perhaps a philosopher, who is somewhat skeptical about the Kabbalah and its teachings. In the following exchange, Sha’altiel asks Yehoyada to explain to him “the purpose of God’s intention in creating the worlds”:

Doubtlessly, *it cannot be said that the Infinite caused the entire reality in vain and for no purpose at all*. And though I have noticed that the divine R. Isaac Luria pursued this investigation, I was not able to understand his views adequately due to my poor capacities. For he writes that the reason for the creation of the worlds was that God necessarily had to be perfect in all of his actions . . . and if he were not actualizing and realizing all of his powers, he would—as if [כְּבִיכּוֹל]—not be perfect. And Luria’s words are obscure. I failed to understand them. *For they seem to imply that God was more perfect*

⁴⁴ *Shomer Emunim* is one of only three Kabbalistic texts whose study was permitted under the age of thirty (following a mid-eighteenth-century ban on the study of Kabbalah).

with the world than without it. But this cannot be said at all, for the Infinite is perfect in himself and does not require anything else.⁴⁵

Sha'altiel's objection is clearly in place: how can one claim that the aim of creation is the realization of divine perfection while not asserting that God was *imperfect* before creation? Let us look carefully at Yehoyada's answer:

We can speak of actual purpose [התכלית בפועל] in two distinct manners. According to the one, the agent aims at achieving a purpose that is external to himself, as when one strives to achieve wealth, wisdom, or any other perfection which he lacks. This kind of purpose cannot explain the creation, for the Infinite is not lacking any perfection. . . . According to the second manner, the agent acts due to the end of his nature and perfection [לתכלית טבעו ושלמותו], as a good and generous person who benefits others due to his nature. It is in this manner that the divine R. Isaac Luria explained the intention of creation. In other words, the *Ein-Sof*, being the absolute good whose simple essence contains latently all perfections before and after creation, wished to create the worlds because it is the way of the good and perfect to benefit and profuse [להשפיע] perfection and reality, and not in order to increase its perfection, since the existence of beings benefiting from the *Ein-Sof* does not increase its perfection.⁴⁶

Yehoyada denies that the *Ein-Sof* acts for an end (or purpose) according to the first manner of understanding end-directed actions. Yet it is not at all clear that his second manner of understanding end-directed actions—action due to the nature, or essence, of the subject—is indeed

45 Yosef Ergas, *Shomer Emunim* [Heb.: *The Loyal Guard*] (Jerusalem: Be-Ferush uve-Remez Press, 1965), 63, right column. Italics added. My translation.

46 Ergas, *Shomer Emunim*, 63, left column. Italics added. My translation.

genuine teleology. Consider, for example, the nature of odd numbers. It is indeed due to the very nature of odd numbers that they are not divisible by four, yet it clearly is not the case that odd numbers are not divisible by four because of their aim, purpose, or goal. In other words, acting due to one's nature, or essence, need not be an action involving teleology. Now, Yehoyada (or Ergas), may well respond that some actions due to the nature of the subject constitute genuine teleology (as in the case of the *Ein-Sof*), while other do not (as in the case of odd numbers). Yet it seems that at this point the burden of proof is on Yehoyada's side; he must explain and motivate the distinction between the two kinds of acting due to the nature of the subject (or agent).

If we look carefully at Yehoyada's words, we can detect his rejection of another common Kabbalistic explanation for creation that has been usually stated by the slogan "There is no king without people [אין מלך בלא עם]."⁴⁷ According to this view, God had to create the world, since otherwise it would be impossible to ascribe to him kingship, or, if we wish to use more careful and less anthropomorphic language, it would be impossible to ascribe to him any perfection which requires the existence of things outside God's essence (goodness, omnipotence etc.). Presumably, it is in response to such a view that Ergas writes: "the existence of beings benefiting from the *Ein-Sof* does not increase its perfection." In other words, divine perfections, being essential characteristics of God, cannot presuppose creatures without thereby making God ontologically dependent upon creatures.

5.4. SPINOZA'S CRITIQUE OF TELEOLOGY

Spinoza's critique of teleology in the appendix to Part One of the *Ethics* has been regarded as one of its most stunning features for more

⁴⁷ A similar formula appears in the *Zohar* [Heb: *Book of Splendor*] (Vilnius: Widow and Brothers Romm Print, 1882), Part 3, p. 5a. The view is very common in Hassidic literature. See, for example, Nahman of Bratslav, *Likutei Muharan* (Jerusalem: Makhon Torat ha-Netzah, 1992), §102.

than three centuries of readership. The precise scope of Spinoza's critique of teleology has been a subject of intense and excellent scholarly debate over the past few years.⁴⁸ The remaining part of this chapter will attempt to provide an outline of an interpretation of Spinoza's view, situating it in the broader context of this chapter.

Let us begin with a passage from Spinoza's preface to Part Four of the *Ethics*, the other main locus for Spinoza's discussion of teleology. The passage provides a useful overview of Spinoza's stance. I have parsed it into four sections, divided by roman numerals.

- (i) That eternal and infinite being we call God, *or* Nature, acts from the same necessity from which he exists. For we have shown (IP16) that the necessity of nature from which he acts is the same as that from which he exists. (ii) The reason, therefore, *or* cause, why God, *or* Nature, acts, and the reason why he exists, are one and the same. (iii) *As he exists for the sake of no end, he also acts for the sake of no end. Rather, as he has no principle or end of existing, so he also has none of acting.* (iv) *What is called a final cause is nothing but a human appetite insofar as it is considered as a principle, or primary cause, of some thing.*⁴⁹

In (i)–(iii) Spinoza argues that God's actions are *necessitated* by its nature (or, what is the same, its essence), and that for *this* reason it would

⁴⁸ See Don Garrett, "Teleology in Spinoza and Early Modern Rationalism," in *New Essays on the Rationalists*, ed. Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 310–335; Martin Lin, "Teleology and Human Action in Spinoza," *Philosophical Review* 115 (2006): 317–354; McDonough, "Heyday of Teleology"; and John Carriero, "Spinoza on Final Causality," *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 2 (2005): 105–147.

⁴⁹ *Ethics*, Part IV, Preface (II/206/23–207/5 in Gebhardt's critical edition). Italics added. Unless otherwise marked, all references to Spinoza's *Ethics* are to Curley's translation: *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, 2 vols., ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985, 2016). For the Latin and Dutch original text, I have relied on Gebhardt's critical edition: Benedict de Spinoza, *Opera*, 4 vols., ed. Carl Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1925). I cite the original texts according to the volume, page, and line numbers of this edition. Thus, II/206/23 refers to volume 2, page 206, line 23 in Gebhardt's edition.

be wrong to view God's actions as aim-directed.⁵⁰ In (iv) Spinoza begins to explain his own understanding of what is commonly called a "final cause." As we shall shortly see, this last explanation is supposed to complement his genealogy of the common erroneous belief in divine, anthropocentric teleology in the appendix to Part One.

Section (iii) clearly echoes Maimonides's words, "just as we do not seek for the end of His existence, so we do not seek for the final end of His volition,"⁵¹ and Spinoza's insistence that divine actions necessitated by God's nature cannot be aim-directed is quite similar to Maimonides's argument that for Aristotle there cannot be a final end for reality since, "according to Aristotle, all things derive from an eternal *necessity* that has never ceased and will never cease."⁵² Still, why precisely does Spinoza think the necessity of God's actions is incompatible with conceiving these actions as aim-directed?

One simple (and adequate) answer is that, for Spinoza, the necessitation of God's actions by his nature makes teleological explanations redundant. Insofar as God's nature—being the *efficient* cause of all things⁵³—is the sufficient cause for all of God's actions,⁵⁴ teleological explanations appear sterile at best, and misleading at worst. Still, in order to better understand Spinoza's view, we should look carefully at the appendix to Part One of the *Ethics*, where he develops an intricate analysis of the beliefs in divine teleology, human teleology, and free will, as well as the interrelations among these three beliefs. Arguably,

⁵⁰ The contrast between teleology and necessitarianism will be addressed shortly once we turn to discuss Spinoza's claim that the belief in (thoughtful) teleology relies on the erroneous belief in free will.

⁵¹ Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 454–455.

⁵² See Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 449. Italics added. Cf. Harvey, "Spinoza and Maimonides," 51–52.

⁵³ See *Ethics*, Part I, Proposition 16, Corollary 1.

⁵⁴ See *Ethics*, Part I, Axiom 3, where Spinoza stipulates that a cause must be necessary and sufficient for the effect. In "Spinoza's Monster Cause" (an unpublished manuscript), I show that, for Spinoza, *all* causation is efficient, but even if one does not accept this general and strong claim, Axiom 3 is barely intelligible unless read as referring to efficient causation. On the paradigmatic role of efficient causation in Suárez, see Schmid, "Finality without Final Causes."

Spinoza attempts to root out not only belief in divine teleology, but also in human teleology.

Spinoza begins his analysis in the appendix to Part One with the following observations.

All the prejudices I here undertake to expose depend on this one: that men commonly suppose that all natural things act, as men do, on account of an end; indeed, *they maintain as certain that God himself directs all things to some certain end, for they say that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God.* . . . Of course this is not the place to deduce these things from the nature of the human mind. It will be sufficient here if I take as a foundation what everyone must acknowledge: *that (i) all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, and that (ii) they all want to seek their own advantage, and (iii) are conscious of this appetite.*⁵⁵

This passage too contains clear echoes of Maimonides's discussion of teleology, as the view attacked by Spinoza (and Maimonides)—“they say that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God”—is formulated in almost the very same words as those of Maimonides.⁵⁶

Typically for Spinoza, when he launches an argument to prove a thesis which he knows is likely to be highly controversial (and there is no shortage of those), he strives not only to prove his thesis, but also to provide a detailed explanation of why its opposite became so commonly accepted by almost everyone else.⁵⁷ Spinoza's main argument for the rejection of teleology—both divine and human—is that the

⁵⁵ *Ethics*, Part I, Appendix; II/78/1-17. Italics added.

⁵⁶ “It is likewise thought that the finality of all that exists is solely the existence of the human species so that it should worship God.” Maimonides, *Guide* III 13; Pines 451.

⁵⁷ This is indeed a prudent and useful manner to establish controversial claims, though in some cases (not in the case of teleology), Spinoza seems to be so carried away by his attempt to explain the genealogy of his adversaries' error that he forgets the need to establish his thesis first.

“eternal necessity of nature” leaves no room for intentional action out of free will.⁵⁸ But why does Spinoza think that intentional action—or, at least, intentional action suited for genuine teleology—requires free will? In order to answer this question, as well as understand his genealogy of the belief in divine teleology, we need to carefully reconstruct his analysis. For Spinoza, the belief in divine teleology is the result of a *pile of errors*, accumulating one above the other; in order to understand the full scale of the problem it is crucial that we should not be satisfied by pointing out just *one* error, but rather make sure that the errors diagnosed so far provide a *complete* explanation of the philosophical blunder at stake.

Spinoza begins his analysis by identifying three universally agreed-upon claims (which he also endorses): “that (i) all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, and that (ii) they all want to seek their own advantage, and (iii) are conscious of this appetite.” Relying on this common ground, Spinoza will attempt to show why we develop the false belief in divine teleology. The first layer of error resulting from (i)–(iii) is the false belief in (human) free will. Thus, the passage we just quoted continues:

From these [assumptions] it follows, *first, that men think themselves free*, because they are conscious of their volitions and their appetite, and do not think, even in their dreams, of the causes by which they are disposed to wanting and willing, because they are ignorant of [those causes]. It follows, *secondly*, that men act always on account of an end, viz. on account of their advantage, which they want. *Hence, they seek to know only the final causes of what has been done, and when they have heard them, they are satisfied, because they have*

⁵⁸ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Appendix; II/80/5-9. Next to this chief argument, Spinoza launches two auxiliary arguments. According to the first, teleology “turns nature upside down” by making the finite the end of the activity of the infinite (II/80/10-22). According to the second, teleology “takes away God’s perfection. For if God acts for the sake of an end, he necessarily wants something he lacks” (II/80/22-29). Here, I will limit myself to the discussion of Spinoza’s main argument.

no reason to doubt further. But if they cannot hear them from another, nothing remains for them but to turn toward themselves, and reflect on the ends by which they are usually determined to do such things; *so they necessarily judge the temperament of other men from their own temperament.*⁵⁹

We develop the belief in free will as a result of the collusion of three elements: (1) the fact that we have desires (or volitions), (2) the fact we are *conscious* of our desires (or volitions), (3) the fact that it is almost impossible for us to have a *complete* knowledge of the *causes* of our desires.⁶⁰ Obviously, we may have some knowledge of the causes of our volitions. For example, I may know that part of the reason why I desire garlic ice cream rather than dulce de leche is because I am allergic to milk. However, this knowledge explains (at best) only why I avoid dulce de leche; it does not explain why I always order garlic ice cream (and not onion ice cream). Occasionally, I may try to achieve more substantial self-transparency and attempt to understand the causes underlying some of my more important decisions (or volitions). In such a case, I go to a psychotherapist (or a geneticist) and spend a good couple of months (or years) in trying to understand, as fully as possible, the causes of my volitions. Yet I experience volitions almost every moment of my life, and in almost all of these instances of volition, I have merely an awfully incomplete knowledge of the causes of my volitions. Thus, I hardly ever experience my volitions as fully necessitated by the causal information I have, or, in other words, I experience my volitions as *free*, and not necessitated by previous (efficient) causes. This, in a nutshell, is Spinoza's explanation of how we come to develop the belief in free will.

⁵⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Appendix; II/78/17-28. Italics added.

⁶⁰ In the current paragraph I merely attempt to provide an outline of Spinoza's explanation of why we necessarily develop the barely eliminable belief in free will. I discuss in greater detail the relevant texts and address a number of important objections in Yitzhak Y. Melamed, "The Causes of Our Belief in Free Will: Spinoza on Necessary, Innate, yet False Cognitions," in *Spinoza's Ethics: A Critical Guide*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 121-141.

Since this experience of “free” volitions accompanies us throughout our lives, one could see why we are so attached to this false belief. Just think of how you would react to a belief that is reinforced whenever you have volitions, i.e., every second of your life.

The belief in free will is thus the first layer of error in the pile which results in the belief in divine teleology. The second layer is the belief in *human* teleology, i.e., that “men act always on account of an end.” Shortly, we will zoom in on the question of why Spinoza thinks that the belief in human teleology results from the belief in free will. For the time being, I only wish to note that according to the earlier passage, the belief in human teleology “follows [*sequitur*],” or results, from the issues previously discussed. The third layer of error is a simple projection. I believe that my actions are free and should be explained by my aims, and I project the same belief onto other agents. In the earlier passage Spinoza discusses the manner in which we project from ourselves to “the temperament of other *men*.” A few lines later in the appendix, Spinoza invokes the very same psychological mechanism to explain anthropomorphic thinking, i.e., the way we project from what (we believe) is true about our own psychology to the psychology of the unknown rulers of nature, or the gods.⁶¹

Let us now look more carefully at the relation between the beliefs in free will and human teleology in the last passage. Why does Spinoza think that the belief in human teleology “follows” from the belief in free will? The crucial sentence in this context is the following: “Hence, they seek to know only the final causes of what has been done, and when they have heard them, they are satisfied [*quiescant*], because they have no reason to doubt further.” Teleology provides an easy explanation for the causes of our volitions (and actions), and thus distracts

61 “And since they had never heard anything about the temperament of these rulers, they had to judge it from their own. Hence, they maintained that the Gods direct all things for the use of men in order to bind men to them and be held by men in the highest honor. . . . This was why each of them strove with great diligence to understand and explain the final causes of all things.” *Ethics*, Part I, Appendix; II/79/5-14.

us from the challenging, yet absolutely crucial task of uncovering the efficient causes of our volitions. As long as we feel that we are in a state of ignorance about the causes of our volitions, we would still have the urge to look for these causes. Teleological explanations relax—or “satisfy,” in Spinoza’s language—this urge. They tell me that I pick garlic ice cream because I desired garlic ice cream. Spinoza would not deny that I desired garlic ice cream. Yet he would insist that such desires, just like anything else, cannot arise *ex nihilo*, and thus must have an efficient cause which produced them.⁶²

Still, we may wonder, why not adopt the epistemological virtues of human teleology while rejecting its vices? In such a case we could, for example, view explanations through final and efficient causes as equal and *parallel*. We would be careful to avoid the temptation to be satisfied merely by teleological explanation, but we would still insist that teleological explanations are on equal footing with efficient causation, and cannot be reduced to efficient causation. In order to see why Spinoza rejects this Leibnizian line of thought,⁶³ we need to return to the very end of the passage with which we began our discussion of Spinoza in this section of the chapter.

What is called a final cause is nothing but a human appetite insofar as it is considered as a principle, or primary cause [principium, seu causa primaria consideratur], of some thing. For example, when we say that habitation was the final cause of this or that house, surely we understand nothing but that a man, because he imagined the conveniences of domestic life, had an appetite to build a house. So habitation, insofar as it is considered as a final cause, is nothing more than this singular appetite. It is really [reverá] an efficient cause,

62 In other words, for Spinoza, teleology presupposes free will, which in its turn presupposes the absence of efficient cause.

63 For a very helpful discussion of Leibniz’s “two kingdoms” view, see McDonough, “Heyday of Teleology,” 196–199.

which is considered as a first cause, because men are commonly ignorant of the causes of their appetites. For as I have often said before, they are conscious of their actions and appetites, but not aware of the causes by which they are determined to want something. As for what they commonly say—that Nature sometimes fails or sins, and produces imperfect things—I number this among the fictions I treated in the Appendix of Part I.⁶⁴

As far as I can see, Spinoza's main point here is the following. Desires are indeed the causes of our actions (or more precisely, desires are the causes of the mental parallels of the causes of our physical actions).⁶⁵ When a desire D causes me to perform act A, the desire is just the efficient cause of the action. Just like any other efficient cause, D itself must have in its turn its own efficient cause. Spinoza does not at all deny that we have desires, but he rejects the very possibility of desires that are "primary causes," i.e., uncaused causes. Just like anything else, desires must have efficient causes. Thus, the picture we get is one in which nature is governed fully under the tyranny of efficient causes. Aim-directed actions, just like memories, are crucial features of certain mental items in these infinite chains of *efficient* causes. The memory I have now of certain events that occurred when I was five years old are likely to influence my actions in the near future. Still, this intentionality toward the past does not violate the strict regime of efficient-causal determinism, nor do I believe that there is some special kind of causation in which my distant past causes me now to act. It is the *recollection*

64 *Ethics*, Part IV, Preface; II/207/3-17. Italics added.

65 For Spinoza, there is no causal connection between minds and bodies, but rather mental and physical items are two aspects of one and the same thing. See *Ethics*, Part II, Proposition 6 and the scholium to Proposition 7. Thus, strictly, (mental) desires cannot cause physical change. Instead, desires are the causes of the mental aspect of what we perceive as physical change, or action. In *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 2, scholium, Spinoza designates the terms "decision" (*decretum*) and "determination" (*determinatio*) for the mental and physical aspects of volition, respectively (II/144/3-8). In the following, I will adopt the coarse, non-Spinozist language and refer to desires "causing" action just for the sake of brevity.

of my distant past—which can be weak or strong, adequate or misleading, happy or miserable—and not the distant past itself, that is the cause of my action. The recollection is an efficient cause of my action, and the intentionality toward the past is just a *feature* of this efficient cause. Along the very same lines, Spinoza would argue, intentionality toward the future does not make the future the cause of my action.⁶⁶ The intention itself can take as its object past, present, or future states, and these states might be possible, impossible where the impossibility is unbeknown to me, or even transparently impossible (“I wish I could climb tomorrow this Escher-style staircase”). Still, Spinoza would insist, the desire, with its embedded intention, is just an efficient cause.

Before concluding this section, let me note that Spinoza barely engages Aristotle’s natural, thoughtless teleology.⁶⁷ Given our discussion so far, one can easily see why Spinoza is not impressed by that strand in Aristotle’s thought which suggests that, heuristically, we may view the teleological principles of nature *as if* nature has “an intelligent, creative designer.” If genuine divine teleology leads us to deep errors and contentment with ignorance, it would seem quite silly to adopt this view as a mere heuristic device (unless our aim is ignorance and erroneous belief). Indeed, in the very last sentence of the passage quoted, Spinoza responds to Aristotle’s claim that nature sometimes fails or sins.⁶⁸ Spinoza can barely hide his ridicule toward this highly anthropocentric evaluation of the perfection of things.

66 Clearly, I can have intentionality toward the future even when this future will never exist (or even cannot ever exist). Thus, even if one holds that the future is as real as the present, ascribing causal powers to the future (rather than to the present desires toward, or anticipation of, the future) seems to be highly problematic.

67 The most common Aristotelean natural, thoughtless teleology that is not presented as a mere heuristic device would most likely appear to Spinoza as a bizarre, redundant, and unmotivated claim, bordering on the occult.

68 See *Generation of Animals* IV.3, 765b5–23, and Mariska Leunissen’s fascinating discussion (in her contribution to this volume) of Aristotle’s view of females as monsters, i.e., deficient animals that fail to replicate the form of their species.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Spinoza's attack on teleology is one of his boldest philosophical moves (and this is quite a high bar)—so much so, that, even today, Spinoza's wholesale rejection of teleology (and especially, of human thoughtful teleology), read literally, may strike many readers and scholars as counterintuitive and odd. Spinoza is indeed rarely afraid of challenging his readers' intuitions. Whether Spinoza succeeded in proving that all forms of teleology are erroneous is an evaluation I cannot fully pursue in the current chapter. Still, I hope I have demonstrated that Spinoza's critique of teleology (read according to the letter) is both insightful and powerful. As Warren Zev Harvey has pointed out recently,⁶⁹ Spinoza's attack on teleology is at least partly indebted to Maimonides's deep reservations about many aspects of Aristotelean teleology.⁷⁰ I have also attempted to show in this chapter that readers who expect to find rabbinic authors endorsing a textbook version of medieval teleology are very likely to return frustrated. As with many other issues of doxa, the rabbinic scholarly discourse was strongly decentralized and poorly regimented. Some of the results of this fortunate chaos has been illustrated in the current chapter.

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⁶⁹ See Harvey, "Spinoza and Maimonides."

⁷⁰ In one of his sermons, Saul Morteira, Spinoza's teacher and rabbi in the Jewish community of Amsterdam, criticized Maimonides's views on divine teleology. See Marc Saperstein, *Exile in Amsterdam: Saul Levi Morteira's Sermons to a Congregation of "New Jews"* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2005), 92. Morteira's sermons were delivered on the Sabbath in front of the entire congregation. The young Spinoza might have been a member of the audience.