# Ephraim Chamiel

# "The Existence and Growth of Wisdom"

# Chapters of Research and Interpretation

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Carmel • Jerusalem

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# "The Essence of Scholarship and its Development"

Studies in Jewish Thought and Commentary

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To my in-laws, Baruch ben Moshe Shweig and Nechama Shweig nee Solomon,

And to my mother-in-law, Adina Eidel Schweig, daughter of Yehuda Leib Rosenfeld and Yaffa Sheindel Rosenfeld nee Reiz.

To our elders

Ephraim, son of Mordechai Zeev and Hinka Kmiel,

And at night, Rivka Kmiel, daughter of Yehuda Aryeh and Sheina Ziman,

From Ostrolenka, Poland, who perished in the Holocaust.

Jacob, son of Daniel Tanhum and Sarah Hertz,

And Batya Hertz, daughter of Rachel and Shlomo Lanzkron,

Hamburg, Germany, who immigrated to Israel as pioneers before the Holocaust,

And they became farmers in the field of Jacob in the Jezreel Valley.

 Blessed be their memory!

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# Introduction

**The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.**

Source text: {המאמר הזה מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של התקופה, וממשיך לדיון במקורות התלמודיים שמתארים את האירועים. המחבר מנתח את הטקסטים באופן מעמיק, מתייחס לשינויים במשמעותם של מונחים מסוימים, ומציג תרגום מדויק של הטקסטים. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין המקורות התלמודיים למקורות אחרים מאותה תקופה, ומציג תיאוריה חדשה לגבי האירועים שהתרחשו.}  
  
Target text: {This article begins with a presentation of the historical context of the period, and continues with a discussion of the Talmudic sources that describe the events. The author analyzes the texts in depth, referring to changes in the meanings of certain terms, and presents an accurate translation of the texts. The article concludes with a comparison between the Talmudic sources and other sources from the same period, and presents a new theory regarding the events that took place.} Scott Fitzgerald, **Shaver Keli** , 1932 translated by Ariel Krill)

Last year, after completing the trilogy that deals with the mainstream of Judaism in the modern era, starting from Mendelssohn and ending with Rabbi Zacks, it seemed to me that I had exhausted what I wanted to convey. However, the thought does not cease for a moment and the typewriter responds accordingly. The Corona pandemic has confined the elderly to their homes for over half a year, and some chapters of the book before you were born during this lockdown. Under these circumstances, several articles have accumulated in my drawer over the past year, and I decided to compile them into a new book with a title taken from the title of the second chapter.

The first chapter of the book effectively closes the circle of engagement with the dual position of truth. Until I wrote this, I was under the impression that Elijah Delmedigo was the first Jewish thinker to hold such a challenging position. Isaac Julius Gutman indeed linked Isaac Albalag to the position of double truth, but I did not delve into his words nor did I fully grasp his opinion. As I decided to delve deeper into Elbogen's work and Guttman's comments on it, I became increasingly convinced that Guttman was mistaken in his conclusion that Elbogen did not side with this challenging position, and those who followed in his footsteps were also mistaken. I will attempt to elucidate this claim in this chapter.

The first three chapters are dedicated to the philosophy of the Maharal. This straightforward and courageous interpreter of the plain meaning, and man of thought and research, casts a spell on me. I never cease to engage in his thoughts and interpretations, and am constantly amazed to discover new insights each time. The second chapter is unique in its readiness to admit its mistakes and to publicize this in public, when it adopted a new interpretation or a new stance. The third chapter is dedicated to his relationship with his cousin Rachel Morpurgo and their differing opinions regarding Kabbalah. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the seven versions of his interpretations of the Ten Commandments, according to the various manuscripts of his Torah commentary. The nature of these manuscripts was made known to me by my friend, another lover of S.D.L., Yonatan Bashi. The edition of the Pardo brothers to S.D. Luzzatto's commentary on the Torah, which he edited and published, allowed me to examine the development of Luzzatto's words and the changes that occurred in them from the manuscripts to the first print. In this chapter, I will illustrate this development, in accordance with his changing philosophical positions, in the various versions.

The following chapters are studies I have conducted on several expressions and principles in our sacred sources: Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud. In these studies, I followed the meanings given to these expressions and rules by those who coined them, and how their meanings have changed over the course of history in the thought of those who came after them, up to the present day. I will attempt to explain the factors leading to these changes, explanations that lead to interesting and challenging insights.

The second and third chapters have been previously published. The second chapter was published as an article under the title "The Being of Wisdom and its Cultivation", in the **Israel** **Heritage** magazine, 1977. The third chapter was published as an article under the title "Shadl and Rachel Morfurgo - between acceptance and reason", in the journal **Da'at** , 2018. The rest of the chapters are seeing light here for the first time.

On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to the entire Carmel Publishing team. Especially for Israel Carmel, who leads the publishing house with modesty to significant achievements. To the spring of El-On, the right hand of Israel, and the linguistic editor and arranger, Setu Pozner. Thanks also to the index editor, Amnon Shashon. Special thanks to all my family members, my mother, my sons, my daughters-in-law, and my dear grandchildren, and first and foremost, my beloved wife Guli.

Enjoyable study.

Ephraim Chamiel

Jerusalem, Iyar 5781.

# First Chapter

# Rabbi Yitzhak Albalag: The Beginning of the Dual Truth Position in Judaism

Introduction

At the Fourth Nahalim Conference for Israeli Thought, which took place at the end of 2019, among other speakers, Binyamin Braun presented on the dual truth stance of Rabbi Isaac Albalag (Catalonia, second half of the 13th century) from a contemporary philosophical perspective. I listened to a recording of the lecture on the subject matter. The lecturer instantly took me back to the beginning of my research, which had initially led me to the discovery of the dual truth position in the philosophy of Shadal.[[1]](#footnote-3) This revelation led me to trace the origin of this stance in Judaism, which pointed to Albo and Rabbi Elijah Delmedigo (1493-1458) as those who held this rare position in the Middle Ages or as those whose names were associated with it. Braun's lecture inspired me to examine Elbogen's work **"Correction of Opinions"**,[[2]](#footnote-4) whose manuscript was likely written in 1292. This manuscript includes a translation into Hebrew by Albalag of parts of the book of the conservative Muslim theologian, Abu Hamed al-Ghazali (1111-1058), **The Intentions of the Philosophers** , and Albalag's critical comments on it.

In all of my writings, I make it a practice to give the speaker the right to express themselves in extensive quotations, and I add explanations and notes in the margins of their words. Here too, I follow the same practice. In my opinion, it is important to allow the reader to directly access the source, rather than just providing a reference and hoping that they will take the trouble to look it up. It is preferable that the reader be able to encounter the text in its original form, so that they can judge for themselves whether my explanation seems accurate or if their understanding of the source differs from my own. This is doubly true for the topic at hand. In this chapter, I disagree with most of the interpreters of Albo who preceded me, and argue, contrary to them, that he indeed adhered with great consistency and clarity to the position of the dual truth. In such a polemic, the need to present their words and his words in detail is of utmost importance, and the significance of the quotations is paramount if one wishes to lead the reader to an informed decision based on comprehensive data. According to the position of dual truth, it is impossible to avoid the difficulties and contradictions between the conclusions of science and philosophy, as understood by human intellect, and the revelations of the Holy Scriptures and tradition. Thus, we are dealing with two full, and sometimes contradictory, truths in the world of the enlightened believers and their recognition, and they are not subject to reconciliation. We must embrace both, as both are necessary to complete our worldview, and we should not relinquish either of them. In my research, I have termed this stance 'an irresolvable dialectic', as there is no escape from the tension between the two poles of the dialectic, except in God's world or in a utopian future. I find this bold stance to be neither escapist, apologetic, nor fundamentalist.

Recent scholars of Jewish thought unanimously agree that the foundation of Albalag's dual truth stance is rooted in the philosophy of the Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes,  
1126-1198), and in the philosophy of several of his Christian Averroist disciples. However, they struggle to determine whether Albalag indeed held the position of dual truth, in contrast to the position of Ibn Rushd, or, as most tend to determine, that he remained faithful to Ibn Rushd and to philosophical truth as the sole truth. Either way, this is a bold and unusual stance for a Jewish believer in the thirteenth century, and therefore it is no wonder that it was subject to sharp criticism and derogatory terms from both the supporters of Maimonides' approach on the one hand, and opponents of philosophy on the other hand. The accepted Shem Tov Ibn Shem Tov (died 1430) in **the Sefer HaAmunot** calls it 'Hamin HaBliel',[[3]](#footnote-5) Philosophical thinker Avraham Shalom ben Yitzchak (died 1492) calls him in his book **Neve Shalom** a 'disbeliever', a 'fool', a 'bad heart', a 'shepherd of spirit'.[[4]](#footnote-6) The philosophical thinker Isaac ben Shem Tov (15th century) in his work **"Commentary on 'The Intentions of the Philosophers'"** refers to Averroes' position as 'confusion and denial of the law of the Torah', 'speaking rebelliously against God', 'showing disrespect to the Torah not in accordance with the law' and 'turning the words of the living God into heresy'.[[5]](#footnote-7) Biblical commentator Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508) describes him and other radical philosophers (Ibn Kippi, Narboni, Ralbag, and others) as follows: They lay a hand on the Torah, speak what is not according to the law, with a vile and unwise person, they make intentions for the work of heaven [idolatry], they speak errantly about God, they reveal faces in the Torah not according to the law, they are heretics.[[6]](#footnote-8) And elsewhere: those who are wise in their own eyes, those who are wise to do evil, forgers of the Scriptures, the cursed sect, the blind.[[7]](#footnote-9) Yosef Yabetz (1508-1440), the knight of the innocent faith, in his book **Or Ha'im** , calls him and his fellow believers: son of Edom, reaching out to the Torah, his religion is vain and works wonders, a scoundrel, walks in darkness, makes plans for the work of heaven, where the wicked will rot.[[8]](#footnote-10)

Scholars' Opinions

In the years 1859, 1861 and 1865, Yehoshua Heshel Shur (1814-1895) **published** five key sections out of the 76 sections from the manuscript of **the revision of opinions** in his journal HaClut. This manuscript had been neglected since the beginning of the 16th century, and until then, no one had shown interest in it. Based on this publication, Yitzhak Julius Guttmann (1880-1950) writes in his book *Philosophie  
des Judentums*, originally written in German, a section on Albo.[[9]](#footnote-11) This book was translated into Hebrew in the year 5711[[10]](#footnote-12) under his supervision, and changes and corrections were made, primarily in the section dealing with mourning. Even before the translation, Gutman published an article in 1946, in which he reviewed Albalag's philosophy.[[11]](#footnote-13) In this review, he expanded on what he wrote in the German version of the book, and his words are similar to what was later published in the Hebrew translation, especially in relation to our topic. In the Hebrew translation, it is written by Yitzhak Albalag.

He earned his name in the annals of Jewish philosophy due to the fact that he was the first, and for a long time the only one, who adhered to the doctrine of the dual truth. Similar to the Christian Averroists who lived around his time, and from whom he likely adopted this view, Rihal argues that there is no need for the recognition of philosophy to align with the teachings of divine revelation. In cases where there is a contradiction between the two, a person is obligated from a faith perspective to affirm the former, and from a recognition perspective to deny the latter, without subjugating recognition and divine revelation to each other. [...] In contrast to the Christian Averroists, who were cautious about any change in the literal interpretation of the divine revelation, Rihal goes far beyond his Jewish rationalist predecessors in his philosophical interpretation of the Torah, incorporating all his philosophical views, which largely follow the teachings of Ibn Rushd, with only a few exceptions. [...] His discussion of the Torah's independence only goes so far as to say that after he makes interpretive changes to its words, he casually mentions that he also acknowledges and believes in the literal meaning of the text. Clearly, we must pass judgment on these promises and on this form of the dual truth doctrine. [...] the Torah should be seen as merely a legal statute, not intended to reveal the ultimate truth to either the people or the scholars. This is likely the true and fundamental opinion of Albalag, and with an almost cynical heart, he declares that he does not believe in the deep philosophical meaning of the Torah, nor in the prophetic truth contained within it, which is not open to reason and certainly opposes it. The recognition of truth is solely the concern of philosophy, which does not need to opine on the revelation of the Divine Presence that serves only for legal purposes.[[12]](#footnote-14)

So too in the article that preceded the translation:

For him [Albalag], the political and social purpose is the sole purpose of the Torah, and he does not recognize the additional goal that they [the Muslim and Jewish Aristotelians] attribute to it, which for them is the primary objective. According to Maimonides, the goal is the rectification of the soul through true beliefs. In stark contrast, Albalag asserts that the beliefs mentioned in the Torah are not there for the purpose of learning the truth or for the rectification of the soul, but rather they serve only the political purpose of the Torah. [...] The view that the Torah contains hints to every true philosophical idea, which forms the basis for all philosophical interpretation of the Torah, appears as a deliberate addition to his original opinion on the intent of the Torah, which he formulated in a calculated and systematic manner. [...] The philosophical view is formed without any consideration for the Torah's opinion, and it does not matter whether it can find support in the Torah or not. [...] He [Albalag] employs a wonderful art in the method of the free-thinkers, revealing an inch and covering two inches, or more accurately, sometimes covering what he once revealed. For this, he sometimes uses the theory of the double truth, and sometimes the idea that the Torah has both a revealed and a hidden aspect. However, his true opinion is quite clear, and it is that the Torah has no concern for metaphysical truth, which is only a matter for philosophy.[[13]](#footnote-15)

Therefore, according to Gutman, Albalag's thought was influenced by Christian Averroists, but even more so by his teacher Ibn-Rushd, who was an extreme Aristotelian. From his analysis of Albalag's words, it emerges that following Ibn Rushd, Albalag believed that there is no identity between the narrative of revelation and the conclusions of philosophy. In addition, Albalag's dual truth position does not truly give equal weight to revelation and reason. Philosophy is the discipline that teaches truth, while revelation does not contain prophetic truth that may contradict it, but only a political law. According to Gutman, Albalag rejects both the position of identity and the position of dual truth, and when there is a contradiction between the domains, it is reason that determines. In other words, the proposal to interpret the sacred text through philosophical allegories in order to adapt it to reason, is also rejected. According to Gutman, Albalag reveals and conceals this position in ambiguity, revealing an inch and covering two, as he jumps from one position to another like in a game of hide and seek. It appears that this interpretation had a decisive influence on the commentators of Albeck who followed Guttmann.

About ten years later, Judah Aryeh Vidah publishes a study in French[[14]](#footnote-16), which includes a French translation of almost all of Albalag's manuscript and a review of his thought and views. He summarizes this research in an English encyclopedia entry on Albalag.[[15]](#footnote-17) Among other things, he writes that according to Albalag

The revelation is aimed at the multitude of believers in terms that they have the power to grasp. An allegorical Midrash always extracts philosophical truths from the Torah. Thus, Albalag interprets the first two chapters of Genesis according to the concept of eternal creation. However, he asserts that such interpretation does not yield absolute certainty. Albalag does not deny that the Torah, which is primarily a "national" book, a guide to life designed to ensure good order in human society, contains truths that are not accessible to human understanding. Nevertheless, these truths described as "prophetic" are of little interest to the common man, whose welfare is guaranteed by full obedience to the letter of the law, and also to the intellectual capable of attaining through philosophy the truths necessary for the happiness of his immortal soul. In those cases where the allegorical Midrash fails to resolve the contradiction between the undisputed facts in the sacred texts of the religion and the conclusions of speculative philosophy, there is no alternative but to acknowledge each in its own domain, that is, the truth presented in the text of revelation and the opposing truth that is irrefutable, based on intellectual demonstration. The direction of Albalag's thought and the terms he chooses (truth that nature determines, religious truth according to miracle) strongly suggest the likelihood of his being influenced by the Latin Averroists, who were accused of advocating the position of "double truth". However, at the conclusion of the investigation, it remains uncertain whether Albalag exclusively attributed validity to a truth that is not intellectual, at least for anyone who is not a prophet.[[16]](#footnote-18)

Despite clearly identifying the dual truth position in Albalag's words, Vidas adheres to Guttmann's interpretation and conclusions.

Two years after the publication of Vida's research in French, Shimon Zvi Alexander Altman (1906-1987) writes a review of the book.[[17]](#footnote-19) Among other things, he writes as follows:

With great caution, Waida reveals the essence of Albalag's intent regarding the relationship between philosophy and religion. To clarify this matter, which already occupied Isaac Julius Gutman in his time, he dedicates a special chapter (pages 251-266) that reveals the tensions and paradoxes in Albo's position. It appears that one should not conflate the position of the Christian proponents of the "double truth" theory (Zigara of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia) with that of Averroes. It seems, according to scholars such as Gilson and Van Sreenbergen, that the Latin Averroists did not perceive reason and faith as two paths leading to two types of truths that contradict each other. Instead, they believed that what reason cannot mandate (for example, the creation of the world) can be mandated through the path of faith. In other words, I can believe in the power of God to miraculously do what reason must deny He would do according to nature. He used to say, that intellect and faith complement each other. However, Albalag held a different opinion. Even though he does not use the "double truth" formula (p. 256), he holds this Torah in a radical and unique extremity (p. 257 and footnote 1). The sage must accept the prophet's teachings through simple faith. Even though these matters contradict each other, both hold their own strength, for the form of the biblical faith does not cease and its truth remains even if there is conclusive evidence against it. Albalag posits that the religious truth is revealed and clear to the prophet, even though it is inaccessible to the intellect, and therefore, it must be accepted with simple faith. But what are the prophetic truths that contradict reason? Indeed, it appears that in fact Albalag completely ignores them and, in truth, he interprets the Torah based on the assumption that the essence of the philosophers' opinions should be revealed in its hidden meaning. Thus, the most extensive and interesting interpretation of the story of Genesis found in the Torah and in the Midrashim of the Sages confirms the philosophical view that the world is primordial (pp. 130-169). Albalag admits that prophetic truths were transmitted to the Kabbalists and that Kabbalah constitutes a realm of Torah secrets, in which these truths were interpreted. But in fact, he emphatically rejects the credibility of the Kabbalists as the true bearers of the secret. He argues that this secret has already been forgotten over the generations and in the hardships of the times, and that the teachings of "the masters of the hidden in our land" have nothing to rely on. It is better, therefore, to believe in the simple interpretation of the verses of the Torah than to accept the strange opinions of the Kabbalah that contradict intellectual truth. Vaida convincingly shows that Albalag's praise for his three contemporaries (Isaac the Priest, Todros the Levite, and Moses of Burgos) is nothing more than empty flattery without substance (p. 168). It is therefore clear that despite Albalag's belief in dual truth, the only truth he upholds is the philosophical truth, that is, Aristotle's theory as interpreted by Ibn Rushd. For this reason, he opposes Maimonides, who sought to reconcile traditional religious Torah and philosophy (pp. 154, 160). On the other hand, Maimonides also agreed, according to his opinion, with the philosophical theory on the pre-existence of the world, but he did not want to reveal his true opinion because one does not disclose to the public matters that the Torah has concealed (pp. 164-165). Albalag allows himself to reveal the hidden truth: (a) because he believes in the literal interpretation of the Torah in a simple faith manner and in the philosophy of nature and intellect; (b) because his book is not written for the masses; (c) because in his generation, even the masses already understand that the doctrine of the world's eternity does not constitute heresy, as they have begun to understand the difference between eternal existence without a divine cause and eternal existence in the form of eternal creation (pp. 165-166). In sum, as Weida rightly pointed out, according to Albalag's view, there is a dual truth and at the same time there is not a dual truth but only one truth. Albalag's doctrine remains a mystery and it is difficult to fully comprehend his views (p. 265).[[18]](#footnote-20)

Altman follows Vida's words without any criticism, despite his absurd conclusion that Albalag is both a proponent of double truth and against it– a conclusion that is in the nature of a double truth within a double truth. In the following, I will attempt to elucidate Elberg's words in a coherent manner, so that the reader will not stumble into thinking that we are dealing with an enigmatic or paradoxical teaching that is difficult to reconcile. You cannot, on the one hand, claim that Albalag held a radically dualistic position of truth, and on the other hand, assert that the only truth he adheres to is philosophical truth, and still escape criticism.

One of Vida's students, the researcher Shalom Toati, also wrote a critical article in French about Vida's French research, and another additional article, also in French. From these articles, it emerges that Toaff holds a different opinion from his teacher, arguing that in his view, Albalag indeed adheres to the position of double truth, contrary to Vida's opinion.[[19]](#footnote-21)

Solomon Pines (1908-1990) writes about the extreme rationalist thought of Ibn Rushd in terms similar to those of Guttmann:

His intention was to teach the enlightened to read in his book [Aphlatun's Abridged Book of the State] that the philosophical state, which arguably requires a legislator to be a prophet, is essentially superior to the most orderly Muslim states, and it is fitting that it should serve as their example. [...] According to Ibn Rushd, the excellent philosophical state surpasses the Muslim state founded on Sharia, that is, religious law. [...] We thus find that Ibn Rushd believed that all these human objectives, whether they are objectives such as wealth and honor, or objectives that rely on religion, originate from the opinions of the masses, which differ from the opinions of the philosophers. And if we scrutinize his words, and apparently we are obliged to do so, even the belief that there is a correlation between religion, which sees in God's will (or in the fulfillment of His will) the purpose of man, and philosophy, is also one of the sciences of the masses. Did Ibn Rushd really adopt this position regarding the last mentioned point, a stance that might seem most peculiar? We cannot definitively determine this, but we cannot ignore this possibility either, as the text's formulation suggests it. Or perhaps Ibn Rushd intended to suggest that the view which posits a harmony between religion and philosophy is an opinion expressed by philosophers, but is intended for the masses. [...] In his summary of the book of the state, Ibn Rushd views the philosopher and philosophy as authorities that are unsurpassed. This authority grants the philosopher the permission to regard the Muslim state as an 'incomplete' imitation of the ideal philosophical state, and to hope for the rectification of this religious state, its approximation to the philosophical state, or even to act towards this goal.[[20]](#footnote-22)

It is said, according to Pines, it is very plausible to assume that Ibn Rushd believed there is no identity between the conclusions of revelation and the conclusions of philosophy. In other words, there are sometimes contradictions between them, and in such cases, he believed that rational philosophy should be preferred and that the religious guidelines, which the Muslim ruler establishes as his laws, should be amended accordingly. Did Pins agree with Gutman that Albalag thought like Ibn-Rushd? There might also be another possibility regarding Pins' opinion. According to this, Albalag, like several Christian philosophers who were students of Ibn Rushd and were less radical than him (among them Siger of Brabant [1284-1240] and Boethius of Dacia [13th century], who wrote treatises in 1270 and were subsequently accused by the Church in Paris in 1277 of believing in double truth), could not fully accept Ibn Rushd's assertion that religion is inferior to philosophy, but on the other hand, they could not renounce the truth of philosophy that contradicts religion. Therefore, they preferred the paradoxical stance of 'double truth', according to which there indeed is no identity and there is contradiction, but despite the contradiction, they believed that we should adopt these two sources of authority equally as two contradicting truths and not reject the revelations.[[21]](#footnote-23)

Eliezer Shavit is also examined for the influence of Ibn Rushd on the philosophers who followed him and Maimonides (1135-1204). He explains that while Maimonides and his predecessors adopted the philosophy of Al-Farabi (950-872) and Ibn Sina (1037-980), which mixed Neoplatonism and Emanationism with Aristotelianism, Ibn Rushd, and following him the Christians Duns Scotus (1308-1265) and Thomas Aquinas (1274-1225), and the Jews Isaac Albalag and Joseph Ibn Kaspi (1340-1279), sought to cleanse Aristotle's theory from such a mixture towards pure rationalism. The first issue that Ibn Rushd addressed was his opposition to the idea of the survival of an individual soul attached to the active intellect. Shabi continues:

The second central theological issue reopened for renewed debate by Ibn Rushd is the problem of the creation of the world ex nihilo by divine will. Ibn Rushd unequivocally demonstrated that Aristotelian physics necessitates the assumption of the world's eternity in a compelling, obligatory manner. Maimonides could have argued otherwise and attributed to God a will that is an expression of divine activism, turning beyond Himself, only on the basis of the assumption of the absolute transcendence of God from the world and of the world from God. But if God is perceived as the form of the world, they cannot be separated. The interaction between God and matter is eternal, time is infinitely powerful, and the world is primordial.[[22]](#footnote-24)

The result of this development, as determined by Saadia, was the nullification of the correspondence between philosophical truth and prophetic truth. The interpretive approach that reads the text according to reason to demonstrate their identity, which Maimonides adhered to, is no longer taken into account. Religion is required only for the functioning of the state and its citizens. How then can one give philosophical validity to the truth of the Torah? Here comes the dual truth stance of Albo, offering a solution. In the formulation of Shabid:

The consistent Aristotelianism of Ibn Rushd in the issue of the eternity of the world influenced the interpreters of "Guide for the Perplexed" in the thirteenth century. Under its influence, they could not accept the words of the Rambam regarding the question of creation ex nihilo, the miracle, and the event of Mount Sinai as stated wholeheartedly. They were forced to assume that Maimonides intentionally contradicted his true opinion in order to externally uphold "necessary truths" from the perspective of the Torah. And of course, the interpretation of this is that even Maimonides' most fundamental claim that there is necessarily a correspondence between the Torah truth, the prophetic truth, and the scientific truth is nothing more than lip service to maintain the faith of the masses who need an external divine authority. The question that arises from this is: What is the philosophical justification for a position that seemingly appears false? And the answer was provided by Ibn Rushd himself in a nutshell: Political philosophy is the justification, as philosophy recognizes the necessity of religion for the proper functioning of the state. But here the ironic paradox is revealed: the unequivocal clarification that there is no correlation between the Torah truth and the scientific and philosophical truth, undermines the possibility of fulfilling the political demand to give philosophical validity to the authority of the Torah teaching by mere lip service. A different form of justification is required, such as the one we found in the words of Rabbi Isaac Albalag.[[23]](#footnote-25)

According to Shaviv, the solution proposed by Albalag answers the questions he raises about Maimonides' approach.

Would it not be better, both from the perspective of the simple believer and that of the philosopher, to openly admit that there is no correlation? That is, to the Torah as a truth unto itself and to philosophy as a truth unto itself, and in every field the intention is to fulfill a vital role in the life of culture, both in the social-ethical and political plane and in the scientific and metaphysical plane?[[24]](#footnote-26) Indeed, this was a sharp critique of Maimonides' work, but not in the realm of Torah study itself, nor in the philosophical realm itself, but in the way they intersect. Albalag's starting point was the claim that Maimonides' attempt to reconcile Torah with philosophy leads to complete inconsistency, both from the perspective of Torah study and from the perspective of philosophical inquiry. The Rambam did not fulfill the obligation of the two sources.[[25]](#footnote-27)

Shabi adds that Elbag criticized Maimonides on two additional fundamental issues:

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה המדרשיים. בהמשך, המאמר מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסים לרשימה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים והדמיונות ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the section appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its midrashic characteristics. Subsequently, the article focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and attempts to understand the criteria by which they are included in the list. The article concludes with a comparison between the list and similar lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta, and tries to understand the differences and similarities between them.} Albalag believed that Maimonides' method of proving his claim that Aristotelian proofs for the eternity of the world are not compelling [necessary], but rather they are plausible from a certain perspective. Albalag bluntly refers to this approach as "false claims," since, in Albalag's view, if one accepts Aristotelian physics as true, there is no escape from the assumption of the pre-existence of time and matter. Since Maimonides accepted this physics, he had to reconcile with what it entails. However, it seems that even Elberg does not accept the assumption of preeminence. What does this mean? He talks about **the eternal renewal** . In other words: God continually renews the world and prevails eternally. In this, he sees a perspective that better integrates the Torah. God is good and it is His essence to always do good. There can be no change in this matter.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה המדרשיים. בהמשך, המאמר מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסים לרשימה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its midrashic characteristics. Subsequently, the article focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and attempts to understand the criteria by which they are included in the list. The article concludes with a comparison between the list and parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta, and tries to understand the differences between them.} According to Albo, one cannot say about God either that He has a will, or that He lacks a will. The way he turns the world is beyond thought. At first glance, it seems to be a tendency towards a consistent Torah perspective, similar to that of Maimonides. However, in fact, Albo expresses the Aristotelian view that the world is eternal with the term "eternal renewal". What did Maimonides aim to achieve by positing the innovation of creation ex nihilo? He posits that creation is an expression of free will, and that on its foundation, miracles can occur, and on the foundation of miracles – the giving of the Torah at Sinai. When one speaks of eternal innovation and negates the dimension of will, the entire theological-Torah structure that Maimonides built on the theory of will collapses.

[...] As known, Albalag acknowledges that in this formulation he proposed, the contradiction between Torah and philosophy remains, at least in the question of the possibility of miracles. He thus acknowledges this and does not attempt to bridge. His solution is implied from the necessary distinction drawn from his words: he believes in miracles as an intellectual truth, and he knows that they are impossible from the perspective of true physics, and one authority does not touch the other. [...] Prophecy is an attainment beyond intellect. Therefore, although one should not interpret the Torah according to the Rambam's principles, one should also not interpret the Torah according to philosophy. We accept the simple interpretation and acknowledge its truth, even if we do not understand it. And in the field of philosophy, they follow the way of the philosophers. And from here, another assertion arises in which Albalag challenges Maimonides: the prophet is not a philosopher. Prophecy and philosophy are two entirely distinct types of attainment, and although Albalag attributes to the prophet a higher level of attainment than the philosopher, his knowledge does not encompass what is within the realm of philosophy. It is self-evident: Since the doctrine of prophecy is the central pillar of Maimonides' religious philosophy, and the belief in the creation of the world is the foundational pillar of the principles of the Torah, their omission implies - the separation of the system into two distinct and independent components. The question arises: Was Elbog indeed so? Did he truly believe in the Torah truths knowing that they are not scientifically true? One could debate this issue back and forth without reaching a conclusion, and indeed, there is no need to do so.[[26]](#footnote-28)

The only thing missing from my argument is the assertion that this is indeed the dual position of truth. His assertion that we will not reach a decision on the last question he presented, and that such a decision is not necessary, is suitable for someone who does not believe in revelation. Yet, one who believes in it, like Albo, might indeed sincerely think that we are faced with two equal truths and we must hold onto both of them even though they contradict each other.

Sara Stroumsa quotes extensively from Albalag's words and agrees that it is difficult to determine his true position, but asserts that it was bold and unique:

It is hard to avoid the impression that Albalag, like Ibn Rushd, believed that there is only one truth, the philosophical one, and that the concept of prophetic truth only serves to blunt the audacity of this thought. In the end, even the prophetic truth about the creation of the world in time seems questionable to Elbalag, since in his interpretation of the Book **of Genesis** he finds evidence of the eternity of the world. However, the assumption that Albalag internally agreed with Ibn Rushd's view is not entirely convincing; for the concept of two truths contradicts the accepted religious faith no less than the idea of a single, philosophical truth. It is difficult to determine what Albalag's true thought was. Yet, there is no doubt that Albalag, as bold as his thinking was, remained within the realms of Judaism - philosophical Judaism, indeed, but nonetheless, undoubtedly Judaism.[[27]](#footnote-29)

Shalom Rosenberg notes the existence of differing opinions regarding the meaning of Albo's dual theory of truth, but according to him, he himself does not decide and does not establish his own opinion. Rosenberg primarily draws attention to the fact that Albalag's dual truth position allowed him to interpret the creation story unambiguously in light of the assumption of the world's pre-existence. Before Albalag, the philosophical commentary on Al-Farabi's theory of emanation was constructed, or on that of Ibn Sina, who distinguished between the Necessary Being and the rest of the beings that are possible.

According to this approach, the concept of creation, despite not being identical to its classic content - the creation of something from nothing in time - has retained its meaning and centrality in religious philosophy by allegorically describing the asymmetrical dependence of the world on God (compare, for example, Guide for the Perplexed, Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, Chapter 1, sections 1-4). Following the teachings of R. Rashd, who believed that reality and essence should be identified unequivocally, classical interpretation reached a crisis, as it was no longer possible to interpret creation as hinting at the dependence of contingent beings on God. Therefore, the Genesis narrative could have lost the remnants of its meaning. This development occurred later. In the early stages of its development, Rashd's teachings influenced Jewish thought only in matters of Mishnaic topics. Only in the second half of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century did the issue emerge in all its sharpness and focus on a number of central topics, primarily, as we have seen above, on the issue of creation. In light of this problem, one can see in the teachings of Ralbag and Isaac Albalag opposing solutions in their extremity, both attempting to advance beyond the position of Ibn Sina. Rabbi Levi ben Gershon (Ralbag) returned, in the name of consistent Aristotelianism, to the understanding of creation as a novelty in time. In contrast, Gersonides fully embraced the new theory, while pointing out a new possibility for understanding the doctrine of creation. In place of the previous division into contingent beings and necessary beings, following N. Rescher, Albalag proposes a new, as mentioned above, tripartite division:[[28]](#footnote-30)

Every form can be - A. Non-physical, B. The physical existence of the movement, G. Materiality that is the purpose of movement. Our world is physical, its existence is motion, and therefore it requires an active force to ensure its activity as long as it exists. This motive is referred to in religious language as 'the Creator'.

Before us is a shift in the meaning of the concept of "creation," hinting not at the novelty of the world, but at the assurance of its existence. The essence of the world requires constant action to sustain itself, it is the "absolute renewal". [...] Based on the above, it can be concluded that in Albalag's approach, the emphasis shifts from the metaphysical motif to the natural one. [...] In light of these matters, it seems to me that one should not dismiss the interpretive work of Albalag, as incidental. Behind it lies not only the desire to adapt the biblical text to the philosophical approach, but also the need to seek a new philosophical meaning for the classic concepts in religious theology.[[29]](#footnote-31)

In my opinion, if this is indeed the innovative aspect of Albo's position, it is not groundbreaking and does not provide a new and significantly different philosophical meaning from the classic approaches, which sought to identify the principles of the Torah with the conclusions of philosophy, and interpreted the text allegorically in order to make this alignment. This is simply a different type of allegory, more suited to the teachings of Ibn Rushd. In my opinion, this is not a dual truth position but an interpretive identity stance, and Rosenberg, contrary to his statement, indeed expresses an opinion on this matter.

The sole researcher, apart from Touati, who reads Albalag differently from the others is Benjamin Brown. In his book[[30]](#footnote-32) on source theory, he describes, among other things, the various positions regarding the sources of authority and knowledge. The two positions relevant to our discussion here are rooted in Braun's terms: the Monotheistic Religious System (MRS) and the Western Rational System (WRS). Both are described as 'ideal types', understanding that these are not pure systems, but rather living historical traditions. The subject can adopt one system and reject the other, or adopt both within a hierarchy or another 'division of labor' between them. He can also adopt both of them as one without deciding between them, that is, to approach them in the way of the double truth.[[31]](#footnote-33) Brown chooses Elbulg to present the dual truth theory.[[32]](#footnote-34) In his book, he describes Albalag's position, writing that his work grapples with two systems, the religious-monotheistic and the rational-Western:

He refers to the rational proof as a 'miracle', while the proof from the Torah he calls a 'prophetic objection' or an objection 'through a miracle'. For him, as with most medieval philosophers, the main issue is the problem of the world's eternity versus its creation. On the philosophical, rational plane, he offers his own solution to this issue, which he calls 'the complete renewal' (which is undoubtedly a manipulative expansion of the term 'renewal'), according to which the existence of the world is contingent [a possible reality], and therefore depends on God at every moment, but in practice the world has existed forever, without a starting point in time. He is aware that this perception is closer to the concept of preexistence rather than the pure novelty concept of the Bible. According to him, he could have reinterpreted the Bible allegorically in a way that would fit this perception - and he even demonstrates this in a sportive spirit as a kind of intellectual exercise - but essentially, he emphasizes that this is not the appropriate way. Beneath this, it presents another way to relate to the two systems, which has been dubbed the theory of 'double truth' [...]. This Torah adopts an approach that maintains both systems in parallel, and adopts a Non Liquet [no clear solution] stance towards them.[[33]](#footnote-35)

After Brown quotes a relevant passage to present Albalag's dual truth stance (from paragraph 30 of the composition, p. 44), he adds:

The advantage that prophecy ostensibly has, as suggested by the last lines, is nothing but lip service. In practice, Albalag believes that this advantage does not necessitate preferring the words of prophecy - which are sealed and hidden from those who are not prophets - but rather to continue thinking in both systems in parallel. He also implies that the masses, had they thought rationally, would have reached the same conclusions through the use of the rational system, and therefore 'surely their understanding is my [rational] understanding and the faith of the Torah is my faith, this through natural means and this through a miracle. And if you understand my words, you will know that my knowledge is truth, and my faith is truth, and the knower of truth will make me know the truth for His name's sake.[[34]](#footnote-36) [...] From his words, it appears that he was deeply and fully exposed to both the religious system and the Western rational system, and formed a spiritual connection to each of them. He feels a deep affinity with each one, understands their inner logic and inherent righteousness, and feels a sense of injustice in any attempt to distort one system in favor of another, or to push aside parts of one because of its flaws in order to achieve a 'forced harmony'. Therefore, he implements each one in parallel, and operates as if each one is a separate computer program: he inputs the question into each of the programs, and seeks to examine what would be the response of each of the systems from its sources. He juxtaposes the data received, but is not willing to decide between them, because he has no way to make a decision between the systems that would not be entirely arbitrary, just like the adoption of these systems themselves. He therefore prefers to maintain them in parallel and live in a state of Non Liquet.[[35]](#footnote-37)

Now, Brown proceeds to explain why Albo's position remained exceptional and unaccepted, what the psychological basis for this sharp stance is, and why it is still important today as a suitable solution for the modern believer:

Some feel uncomfortable with this approach, viewing it as 'intellectual schizophrenia'. In conclusion, the critics argue, Elbogen is a living creature, who inherently cannot maintain absolute neutrality: where two systems provide contradictory data, it is reasonable to assume that he feels a much stronger emotional connection to the data of one system over that of the other. However, in this matter, Albalag is not a modern thinker. It is not the existential question of the self's identification with 'his truth' that interests him, but the question of truth itself. On the contrary, he is willing to negate his emotional needs and intellectual comforts, and sacrifice them on the altar of that 'truth'. And more than that: he is willing to sacrifice his own sense of spiritual completeness for the sake of preserving the integrity of the systems that purport to provide him with that truth. From his perspective, even if he feels a spiritual closeness to the data of one system more than to the contradicting data in another system, this spiritual closeness is not proof of the greater truth of these data, but only of the subjective psychological state of the system operator. However, even though this is not its primary objective, paradoxically, this approach subtly addresses deep existential feelings, perhaps even deeper than the existential need for harmony among the sources. Anyone who, like Albalag, has been exposed to the Western rational system and the religious system as one, is aware of the immense cultural and intellectual forces inherent in each of them. One who truly opens up to the reception of these forces will never be able to genuinely identify with the radical secular messages in the style of Russell, or with the radical anti-Zionist messages voiced by the religious thinkers representing this line. One who truly knows the religious tradition, especially modern believers, can no longer say that it is entirely based on fear. Similarly, one who truly understands the Western rational system can no longer claim that its sole purpose is to provide an outlet for 'desires' and 'evil traits'. The Western rational approach relies heavily on cautious faith in basic cognitive tools, or at least on the assumption that these cognitive tools are more reliable than authoritative sources claiming to stand above them. On the other hand, the traditional religious approach relies heavily on disbelief in these cognitive tools, both due to their limitations and the fear that undesirable sources will influence them. It prefers to trust the data transmitted by sources considered authoritative, data that has stood the test of time and whose chain of transmission, according to belief, reaches back to divine revelation, that is, to a supernatural source. Since every question of adopting a system depends on a spiritual connection, the question of faith is a decisive one in it, and every detail of the system that adopts it does so implicitly based on the faith that he is more inclined to feel for this or that source according to his inclination. However, one who is intimately familiar with both systems, and identifies with both, understands well the internal logic of each and can develop an emotional connection to each one.[[36]](#footnote-38)

It is clear that, in contrast to all the interpreters of Albalag who preceded him, except for Touati, Braun is convinced that Albalag was indeed consistent in presenting his double truth position. However, within the framework he set for himself in his book, Braun does not need those interpreters, nor does he need other parts of the composition that, in their opinion, contradict the double truth position. Therefore, he does not turn to explain why he does not think like them - at the end of the day, Albalag leans towards one truth - this is the contemplative. I would like to undertake this task and will attempt to demonstrate how, in my opinion, one should read and understand Elbogen's work. In doing so, I aim to overcome the claims of previous interpreters regarding the contradictions, paradoxes, and supposed enigmas in his words, as well as their difficulty in determining his final opinion.

The last commentator of Albalag, and the most extreme of all his predecessors, is Shalom Tzadik. In the article he published[[37]](#footnote-39), he analyzes the term 'prophetic truth', which Albalag uses throughout the entire composition, except for two sections in paragraph 'L'. According to the righteous one's opinion, the analysis suggests that Albalag believes this truth is known only to the prophet, and behold, prophetic revelation has ceased to exist. Moreover, in the prophet's consciousness, the prophetic truth cannot contradict the philosophical truth, but only add to it some truths that philosophers cannot attain without prophetic revelation. Admittedly, the analysis of several sections in section L does maintain the contradiction between the philosophical truth and the prophetic truth on the subject of the creation of the world - ancient or renewed - but according to Tsaddik, these sections were added to the composition by Elblag, in order to hide his true opinion that the world is ancient.

I hold a different justification. In my opinion, it is clear throughout the entire composition that Albalag believed, according to philosophical understanding, that the world is primordial and is eternally renewed by the everlasting God. He does not deny this. In general, as Sirat suggests, is the perception that the world is ancient, according to philosophy and contrary to revelation, more audacious than the perception that there are two truths and the philosophical truth contradicts the truth of revelation? Why hide the first and reveal the second? Indeed, prophecy has ceased and only at the end of history, when prophecy will be renewed, or in God's world, do the two truths unite. Until then, Albalag asserts, when the believing sage fails to interpret the prophetic text with his understanding, he must adhere to the literal prophetic interpretation, even if it contradicts the conclusions of understanding. From the introduction to his work, it is clear that the dual truth is a fundamental part of Albo's teachings, and therefore it is not logical to describe it as an apologetic addition.

The Book of Rectifying Opinions

In order to try to establish a position regarding the various researchers' interpretations of Albalag's stance, and to attempt to describe his coherent position, one must carefully examine the text of the **Book of the Correction of Opinions**, and this is what I will do from here on. I will try to present an analysis of the passages in the order of their appearance and to show that Albalag follows from the beginning of the composition and throughout, and does not agree to give priority to the philosophical truth - neither in the way of Ibn Rushd nor in the way of Rambam.

In his introduction to the work, Albalag declares that he does not accept the position of Ibn Rushd that the sacred texts of revelation are inferior to philosophy, and that in his opinion they are identical in their fundamental beliefs, and therefore philosophy has no advantage over the Torah. He also informs that his intention, in translating al-Ghazali's book **The Opinions of the Philosophers** from Western to Hebrew, is to present to the reader in Hebrew evidence that, like all religions, philosophy also accepts the four basic beliefs: reward and punishment, the survival of the soul, the existence of a God who rewards and punishes, and providence. The difference between Torah and philosophy stems from the difference in the level of the readers to whom the words are directed, not from reasons related to the field of engagement or the content of the matters. The Torah teaches the principles of faith and truths to the masses through stories and laws, promising reward to the souls who fulfill these laws after death. Its primary purpose is to organize human society through this formulation, thereby ensuring its success. In contrast, philosophy teaches intelligent individuals those same principles of faith and truths through logical proofs and analytical means. Indeed, according to him, the philosophers have proven what the Torah teaches, and the revelation contradicts, in hints and secrets of the Torah according to the Oral Law, the intellectual truths that are difficult for the masses to understand. That is, he does not give primacy to philosophy nor does he maintain, like his teacher Averroes, a programmatic distinction between the two domains as proposed by Guttmann and Shweid - the social-political order versus philosophical truths. Through this line of argument, Albalag hopes to change the mind of the believing Jew and convince him that there is no reason to suspect philosophers whose views are considered heresy in the Torah of Israel.

And know that **the faith of the Torah and philosophy are one and the same, with no difference** except for one that cannot be otherwise, which is: the ultimate purpose of the Torah is the success of the masses and their distancing from evil, and to teach them from the truth as much as their understanding can bear. Due to their lack of knowledge and limited comprehension, they do not have the strength to stand on the truth of the intellect and to depict them as they are, but only in physical terms that they are accustomed to, to the point that they cannot depict any existence except in place and time, and no time except one that has a beginning and an end. Just as it is impossible for a blind person to depict the essence of color, or for a deaf person to depict the essence of sound due to the lack of tools, so too, they cannot depict the essence of intellect due to the lack of the necessary tool, which is the intellect itself. And therefore **the Torah** piled up to silence their ears and put their minds to what allowed them to hear, and made them suffer the punishment in fire, and the pleasure of the soul in physical pleasure and the titles of God in the titles of the body and his supervision in the supervision of men and his opinion in their minds. In this manner, it likened the existence of the world to the existence of its parts, and its eternal renewal to their temporal renewal. However, philosophy, which is not intended for the masses or their success, but for the success of the perfect, depends on knowing all of reality in its truth and everything in its creation. **It brings proofs [= rational arguments] for the truth of the faith of the Torah**, but not in the way that the masses understand its simplicity, but in ways strange to their knowledge and things far from their comprehension that they have never considered. So much so that if they heard them, they would think they negate the faith of the Torah and attribute deficiency to the Creator, when in truth, they are the deficient ones. Therefore, the Torah concealed them and did not write them. And these are certainly **Torah secrets** which the sages were not allowed to put down in writing or to convey them but to a wise man from his own mind, so that the people of the land would not be heard and would rise up in their mass belief which surrounds their consent from the hope [of reward] and the fear [of punishment]. [...] And it is known that if there were any benefit to the masses in the memory of truth, or if it led to the intended purpose, the Torah would not conceal it nor would it withhold good from its possessors. However, **there is no true opinion in philosophy that was not hinted at by the Torah** in a way that awakens the wise and the foolish will not feel it. Moreover, even the prophetic ideas that are beyond rational inquiry and natural investigation have hints in the Torah. Therefore, there were two types of Torah mysteries: one philosophical and the other prophetic. It is known that philosophies allowed the sages to understand from their knowledge of the scripture through the wisdom that preceded them, and therefore they were permitted to contemplate them **and to interpret the writings of the Torah in this way**. But the prophecies cannot be known except by a prophet, and cannot be received except from the mouth of a prophet or from someone who received them from him, directly or indirectly, and there is no advantage for the wise over the fool in their attainment, for they are the hidden things that no one but the prophet should deal with. For just as demonstrative knowledge can only be attained by demonstrative power, so divine knowledge can only be attained by divine power.[[38]](#footnote-40)

One who only reads the introduction might get the impression that Elbogen holds a similar position to Maimonides, suggesting an identity between the legends of revelation (aimed at the masses) and the conclusions of science and philosophy (aimed at the enlightened elite). However, in cases where apparent difficulties and contradictions between the fields are revealed, we must use wisdom as a measure of truth and interpret the scriptures according to the tenets of philosophy and its principles, and achieve the desired identity. It is possible that Albalag, in this introduction, intended to reassure the reader who is not a philosopher, or who is opposed to philosophy, that the composition does not contain any unsettling innovations. However, even in the introduction, there are hints about what is to come. Claims such as - 'The world is not renewed in time, but eternally renewed'; 'The prophetic views in the Holy Scriptures cannot be explained by human intellect' - contain explosive material. How are we supposed to distinguish between philosophical narratives and prophetic narratives in the Torah? If we find a contradiction between a prophetic narrative and a philosophical one, who will resolve it for us and interpret the prophetic narrative in the absence of a prophet? Indeed, the first pitfalls explode already in paragraph one. It turns out that Albalag is indeed a student of the pure Aristotelian Ibn Rushd, and like his teacher he also attacks the conservative Muslim theologian Al-Ghazali and his books, **The Intentions of the Philosophers** and **The Fall** **of the Philosophers** , for which he mixed Neoplatonism into Aristotle's method in his critique of philosophy. The restrictive identity stance of Al-Ghazali, according to which when there is a conflict between revelation and philosophy - the revelation backed by divine authority is preferable (as in the position of Rihal), did not find favor in the eyes of the rationalist Averroes. Yet Albalag also criticizes Maimonides, a student of Ibn Sina and Avicenna al-Farabi, who also erred in their mixture of Neoplatonism with Aristotelianism. As a result, according to Albalag, Maimonides erred both in his understanding of the Torah and in his understanding of philosophy, and therefore also erred in his understanding of the relationship between them. This approach will lead him to a position different from that of Maimonides regarding the relationship between these two sources of authority, however, he does not reveal it at this stage of the composition.

And the wise Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd responded to his [al-Ghazali's] criticisms and resolved the doubts he had raised about the philosophers, pointing out the places of error and deception [=forgery] in them. In this book, I will also point out some of those places and express my opinions, so that beginners in study will not harbor any misconceptions. Such was the case with Rabbi Moses in his book called The Guide for the Perplexed, with the criticisms he brought against wisdom. In truth, his error in the law of wisdom was no greater than his error in the law of faith. One who examines his criticisms and those of this [Al-Ghazali] will find them of the same kind and their refutation follows the same path. And the reason is that both of them drew from the same source and learned from the same doctrine, which is the doctrine of Avicenna and Ibn Sina, who deviated from the path of Aristotle for reasons that we will mention later.[[39]](#footnote-41)

In sections B and H, Albalag enumerates another reason for the error of Ibn Sina and Maimonides. The reason for their error lies in the distinction they made between the necessary existence and the possible existence, a distinction that was refuted by Ibn Rushd.

This view, that reality is accidental to all existences, is the opinion of Ibn Sina and it is the cause of great errors and confusions in divine wisdom, as will be explained in its place. And Ibn Rushd argues that this is not the opinion of the ancients [=Aristotle] and that reality is not accidental in any way. [...] And in my opinion, there is no difference between the [reality] of the simple and the complex in this regard, but in both cases, the reality and essence are one in my view.[[40]](#footnote-42) Ibn Sina believed that the existence of God is clarified by this wisdom [= philosophy], and therefore he chose to follow the path of Aristotle, deviating from it only when he had to divide the existent into the necessary of existence and the possible of existence, so that he could derive from it a necessarily existent being. However, this path is foreign and all its premises [= assumptions] are not perfect, and therefore many doubts will reach him. However, Ibn Rushd asserts that the existence of the Creator is not for this wise person to explain, but rather to accept from the wisdom of nature [=science], which is the place of its explanation.[[41]](#footnote-43)

Subsequently, Elberg proceeds to extensively discuss the concept of eternal renewal versus temporal renewal. As we know, Rambam states in **the Teacher** **of the Perplexed** that philosophy has not been able to prove that the world is primordial, and therefore he remains faithful to the words of the Torah regarding creation out of nothing at some point in time. If such proof existed, says Maimonides, he could have interpreted the story of Genesis according to the claim that the world is eternal. Albalag argues in sections 22-30 that Maimonides is not consistent on this matter. One who subscribes to the natural science and physics of Aristotle should understand that there is no doubt that the world is ancient, and the proofs for this are solid. However, it is not ancient in the sense understood by the masses, but rather it is temporally attached to the eternal God and constantly renewed in an eternal and absolute manner - just as the sun and the light emanating from it are temporally connected, and like the movement of the finger and the movement of the ring worn on it.

The cause [the enabling factor] does not necessarily precede the effect [the outcome] in time, especially when the cause is part of the effect itself, like the material and form to the body composed of both. Even the cause that is external to the essence of the effect can exist simultaneously with the effect in time, as in the case of an agent that acts by its own nature, like the sun to light and fire to heat. In this vein, it is said about God, who is the cause of the world, that He acts upon it and is not temporally prior to it. This is the essential priority that Avicenna [Al-Ghazali] likened to the priority of the movement of the finger over the movement of the ring. This is their [the philosophers'] strong claim that necessitates that the First Cause should not have a temporal beginning and that the Cause and the effect should always exist in their existence, and there is no precedence or posteriority in time among them. [...] The form-giver is the true agent, and every form will be either physical or non-physical, and every physical form will either be a movement, like accidental forms which are quantity or quality, or it will be the end of movement, like substantial forms that do not accept movement because they do not divide, as explained in natural hearing. And the movement that was a random form, the agent necessarily causes it while he is acting. [...] Given that the existence of the natural world and everything within it is dependent on the rotation of the sphere, as explained in natural science, and that the rotation of the sphere can only occur through a force that propels and perpetually maintains it, it is necessary that the mover of the sphere is the eternal agent and preserver of its existence, by virtue of being the originator of the motion upon which its existence depends. Since the parts of the movement are not found together as parts of a stationary object, but rather one after the other, the movement is found to be continuously renewing in its parts, and the motive force continuously renews each and every one of them, one after the other. And if this motive is eternal, never ceasing to drive and renew the parts of the movement, otherwise it would require another motive and it would turn out that it is not the first motive but is caused by another, as explained in natural science, it would necessitate that this movement, which is renewed in its parts, be eternal. The renewal of the parts of the world, their creation and loss, would follow the eternal renewal of the parts of the movement, and it would necessitate that the world is constantly renewed in its parts and exists in its entirety. And there is no doubt that just as the eternal actor, who never ceases to act, will not cease his action in the blink of an eye- is more fitting to be called an actor than a temporary actor, so too the eternal innovator, who never ceases to be an innovator- is more fitting to be called an innovator than a temporary innovator, as the masses think of the innovator of the world. And just as the one who marvels, who is always marveling - more deserves to be called an action than his own, so the one who is always renewed and has no beginning and end - more deserves to be called renewed than one who is renewed once and remains silent. Therefore, the complete name of the Innovator and the complete action only apply to the Creator and the world alone, as they are the absolute Innovator and the renewed, whose innovation is not dependent on a known time and does not require any condition other than the existence of the Innovator. This is the philosophers' view on the creation of the world, and the matter of its antiquity among them is nothing but its eternal renewal and the negation of its ever being renewed at any time.[[42]](#footnote-44)

According to Braun, and in my opinion as well, there is no new proposal here, but only another type of precedence, which Albalag has already admitted that he accepts in principle.

In the middle of paragraph 30 (which Rosenberg views as a kind of independent composition), Albo begins to interpret the story of creation in a philosophical manner, according to the theory of eternal renewal. In this commentary, he invests all the philosophical knowledge and wisdom he has acquired, and reading this section - spanning about twenty pages with several breaks - is very challenging.– Its purpose is to show the reader that indeed it is possible to interpret and explain the verses of the Torah, which were given in prophecy, in a harmonistic philosophical interpretation in any direction chosen. His conclusion is that it is not possible to determine the correct philosophical interpretation, and that not all prophecy can be philosophically interpreted. Even before he begins to explain, he declares this in advance, hence he does not believe in such artificial harmonizations, as Maimonides did.

And now hear the interpretation of the first verse in the order of Genesis on the theoretical path so that it becomes clear to you that it is possible to extract the philosophical thought in the eternal newness from the Torah and the words of our late Rabbis **without believing it** , as I will inform you at the end of this chapter.[[43]](#footnote-45)

Occasionally, Albalag interrupts the flow of philosophical commentary and records reservations and notes. In the first paragraph, after thirty-seven pages filled with complex philosophical procedures that are difficult to understand, he explains for the first time how a truth-seeker like himself should act when comparing the words of the scriptures to the conclusions of understanding, and how, in his opinion, it is possible to distinguish in the Torah between matters that can be interpreted as metaphors for philosophical secrets, and matters that cannot be interpreted due to their being prophetic secrets and therefore should be accepted literally. According to him, the sages of the Talmud also acted in the same way, while the mystic Kabbalists of his time were operating incorrectly.

This is what I have understood in these names and matters [of the verses of creation] by virtue of what has been clarified to me from the proof [the intellectual demonstration], even though there are some masters of the esoteric in our land who have explained other opinions about them, each different from the other. The scripture tolerates all of them and none provide definitive proof of the truth. Therefore, one who seeks the truth should not clarify its existence from what he understands from the scripture itself without prior evidence. However, one should initially learn from the precedent and subsequently seek scriptural support for it. And this is my approach in everything that I attribute to the Torah and the Talmud from the analytical opinions. For I examine the scripture, and if I find it bearing the miraculous matter, I will explain it in that way. But if it does not bear any of the matters explained by the miracle, I will not explain anything in it, but only say that I do not understand it and its dwelling is hidden from me. This is because it is not from the philosophical mysteries, but from the prophetic mysteries that were only given to those whom God has graced with a spirit of supreme knowledge. And the way of our Rabbis, of blessed memory, is also this or something close to it. For they elucidate the matter through inquiry, and then if they find a verse whose plain meaning indicates it - they bring it as proof. If they do not find one- they will associate it with some verse not intended for that matter. Therefore, you will find them expounding philosophical matters in verses, the plain meaning of which does not indicate them but rather a distant instruction. Rather, each one remembers his reasoning that his inquiry led him to, and brings a support from the verse for it, and he does not seek from the verse anything but a small hint that it is possible to rely on the philosophical opinion which is his reasoning. You will also find them agreeing on one logical argument about the method of debate, and each one brings a proof for his claim from the scripture– not because he has no other proof but the scripture, but because the scripture supports what has been clarified to him from the logical proof according to his thought, so that that scripture will be a reminder for those who do not have the power to understand that matter from the argument like the majority of the people. [...] This is not the case with the practitioners of mysticism in our land. Only [these] are their ways to search and examine the scriptures, and whatever they see and arises in their thoughts, that most of the scriptures lean towards it and testify to it, even though they do not know from another way [source] neither accepted nor proven that the matter itself is true, they will take it as a belief and pass it secretly to those like them from the believers in everything, and they will say to them that it is the truth accepted from mouth to mouth until our father Abraham, peace be upon him, or the intention of the prophet which they understood from their knowledge. And this is the way of those who ponder over numerology and gematria, and this is their folly, and therefore they have strayed to what they have strayed from the lost beliefs that have no root or branch. And if you are among those who desire to know the truth, lend your ear like a funnel to all opinions, and choose from them all that which is proven to you by a sign, or is clarified to you that the matter is accepted from the prophet letter by letter, and no change occurred in it, neither in the matter nor in the language. And do not believe in the interpretation of the scripture except for what is clarified to you in one of these two ways. And if you are not among those who have attained this level, it is better that you adhere to the plain meaning of the text and believe in the absolute faith that is revealed from it, without questioning its reason, from believing in it a foreign logic that is neither from wisdom nor from prophecy, for by being from the sect of the hidden ones in our land, you will not be among the possessors of wisdom nor among the possessors of faith.[[44]](#footnote-46)

He would say: If you have not succeeded in explaining difficult verses through logical reasoning and philosophical proofs, or from precise and authoritative Kabbalah received from a prophet, you must understand that you are facing prophetic mysteries that you are unable to interpret, and you do not have a prophet by your side who can interpret them for you. Rather, you must accept them at face value with complete faith. Do not attempt to interpret them in the ways of the contemporaries who possess the hidden Torah, for their words are foolish and their opinions are corrupt.

Only in the second paragraph, still in section 30 but after forty-three pages, does Elberg focus on the question of the proper relationship, in his view, between the revelations in the Torah and the conclusions of science and philosophy. What is a seeker of truth to do when they have learned a truth on a certain subject through philosophical inquiry, and then study the Torah and find a contradiction to the philosophical truth? For instance, philosophical inquiry teaches that creation is an eternal renewal of the Creator, while the commonly accepted view is that creation is a temporal novelty. A deep philosophical and speculative examination of the verses of the creation story indeed reveals that it is possible to find within it the eternal novelty. However, what do we do in other cases, when we encounter a genuine contradiction, or when the philosophical interpretation of the text is not unequivocal and necessary, and there is no prophet? To this, Albalag responds as follows:

If the six days of creation were actual days during which God created His world and then rested, wouldn't all things that have evolved since then be inactive for Him!? However, according to the philosophers who believe that the Creator is always acting upon the world, it would be necessary to conclude that He is the actor and renewer of everything that has been renewed in the world from the beginning until now and into the future. Moreover, philosophers might ask us, if the world began at a specific time, why does the text simply state: "In the beginning God created," and does not say: "Today is such and such years"? After all, the Torah was not given until the event at Mount Sinai, which was two thousand years after the creation according to our count, and everyone agrees that Moses wrote his book?! So, from where do you derive that the Torah emphasizes temporal renewal more than eternal renewal? But this is the widespread publicity that has been disseminated to the detriment of understanding the scripture. And mass publicity is not reliable for knowing the truth, but rather one must learn the truth from the proof [=rational evidence] and then study the Torah.

And if her words are found to be consistent with the proven opinion - we believe that opinion both in terms of examination and in terms of faith.

And if no written support is found for that opinion, we should still consider it credible based solely on its logical examination.

And if we find in that opinion a scripture that **contradicts** it - we will also believe that the scripture was revealed by means of a miracle, and we will know that that Torah opinion is not foreign to our mind but that it is one of the special divine opinions in the attainment of the prophets and the operation of the ability that is above nature. In this way, you will find my opinion on many matters contrary to my faith, for I know through proof that it is true in the natural order, and I believe from the words of the prophets that the opposite is true in the miraculous order.[[45]](#footnote-47)

This is a clear formulation of the dual truth position. When philosophical inquiry contradicts the text received through prophetic revelation, and we are unable to interpret and reconcile it in a reasonable and acceptable manner, we must hold onto both truths despite the contradiction, and not choose one over the other. Importantly, we should not impose an artificial harmonization, but rather, on one hand, uphold the scientific-philosophical truth, and on the other, the prophetic-miraculous truth inherent in the plain reading of the text. Albalag emphasizes, as he promised in advance, that although he has so far managed to interpret the verses of creation according to the eternal novelty of philosophy - he is not sure that this is the correct interpretation of the scripture, and it may be preferable here to follow the simple interpretation of the prophetic writings, which contradicts the eternal novelty. His success only demonstrates, he argues, that the text can bear several interpretive explanations that are diametrically opposed to each other, and this serves as a warning to those who are quick to grasp a specific interpretation, thereby proving that another philosophical view, which contradicts their interpretation, is mistaken. As an example, he cites Maimonides, who on one hand undermines the validity of Aristotle's proof of the world's eternity (despite the fact that its truth cannot really be doubted according to his physics), and on the other hand confidently asserts that according to the plain meaning of the text, the world is renewed in time to align with his philosophical position.

Moreover, even the compelling interpretation that the text seems to bear, I do not firmly hold that it is the definite intention of the verse and nothing else. Therefore, my intention in what I have explained [the verses of Genesis in a philosophical way according to the eternal novelty] is not to inform you that this is my belief that I believe and that I instruct you to believe, but to inform you that it is possible to reconcile speculative opinions with the Scripture, and that the Scripture tolerates them, just as it tolerates their opposites or more. And all this for what? So that you will not be among those who hastily rush to deny and falsify the evident opinions in what they initially perceive [=through a superficial reading] as the opinion of the scripture, and wish to uphold that opinion with arguments they consider stronger than those of the philosophers, to the point where they believe that the philosophers are mistaken in their claims and think they are evident when they are not. And there are many who follow this path in every nation, including our own, and even our Rabbi Moses [Maimonides] is among them. And these fools have done two things: the first, by denying the miracle and decreeing that it is not a miracle, and the second, by decreeing that their idea is the intention of the prophet. As I have already mentioned in the introduction of the book, it is impossible for us to fully comprehend the intention of the Torah with absolute certainty through our reasoning. Just as only a philosopher can grasp the intention of another philosopher, so too, only a prophet can truly understand the intention of another prophet. And the reason is that their ways of comprehension are different from each other, and not only that, but they are **opposite** [to each other], because one comprehends the intelligible through the sensible, and the other comprehends the sensible through the intelligible. And there is no doubt that as their paths of attainment diverged, so too did their achievements, to the extent that one might attain from below the opposite of what the other attains from above.**Opposite** Therefore, one should not question the other, but rather, a wise person should believe in this when presented with a sign, and accept this as a matter of simple faith. **Even if the words of one contradict the words of the other - this does not negate that, as one of the virtues of the Torah faith is that the denial of a miracle does not negate the possibility of its truth. For what is impossible in logical research due to the laws of nature, prophetic insight may necessitate due to the power of the Divine. Therefore, there are many things that are impossible according to analytical knowledge that are possible according to the Torah; and similarly, there is something understood by the philosopher due to his investigation that is not understood by the prophet except through his portion in contemplation, not through prophecy. This is not due to a deficiency in prophecy, but because its mode of attainment is superior to this.** Furthermore, it will be clarified that there is no deficiency in the Most High due to His inability to perceive the perception of the lowly, just as there is no deficiency in a sighted person due to his inability to see things as seen by the weak-sighted.[[46]](#footnote-48)

Contrary to Maimonides, who believed it was necessary to align his philosophy with the Torah, even through forced allegorical interpretations far removed from the intent of the text, Albo thought there was no such necessity. The Torah's decree, originating from divine prophetic authority, can contradict an opinion based on intellectual authority because its source is higher, above the intellectual and the natural. On the learner accepting that there exist two contradicting truths in his world.

Here, Albalag returns to his philosophical interpretation and focuses on the topic of the days of creation. He argues that this is not about a specific duration of time, but rather everything is created and renewed together all the time. The Torah has accumulated for the benefit of the masses and is written in the language of chronological order and priorities. In contrast, for the sages, the Torah hinted at the eternal renewal. After he finished explaining the Garden of Eden and its rivers in a philosophical manner, he makes a third pause and concludes section 30 with a detailed explanation of his disagreement with Maimonides, whose wording is vague and unclear, and his critique of him on the question of precedents and the relationship between Torah and philosophy.

Now let us return to the interpretation of the verse and say that it states "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east," and it does not say "Garden of Eden," to teach us that Eden is one thing and the garden is another, planted within it. And he said this planting was 'from the beginning,' according to the philosophers, that it has no beginning. This is the consensus view between Torah and wisdom on eternal renewal.

And if only I knew why the rabbi who taught him did not reveal his heart in this matter, and he, as if speaking deceitfully, sometimes alludes and testifies to the fact that this is his belief and builds his evidence on it, as he did in the book of science [Halchot Yesodi HaTorah 1:5] when he wanted to make it clear that the power of the Creator does not have a purpose - he explained it from the movement of the wheel which is eternal and eternal, he is the one who said: "This God has no end and purpose, for the wheel is always turning", and he sometimes replies to the philosophers with false theoretical claims and tries to dissuade them from the path of the straw, and says [Morah Nabukim 188] that the newness of the world is one of the tenets of the Torah that cannot be deny it And I respond to him in the name of the philosophers that as he says, so it is, but the renewal is complete [eternal] and not inferior [from a fixed time]. [...] And in my opinion, even the worst innovation among the philosophers cannot be denied on the basis of faith, but it can be denied on the basis of investigation. Perhaps Rabbi Moses Maimonides (Rambam), being a faithful spirit who conceals matters, did not see fit to reveal what the Torah has hidden from the masses. And from this judgment, I should have acted likewise, but I have three reasons that he did not have:

The first, because **he wants to uphold the literal interpretation of the Torah and to eliminate the philosophers' perspective from consideration, which is impossible under any circumstances. I adhere to the literal interpretation of the Torah as a matter of simple faith without proof, and I acknowledge the philosophers' perspective as a product of nature and human inquiry**.

And the second reason is that this book is not Torah-like in its nature, so that the masses would read it, and if one of them were to read it and not understand from the beginning until this point - he would immediately be repulsed and disgusted by it, abandon it, and would not reach this place. And if one has understood all that has been mentioned before this – he has already moved from the level of the masses to the level of those worthy to engage in these matters, and then he will know that I do not agree with the opinion of the philosophers except because the investigative inquiry does not allow me to deny it, and therefore I admit it in the way of human knowledge and not in the way of faith.

And the third reason is that during the time of the Rabbi, this rationale, meaning the pre-existence of the world, was very strange to the masses. Until they believed that anyone who acknowledges the pre-existence of the world is denying the entire Torah. And today, this question has been disseminated among them and has spread to the extent that the nature of the majority of them shies away from accepting the belief in pre-existence that an Epicurean would believe in, namely that the world is eternally self-existing without a cause. They mistakenly think that this is the pre-existence that philosophers have proven, God forbid. Thus, they are found to be denying both the Torah and philosophy. And when they hear these words, they will know that the philosophers do not believe in absolute pre-existence, but in absolute innovation. And I found myself beneficial to them in three ways: the first in teaching them the correct knowledge dependent on nature, the second in maintaining in their hands the simple faith of the Torah that stands in a miracle, and the third in preventing them from suspecting the righteous of blasphemy against their [the philosophers'] beliefs. And certainly, their opinion is my opinion and the faith of the Torah is my faith, this in a natural way and this in a miraculous way. **And if you understand my words, you will know that** **my knowledge is true and my faith is true** and the knower of truth will make me know the truth for His name's sake.[[47]](#footnote-49)

Albalag, therefore, counts three reasons why, despite proposing a position that is difficult to accept and even absurd regarding double truth, he does not hide his opinion, and this perhaps in contrast to Maimonides' habit of concealment:

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדון במקום שלה במסגרת המשנה כולה. הוא מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נחשבים לחוטאים. המאמר מסתיים בניסיון להבין את המשמעות של המילה "חלק" במשנה זו, ואת ההשפעה של המשנה על ההלכה היהודית.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the section appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its place within the framework of the entire Mishnah. It focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and tries to understand the criteria by which they are considered sinners. The article concludes with an attempt to understand the meaning of the word "portion" in this Mishnah, and the influence of the Mishnah on Jewish law.} One cannot accept the literal interpretation of the Torah at the expense of discrediting the truth of the philosophers, as Maimonides did regarding the pre-existence of the world. Rather, as stated, one must accept both.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת המשנה והתלמוד, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתוך הספרות היהודית. המאמר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ומנתח את הקשר בין הפרק למסגרת ההיסטורית שלו. במהלך הדיון, המאמר מציג גם את השינויים שחלו בפרק 'חלק' במהלך השנים, ואת השפעתם של אלה השינויים על ההבנה שלנו של המשנה והתלמוד. בסוף המאמר, המחבר מציג את המסקנות שלו, ומציע דרכים חדשות להבנת המשנה והתלמוד.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins by presenting the historical context of the Mishnah and Talmud period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah within Jewish literature. The article focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, and analyzes the connection between the chapter and its historical context. During the discussion, the article also presents the changes that occurred in the 'Heleq' chapter over the years, and the impact of these changes on our understanding of the Mishnah and the Talmud. At the end of the article, the author presents his conclusions, and proposes new ways to understand the Mishnah and the Talmud.} Albalag's book is not intended for the masses, like Maimonides' book, but for an intellectual elite capable of understanding complex positions. Therefore, Elbalag reveals the details of his position only in chapter L, assuming that a reader from the crowd will be satisfied with his words in the introduction and if he continues reading - he will get discouraged from reading the difficult essay and will not reach chapter L. Whoever arrives, it is presumed that he will understand and comprehend.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המסגרת הכללית של 'פרק חלק', וממשיך לדיון במקום היחידה שעוסקת באלה שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא במסגרת הפרק. המאמר מציג את הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנתח את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסים לקטגוריה זו. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימה שבמשנה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ובניתוח של ההבדלים ביניהן.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the general framework of 'Perek Heleq', and continues to discuss the place of the section dealing with those who do not have a portion in the world to come within the chapter's framework. The article presents the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and analyzes the criteria by which they fall into this category. The article concludes with a comparison between the list in the Mishnah and parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta, and an analysis of the differences between them.} The topic of the world's antiquity was more accepted in the days of Albalag than in the days of Maimonides. The majority of the people think that the philosophers advocate the position of Epicurus - that the world was primitive without God being its cause, and this is heresy in both Torah and philosophy. Therefore, it is important to know that philosophers reject the view of the Epicureans and accept the concept of eternal renewal.

Thus, the enlightened will gain three things: they will understand the wisdom of speculative science, they will be able to continue and uphold the simple meaning of the Torah despite its contradiction to science, and they will not suspect philosophers of being heretics. Albalag declares that this is his philosophical view and his religious belief, and the reader who will wisely delve into the depth of his thought - will accept them as truth despite their contradiction- and in this, I believe, there is also an answer to the skepticism of Shabid and Sirat. Albalag also declares that he has nothing to hide from anyone who has read up to this point, contrary to Tzadik's claim that Albalag has an interest in concealing his position (although, Albalag indeed writes this in a section, which according to Tzadik, was added by Albalag in order to hide another of his beliefs – the pre-existence of the world).

In the continuation of the composition, I found additional sections where Elbogen provides detailed explanations for some of the principles he has discussed so far. In addition, he adds several important principles that are not necessarily related to the topic of dual truth, but have philosophical interest. The first section, in paragraph "b", deals with the distinction between the attainment of human intellect and the attainment of the supreme knowledge, which is accessible only to the prophet, who is the pinnacle of human perfection. Moreover, he argues that it is known from the ancient philosophers that the higher knowledge does not comprehend the things in the lower world as human knowledge comprehends them, and of course vice versa. If the truth below contradicts the truth above, and vice versa - there is no deficiency on either side:

Whether the attainment of human intellect is specific or general, or falls under the past and future, or increases with the multitude of known and similar entities - it is necessary that the attainment of the separate intellect is neither specific nor general, nor does it fall under the past and future, nor does it increase with the multitude, nor does it transition from potential to actual, but it is always one in actuality, and the many known entities exist in it simultaneously without time - as they exist in the human intellect which will comprehend all these events due to its acquisition from the physical individuals through imagination and senses, until it cannot completely abstract them from the material and its events. Therefore, when human intellect reaches a boundary where it no longer needs to acquire knowledge from the known, or to understand the cause from the effect through inference, but knows it inherently because all known things exist within it in actuality - then its knowledge transcends from the level of human knowledge to the level of supreme knowledge. This attainment is what is called prophecy, and it is the ultimate perfection of man. From the wisdom of the ancients, the pure of heart will understand that **what is above is not comprehensible to what is below in its entirety, and what is below is not comprehensible to what is above due to its lowly existence. There is no deficiency in the law of the superior intellect in its inability to comprehend the lowly matter in a lowly manner like the inferior**, just as there is no deficiency in the law of the intellect that we possess in its inability to comprehend color, sound, and taste in the manner of sensory perception. Rather, their comprehension is directed in that way - a deficiency in its law.[[48]](#footnote-50)

Continuing, in the second part of paragraph "D", Albalag writes about the difference between divine and human knowledge, where only the term 'know' is common to both, but its content is likely to be mostly opposite:

Therefore, His [the Creator's] knowledge is neither personal nor general, and it has already been clarified that He has knowledge in any case, so there is a kind of superior knowledge there - which is neither specific nor general. And the way of His knowledge is as I have already introduced, that He Himself is intellect, and it has also been clarified that the forms of things are not something that emanates from Him, but they are He Himself in the aspect of unity that the essence does not multiply in them. Therefore, His knowledge is He Himself, His knowledge of the forms of things which are He Himself and they are His knowledge. This is the opinion of the ancients regarding the knowledge of the Creator. From what I have informed you about this matter above, you will understand that these questions that Abuhamad [Al-Ghazali] and the like ask do not fall within the divine knowledge, but rather from his metaphor in human knowledge, and his difficulty with it, and the assumption that both of them are of the same kind. And indeed, they are like two opposites in most of their matters, and therefore we do not have the power to depict the essence of the attainment of the supreme intellect and its quality. [...] For this reason, we can only comprehend the existence of these divine attributes, or even less, but their essence and quality are impossible to grasp.[[49]](#footnote-51)

The third section, in paragraph 49, deals with the topic of divine foreknowledge of what is to come, which is not within the law of nature, versus human free will or determinism. Albalag actually adopts Maimonides' view, that God knows in a way that is incomprehensible to us and that man is free to choose between good and evil, and rejects Al-Ghazali's deterministic perspective.

And perhaps you might think that I am denying the Creator's knowledge of potential things before they come into existence, God forbid. Rather, I am denying His knowledge of them in the manner that Avicenna [Al-Ghazali] conceived. There is no doubt that this opinion [of his] is from the category of human opinions, and there is no difference between the two opinions except in more or less, and this is clear from his words and the astrologer's parable that he brought. The faith of Abu Hamid [Al-Ghazali] is suitable to be preached to the masses, but it is not suitable to be upheld by those seeking knowledge of the faith upon which eternal life depends. And when you scrutinize the words of Abu Hamid thoroughly, you will find them necessitating the negation of human free will and the compulsion of his actions, and completely nullifying the nature of possibility [as God's knowledge negates it]. And these explanations are not just denials of philosophy, but a denial of the law of the Torah. Other predecessors have already endeavored to answer these explanations, some from the perspective of faith and others from the perspective of wisdom, until they left me no room.[[50]](#footnote-52)

The fourth section, in paragraphs 66 and 71, is a brief statement on the purpose of man in the world, which is a universal mission in the spirit of Maimonidean philosophy. The true reward lies in the success of the effort to fill the void:

The worthy endeavor for the enlightened is the pursuit of closeness in the attributes of God, which are the intellect and the actions that are obligated from it. And this is the essence of the wise man's [Solomon ibn Gabirol] statement: "In wisdom and in action, the soul clings to the upper world." Therefore, there is no special success in one nation, but the pious of all nations have a portion in the world to come.[[51]](#footnote-53) [...] The soul's attainment of its perfection, this is its pleasure, and its perception of its inferiority and that it lacks the form in which its perfection lies - this is its toil, and suffice it punishment and reward.[[52]](#footnote-54)

The fifth and final section, in paragraph 72b, clarifies that Elbogen, who previously criticized the Kabbalists of his country, has no opposition to authentic Kabbalah and mysticism, which were transmitted to Moses our teacher as secrets of the Torah and almost lost. The opposite is true. One should turn to their mysteries when all doors of intellectual inquiry are closed before him, and choose a healthy reasoning between them and the simple interpretation.

Until here, the demonstrative hand reaches in divinity, and from this point forward, restrain your mouth from speaking and your heart from contemplating. And if your heart yearns, return to the Kabbalah, which is the treasury of mysteries and the house of treasures. There is no doubt that the tradition was passed down from Moses to the community of Jacob, but over the course of the exile and the subjugation of kingdoms, the number of those who transmitted and received it dwindled, and it gradually diminished and almost disappeared from the land. If not for the Lord of Hosts who left a remnant, two or three kernels in our land: a Cohen, a Levi, and an Israelite, Rabbi Isaac [son of Jacob] the Cohen of Kavistan, and the Rabbi, Rabbi Todros [son of Joseph] the Levi [Abulafia, 1283-1225], and the Rabbi, Rabbi Moses son of Simon [of Burgos], who endeavored to revive the name that had died out. And the greatest of them all in this intention was Rabbi Moses, for this man Moses has not ceased to be active to this day, but rather, he learned from all his teachers and God guided his hand to the main points of the discourse from the rest of the remnant that were there. And behold, it is heard throughout all the lands - 'Moses received'.[[53]](#footnote-55)

He would say: One should not force speculative philosophical harmonies onto verses that do not settle with rational examination and whose simple meaning is not understood, in order to avoid an ancient and authentic Kabbalistic mystical interpretation.

The final portion of the Mishnah in Tractate Sanhedrin addresses the four forms of capital punishment. Amid the discourse on these forms of execution, prior to the enumeration of those to be strangled and the discussion of the specifics of this list, there is a section that pertains to groups and individuals who will not partake in the world to come. The positioning of this section, its midrashic character, the nature of the mentioned groups and individuals, and their comparison to analogous lists in the Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta, provoke numerous queries.

After a careful examination of Albalag's words, it seems clear to me that he indeed fully stands by his dual truth position. It is clear that the researchers who argue that such a stance was made possible only in the wake of Ibn Rushd's thought are correct. He was the first to establish that philosophical truth does not have to conform to the truth of the sacred scriptures revealed in revelation. However, in contrast to Ibn Rushd's position, which preferred philosophical truth in cases of contradiction and saw revelation as merely a social-political necessity, and in contrast to Maimonides, who sought to reconcile the two domains and for this purpose interpreted the verses of revelation in an allegorical, philosophical, and speculative manner, Albalag asserted that we have two equivalent comprehensive truths from two sources of authority: reason and revelation, which we must hold onto even though they sometimes contradict each other. Therefore, it seems to me that Albalag's thought is of utmost importance, but not because of the concept of eternal renewal as Rosenberg suggests. Indeed, it is very possible that the eternal novelty in Albalag is merely lip service and a type of familiar preface stance. It is already stated in the prayer book, "Who renews daily the work of creation," and the only question is whether this form of renewal began at a specific point in time or is eternal! Therefore, I would like to argue that the uniqueness and innovation in Albalag's words are primarily rooted in the dual truth stance proposed for the first time by a Jewish thinker, as in my research I am only aware of two Christian thinkers, students of Ibn-Rushd, who may have preceded him in this. I was not convinced by Gutman's arguments, steeped as they are in the modern era where philosophers championed a singular truth, and a philosophical stance on a dual truth seemed to them imaginary and absurd. Vida follows in the footsteps of Gutman, and Altman follows in the footsteps of Vida. Rosenberg has a rejection of postmodern thought that proposes more than one truth, and he sees it as a threat to Jewish tradition. Shavid, a child of the post-modern era, understood Elbelg's position correctly, but doubted his sincerity for another reason: Shavid and Gutman were not great believers in revelation, and therefore, faith in such a truth alongside the rational truth did not seem to them possible or serious. They preferred to fully pair Albelog with Even-Roshed. It surprises me that Colette Sirat was not convinced by the words of Albalag himself, who declared twice that his interpretation of Genesis is not necessarily reliable, but rather serves as an example of how the verses can also be interpreted according to the position of eternal innovation. This reinforces his claim that sometimes one should refrain from philosophical interpretations of the Scriptures and adhere to the prophetic plain meaning, even if it contradicts the concept in wisdom. The righteous is a riddle in my eyes. I assume that he is a staunch rationalist and it seems that the explanation of Braun for his deterrence from the position of double truth should be applied to him (and perhaps even to his predecessors). The sole researcher, aside from Touati, who shares my view is Benjamin Brown, and I hope that this chapter will serve as a complement to his remarks on Albo in his book. He too is fully convinced of Albalag's sincerity and his radical consistency, in presenting his dual truth stance for the judgment of the believing and enlightened reader. The fact that one does not suffice with positions of denial on the one hand, and apologetic or negationist positions on the other, but equally identifies with the source of authority of human understanding and the source of authority of revelation, even though their conclusions and determinations often contradict. I have been investigating this position in my books ever since I discovered it in S.D.L.'s writings.[[54]](#footnote-56) In my opinion, scholars and researchers should approach with due respect when dealing with the contradictions between religion and knowledge. It is a possible solution for modern believers who, in the words of Braun, deeply recognize and fully identify with both the achievements of wisdom in Western culture and the norms and messages of the Jewish religious tradition, and are not willing to give up either of these two sources of knowledge and authority despite the difficulties and contradictions.

# Chapter Two

# "Understanding the Existence and Growth of Wisdom": Changes of Opinion in the Works of Shadal (Samuel David Luzzatto)[[55]](#footnote-57)

Introduction

Samuel David Luzzatto (Shadal, Trieste 1800 - Padua 1865) was one of the greatest Jewish scholars of Italy in the 19th century. He primarily engaged in biblical interpretation and research, the study of the Hebrew language, its grammar and literature, and Jewish philosophy. A distinctive feature of S.D.L. that sets him apart from other scholars was his self-awareness and his recognition of the exceptional nature of his research work and its objectives. He defined himself as a pursuer of interpretive truth, accepting it from whoever speaks it, without showing favor to the great over the small or to the righteous over the wicked. The truth of his words is singular and is embodied in the plain meaning that is the intention of the speaker or writer. Moreover, it was important to him to impart to those who came after him a full understanding of who Shadal was and what his contribution was. This awareness of Shadal is expressed in the following phenomena:

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת המשנה, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתוך הספרות הרבנית. המאמר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ומנתח את היחס בין המשנה למדרש ולתוספתא. המאמר מסקר את השאלות המרכזיות שעולות מהטקסט: מה המשמעות של 'חלק לעולם הבא'? מי הם האנשים והקבוצות שאינם זוכים לחלק זה? ואיך מתמודדת המשנה עם הבעיה של הרשעים שזוכים לחיי עולם? המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין המשנה למקורות רבניים אחרים, ומנסה להבין את המקום של המשנה בתוך המסגרת הרחבה של החשיבה היהודית.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical context of the Mishnaic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah within Rabbinic literature. The article focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter from Tractate Sanhedrin, and analyzes the relationship between the Mishnah, the Midrash, and the Tosefta. The article examines the central questions that arise from the text: What is the meaning of 'a portion in the world to come'? Who are the individuals and groups that do not merit this portion? And how does the Mishnah deal with the problem of the wicked who merit eternal life? The article concludes with a comparison between the Mishnah and other Rabbinic sources, and attempts to understand the place of the Mishnah within the broader framework of Jewish thought.} Shadal often writes about himself, his uniqueness, his feelings, his thoughts, his self-perception, how others see him, and the nature of his work and its advantages. This is expressed in his letters and in the autobiography he wrote.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים המיוחדים לה. המאמר מתמקד בשאלה מדוע היחידה מופיעה במקום שבו היא מופיעה, ומה המשמעות של המיקום שלה. המאמר מציג גם דיון במאפיינים המיוחדים של היחידה, כולל השוואה ליחידות אחרות במשנה ובתלמוד. בסוף המאמר, המחבר מציג תיאוריה מקורית שמסבירה את המיקום והמאפיינים של היחידה.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its unique characteristics. The article focuses on the question of why the unit appears where it does, and what the significance of its location is. The article also presents a discussion of the unique characteristics of the unit, including a comparison to other units in the Mishnah and the Talmud. At the end of the article, the author presents an original theory that explains the location and characteristics of the unit.} Shadal is meticulous in attributing statements and interpretations to their authors, both when he disagrees with them and when he adopts their positions. He is prepared to accept the positions of commentators that, in his opinion, have hit the truth, without considering their ideological teachings, their fame, their character and behavior, their nationality, and their religion. He explicitly emphasizes this fact.

Source text: {המאמר מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת המשנה, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים המיוחדים של 'פרק חלק'. המחבר מנתח את הקשרים בין הפרק למסכת סנהדרין כולה, ומציג את השאלות שעולות מהטקסט. הוא מתמקד בפרט בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את המשמעות ההיסטורית והתיאולוגית של הרשימה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין 'פרק חלק' לטקסטים אחרים מאותה תקופה, ובניסיון להבין את המקום של הפרק במסגרת המשנה כולה.}  
  
Target text: {The article begins with a presentation of the historical context of the Mishnaic period, and continues to discuss the unique characteristics of 'Perek Heleq'. The author analyzes the connections between the chapter and the entire tractate of Sanhedrin, and presents the questions that arise from the text. He focuses particularly on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and tries to understand the historical and theological significance of the list. The article concludes with a comparison between 'Perek Heleq' and other texts from the same period, and an attempt to understand the place of the chapter within the framework of the entire Mishnah.} Shadal is not ashamed nor afraid to retract from mistakes he believes he made, and to publicly admit them. He does so both in his interpretation of the Bible when he proposes a corrected interpretation, in his ideas and views on the correct position of Judaism and its literature, and in his description of the historical past and its background.

Source text: {ד. המשנה מספרת על שלושה מלכים וארבעה פרטיים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המלכים הם: ירבעם, אחאב ומנשה. הפרטיים הם: בלעם, דואג, אחיתופל, גחזי ואיש בני הראשונים. המשנה מסבירה שהמלכים והפרטיים האלה נענשו בגלל שביצעו מעשים רעים במהלך חייהם. המשנה מציינת גם שהאנשים האלה לא יכולים להתקן את מעשיהם בתשובה, מכיוון שהם חטאו במכוון ובאופן חוזר ונשנה.}  
  
Target text: {D. The Mishnah tells of three kings and four private individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The kings are: Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. The private individuals are: Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, Gehazi, and a man of the early sons. The Mishnah explains that these kings and individuals were punished because they committed evil deeds during their lives. The Mishnah also notes that these people cannot rectify their actions through repentance, since they sinned intentionally and repeatedly.} Shadal takes pride in the fact that he corrects himself and publicly admits to it, he points out his motivations and explains the advantages of this approach.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של היחידה המשנתית, וממשיך להשוואתה עם היחידות המקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המחבר מנסה להבין את המשמעות של ההבדלים בין הגרסאות, ולהסביר את המשמעות של הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המאמר מסתיים בניסיון להבין את המשמעות של היחידה בהקשר שלה למסכת סנהדרין כולה, ולהציג את המשמעות של היחידה בהקשר שלה למשנה כולה.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the Mishnaic unit, and continues with a comparison to the parallel units in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta. The author attempts to understand the significance of the differences between the versions, and to explain the meaning of the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The article concludes with an attempt to understand the significance of the unit in its context within the entirety of Tractate Sanhedrin, and to present the meaning of the unit in its context within the entirety of the Mishnah.} Shadal is meticulous in noting the date next to each of his letters, articles, compositions, or books, so that readers, students, and researchers who come after him can follow the developments and changes in his positions in a chronological manner.

I will now elaborate on these phenomena in detail.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת המשנה, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתוך הספרות היהודית. המאמר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ומנתח את המשמעויות ההיסטוריות והתיאולוגיות של הפרק. במהלך הדיון, המאמר מתמקד בשאלות כמו: מה הן היחסים בין המשנה לספרות התנאית האחרת? מה הן היחסים בין המשנה לספרות האמונה היהודית? ואיך המשנה משקפת את התקופה ההיסטורית בה נכתבה?}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical framework of the Mishnaic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah within Jewish literature. The article focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter from Tractate Sanhedrin, and analyzes the historical and theological implications of the chapter. During the discussion, the article focuses on questions such as: What are the relationships between the Mishnah and other Tannaic literature? What are the relationships between the Mishnah and Jewish faith literature? And how does the Mishnah reflect the historical period in which it was written?} "Shadal" on Himself

The historian Samuel Werses dedicated an entire article to S.D. Luzzatto's self-references in his letters,[[56]](#footnote-58) in which he enumerates, categorizes them, and primarily discusses them from a literary perspective. He elucidates them against the backdrop of Shadal's personality and through the historical context of his relations with those to whom the words were written. At the opening of the article, he notes the push of S.D. Luzzatto towards self-reflection, expressed in his openness and willingness to share detailed information about the stages of his personal development, and even about his personal and family fate, his intimate thoughts, his health status, and his working conditions, and how all these have left their mark on him - without embellishment, without apology, and without idealizing himself. Werses notes that Shadal believed such an autobiographical detail, if it is reliable, complete, and unbiased, is of utmost importance for scientific research, as the detailed information about the personality under investigation illuminates her positions and ideas in the correct light. "I," says S.D.L, "see my 'I' as a scientific subject, and I feel obligated to use all the means at my disposal, in order to enable a good understanding and recognition of my research topic."[[57]](#footnote-59) Verses continues to tell about the diary written by the young Shadal, and about the autobiography he published, in which he incorporated excerpts from the diaries, as well as about the abundance of letters he wrote and sent, which also contain a wealth of information about himself, his life, and his ways.[[58]](#footnote-60) In the introduction written by Moshe A. In his autobiographical collection about S.D. Luzzatto, which he edited,[[59]](#footnote-61) Shulvass wrote that Luzzatto was unique among researchers in that he did not disconnect his research from his personality, and he linked and anchored his works in their creator, in his soul's experience and in the powers of his thoughts. Shulvas informs the reader that the autobiography was written in fragments throughout Shadal's life, and was first published in Prague in the Hebrew version in 1857 in the anthology **Letters of the Kadesh Language** , and then in sequels in the **Magid** periodical in 1858-1864. The Italian version was published for the first time in 1878 in sequels in the Italian Jewish newspaper *Mos* *é* printed in Corfu. The Italian version refers to the life of Shadal up to the age of 18, while the Hebrew version covers up to the age of 24. In his edition - which was based on the Italian text that he translated, and on sections of the Hebrew text that were missing - Shulwas added sections from Shadel's later letters and the prefaces to his books in which there are autobiographical descriptions of the next forty years of his life.[[60]](#footnote-62)

Verses describes, according to what is brought from the letters of SDL, his love for this type of exchange of opinions, ideas, and interpretations, his personal hardships - the illness of his first wife and her death, the death of his children (according to him, seven out of ten), his illnesses and senses– his dedication to the redemption of manuscripts, their investigation and the sending of copies from them to anyone who asks, his caution and depth in his research before their publication, and his belief in his unique research that one day its value will be recognized.[[61]](#footnote-63) Continuing, he details and disperses Shadal's thoughts on his characteristics as they emerge from the letters: egocentric tendencies, skepticism, strong religious faith, being a realist and not a man of imagination, disdain for the pursuit of honor and wealth, pursuit of truth and insistence upon it, admission of mistakes, a sense of intellectual and social isolation, a turbulent and sensitive soul, and a constant striving for truth as an ideal and as a primary life mission.[[62]](#footnote-64)

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה של היחידה ובמקומה במסכת. המאמר מתמקד בשאלה איזו תפקיד ממלאת היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, ואיך היא משפיעה על ההבנה של המסכת כולה. במהלך הדיון, המאמר מתייחס לשאלות של מועד התגבשות היחידה, מקורותיה, והשפעתה על תקופות לאחר מכן.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss the characteristics of the unit and its place in the tractate. The article focuses on the question of what role the unit plays in Tractate Sanhedrin, and how it influences the understanding of the entire tractate. During the discussion, the article addresses questions of when the unit was formed, its sources, and its influence on later periods.} Accepting the truth from whoever speaks it.

Indeed, for S.D. Luzzatto, the pursuit of truth became a mantra, and he reiterated it many times in his commentaries, letters, and research. He never ceased to criticize interpreters and other researchers who, instead of pursuing truth, chase after wealth and honor, seeing himself as unique in his generation in this field. He believes that there are not multiple correct interpretations of the biblical text and states: "Pride, love of honor, and flattery, these alone have led the multitude of scholars away from the simple interpretation. There is only one simple interpretation, for there is only one truth. Its place is very narrow, there is no way to deviate to the right or left. He who aims for the mark will find it, and he who deviates this way or that from that point is mistaken."[[63]](#footnote-65) This truth is the plain meaning, which he defined as follows: "In interpreting the verses, all my efforts were to understand for myself and others what the speaker and writer intended, and God forbid that I should distort the scriptures in order to reconcile them with the Halacha."[[64]](#footnote-66) The intention of the original speaker and writer of the text is the correct interpretation, the correct simple meaning to which one should strive, and therefore he singled out his interpretation. Such an interpretation must conform to the rules of Hebrew grammar, the context of the subjects within the text, and sound logic. Shadal expresses disappointment and anger that after Rashi and his students, the simple interpretation was neglected by the commentators and researchers in favor of homiletic interpretation, allusion, and mysticism. This is because they were under the impression that intricate argumentation and blind following in the footsteps of those considered great - bring honor and wealth to their owners.–

In his relentless pursuit of the correct simple interpretation, Delitzsch adopted Maimonides' motto from his introduction to the Eight Chapters, "Accept the truth from whoever says it,"[[65]](#footnote-67) without checking his fringes, and repeatedly declares that he examines all interpreters, great and small, righteous and wicked, famous and modest, Hebrew and Gentile, Jewish and Christian, and more or less wise, and is ready to accept any opinion that seems to him to be closest to the author's intention. He takes pride in this and even makes a point to mention the name of the commentator whose position he adopts or rejects in every instance. For example, he criticizes Maimonides for not citing his sources in 'Mishneh Torah', with the ulterior motive of making people not need the writings of his predecessors, but rather learn from him and follow his example. An example of these things: to think that D'al was only one Isaiah, contrary to the opinion of important scholars, Jews and foreigners, but he is firm in his opinion: "The man who loves the truth will investigate the truth of things with his own eyes and will not rely on others; [...] And here to this day, in my mind, I stand and wherever I am, I am ready to learn from anyone, and to accept the truth from whoever tells it."[[66]](#footnote-68) This is also the case in the introduction to the first commentary on the Torah that he published - **the Tribute** : "Know that in this book, as in all my other writings, I am neither one of the old, nor one of the new, neither a Torah nor a philosopher, neither a rabbi nor a scholar, but I pursue the truth, And I accept whoever says it, even if he is the least of the least, and I will not accept a lie, even if he is the greatest of the greatest."[[67]](#footnote-69) True to these positions, one can find in his commentary on the Torah about two hundred interpreters whose views he presents while mentioning their names, whether he respectfully disagrees with their interpretation, completely rejects their opinion, or adopts it. This is particularly noticeable in dozens of cases, when during lessons in the study hall, one of the young students interpreted in a way that seemed to him to fit the plain meaning, even if the interpretation was different from his own, he waived his honor and quoted his words in the name of the speaker. In my opinion, this is exceptional behavior in its nobility and humility. Many scholars believe that among their privileges is also the right to present the words of their students as their own opinions.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של היחידה המשנתית, וממשיך להשוואה בין היחידה לרשימות המקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המאמר מסתיים בהצעה להבנה מחודשת של היחידה המשנתית, המתבססת על ההשוואה לרשימות המקבילות ועל הניתוח של היחידה עצמה.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the Mishnaic unit, and continues with a comparison between the unit and the parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta. The article concludes with a proposal for a renewed understanding of the Mishnaic unit, based on the comparison to the parallel lists and the analysis of the unit itself.} Admission of Errors in Biblical Interpretation

Schwalb noted, among the good and unique qualities of S.D.L., the fact that he was willing to admit without hesitation and publicly to the mistakes he made and to correct his previous proposals, and he was right in doing so. He cites as an example his retraction from his interpretation of Ecclesiastes, and he will address this issue in detail later on. Schwartz attributes this uniqueness of S.D.L. to the fact that he integrated both intellect and emotional experiences in his research process, thus achieving enlightening experiences that led to interpretive discoveries and, consequently, changes in his positions.[[68]](#footnote-70) In the following, I will show that S.D. indeed wrote about such revelations, but in my opinion, he did not attribute this to his supernatural abilities, but to his deep and creative thinking and his constant search for the truth without bias. He did not believe in the supernatural powers of mortal beings since prophecy was sealed. Conversely, Werses also notes that Shadal himself wrote about his own admission of errors and his changing of positions accordingly, but he believed that there is a "echo of polemical self-defense" in this self-examination.[[69]](#footnote-71) In my opinion, Varsas has made a mistake here, and I intend to substantiate this view in detail below.

Last year, my colleague Yonatan Bashi presented me with the Pardo brothers' manuscript of the Shadal's commentary on Genesis and Exodus up to the end of 'Mishpatim'. This manuscript was found in his father's library and presumably came into his possession as an inheritance from Rabbi Yitzhak Pardo (Y"P), who, along with his older brother Yaakov Chai (YH"P) who passed away in his prime, transcribed the commentary from the teachings of SHaDa"L as they heard it in the rabbinical study hall in Padua between the years 1866 to 1876. Thus it is written in the introduction to the commentary in the manuscript:

Genesis and Exodus, explained and translated [into Italian] by the wise scholar SDL, handwritten by the scholar MH"R YCH"P ZT"L [by the author Rabbi Yaakov Chai Fardo, may the memory of the righteous be a blessing], while he was in the Rabbinical Seminary in Padua in the years 5566 and 5567. And I, his brother Isaac, added to it the additions and corrections that ShDL made in his work from the day I came to study in this yeshiva in the year 1863.[[70]](#footnote-72)

From this we see that Rashi would change his interpretations when he realized he had made a mistake and found a better explanation, and he instructed the scribes to correct the manuscript. Indeed, as I observed, the manuscript is full of cancelled interpretations with lines drawn through them, without erasing what was previously written. That is, it is possible that Rashi and the scribes intended that the previous commentary would remain on the page and it might be possible to read it through the lines for the benefit of future readers. I have briefly examined places where a line was drawn over a previous interpretation in the Parma manuscript. Shadal did not find it appropriate to include the previous interpretation and to indicate that he had changed his mind, but he also did not completely erase it. Most of the erasures stem from Shadal's decision that the interpretation differs from what he initially thought. However, there are erasures that stem from the fact that Rashi was a rationalist in his youth and changed his taste later (Genesis 1:1, 3:21), changes that resulted from Rashi's fear that he would be perceived as belittling the Sages (ibid., 1:21, 26) or as mistaken in the conclusion of natural science (ibid., 1:22), or as mistaken in an ethical-educational approach (ibid., 12:13), or that it is merely a change in wording (ibid., 1:24, 6:13, 12:13). It is possible that in the beginning, D.L. did not find it appropriate to leave interpretations that he decided to change, except if they had already been printed in the context of another article of his, for example in **Bichuri Ha'atim** (ibid., 27 1 change from the 18th century). Only from Exodus 21:8 does Rashi begin to leave the previous interpretation, when he thinks it is possible or that the learner will be able to understand from it (Exodus 21:8 - 29, Genesis 31:39 - 40). As he continues on his path, he increasingly emphasizes the very change in his views for reasons that I will detail later.

At the height of the explanation, he suggested that Yitzhak Pardo took the manuscript with him upon completing his studies, and those who came after him copied from this manuscript before he left, only the commentaries that were not nullified, and added to them. By the time of S.D. Luzzatto's death, six manuscripts had accumulated, which are known to us today. Some of them (or others that have since been lost) reached the publishers in 1877 under the authority of S.D. Luzzatto's son, Isaiah Luzzatto. It seems that the publishers were unaware of these intentions, and likely did not have this manuscript in which there were many cancellations. They only printed the commentaries that were not cancelled. This distortion was recently corrected by Bashi in a new edition of S.D.L.'s Torah commentary, published by Carmel in Jerusalem on the eve of Yom Kippur 5776, exactly one hundred and fifty years after his death, which also includes the original commentaries that were replaced.

In the introduction to his new edition, Beshia explains the evolution of the manuscripts. In my opinion, the first one, on Genesis and Exodus (up to Chapter 24), was written in the year 556. It is located in the National Library and it has almost no erasures or corrections. It appears that Yichud Ha'am copied from it or from its copy. Following it, in 1599, the manuscript of the Institute for the Study of Italian Jewry on Genesis and the manuscript of the Municipal Library in Verona on Genesis and Exodus were written. J"Ph corrected his brother's manuscript based on these manuscripts, either the main manuscript or the manuscripts of one of the other students, and worked on it until the year 5666. The manuscript of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, without a year indication, was, in my opinion, written in 1822 and is located in the Columbia library. It is fragmented due to wear and tear. In the years 1875-1877, Shadal published a collection of his interpretations of the Torah and gave it the title **Hamedhid** . This collection was initially published as an appendix to Mendelssohn's commentary, which was released in Vienna in 1866, and subsequently as a standalone work in Vienna in 1867. As Shadl testifies at the beginning of his introduction to the file, even before printing **the intercessor** he made corrections to what was in the manuscript until then. He writes that the printers from Vienna approached him to send them pages from his commentaries.

So, I felt compelled and did not hesitate, and I set my eyes on the commentaries that I had written for my students over the eighteen years that I have been teaching here in Padua at the Rabbinical Seminary, and on what I had published in Bikkurei HaIttim, Kerem Chemed, and other books. I selected from there some commentaries whose truth and usefulness are more apparent, without them already being found in Netivot HaShalom. In addition to what I had already written, I added new topics. In some places, I also retracted my previous opinion that I had written in the past, and I brought another in its place. I collected all of this in the small book that I am presenting to you [the reader], and its name will be known in Israel as **HaMishtadel**.

A perusal of the printed text from 1871-1876 shows that even in the commentaries published in **the Intercessor** , later corrections and changes took place until Shadl and his students stopped working on the manuscript, which they copied from each other, probably only right near his death. The last manuscript is on the Book of Exodus and was written by Hezekiah Puah from Savigliano in 1854. Pinchas Schlesinger, the editor of the second edition from 2016, noticed this and added in the body of the book as comments selected passages from **the intercessor** that were removed by SDL from the manuscripts that were in the hands of the first printers, or were not inserted in them in the first place. As stated, we do not know which manuscripts they had at their disposal, and it is possible that some of them have been lost.

In the year 1840, S.D. Luzzatto wrote in a letter to Joshua Heschel Schorr (Y.H.S., 1895-1814) in Brody, among other things, about his research methods that differed from those of his contemporaries, about the reasons why he was delaying the publication of his research and commentaries, and about the evolution of his Torah commentary. He wrote as follows:

"And I, with all my salvation and all my desire, aim to establish in Israel the fallen tent of Rashi, to glorify and elevate the Jewish faith, which is - the integrity of the heart and the hatred of deceit. A major principle for me is not that the study is the main thing, but the action (and this is the seal of my beloved students of Rabbi Avi), and another major principle for me is that wisdom does not enter a wicked heart (Wisdom of Solomon)." And this matter I examine daily in the inventions of the wise men of our generation, whose every inclination is not towards truth and justice, but towards honor and gain. They are not moderate in their investigations, therefore their judgment has become distorted. And if I have been privileged to occasionally innovate some truthful and correct matters, I did not see it as a result of my wisdom, but rather due to the integrity of my heart. For it is not my way to bring something into the light of day until it is settled in my heart and as clear as a garment, and until all doubt has been removed from my heart. In most of my inquiries, I consult with my friends and students, who I have already accustomed to not show me favoritism. And after all this, I leave my handiwork to age with the passing of days and years, and from time to time I reach out to them to add and subtract, without mercy. Is it not eight years since I completed the commentary on the Torah (half of it a long commentary and half of it short) and the commentary on Isaiah, and yet I am still afraid to publish part of them, not because I fear my enemies (as is the fear of SHIR KH 28, Kerem Hemdah 3:39), but because I fear making a mistake, and this is the reason for the delay in my SDL research. Therefore, you should know that it is not my intention to include my own work in a book that encompasses inquiries like those of the Raavad and his disciples who follow his path, lovers of novelties that find favor at first glance, and who speak one thing with their mouth and another in their heart: "Into their secret, let not my soul enter," and all my days I will wage war against them, even if they present themselves as loving me. But if a person disagrees with me in all honesty, I will not push him away, but rather draw him closer as a leader, and from all my teachers I will gain wisdom.[[71]](#footnote-73)

It appears that S.D. Luzzatto is referring here to the manuscript that he wrote in his own handwriting, which was completed in 1863 (according to the colophon at the end of the Book of Genesis in the manuscripts of the National Library and the Italia Institute) and is not in our possession. This is the lengthy composition dedicated to Genesis and Exodus. From these words, it also emerges that already in 903 there was a short composition from the beginning of the 'Terumah' portion until the end of the Book of Deuteronomy. In addition, Rashi describes here what was done in the commentary from then until the time of the Talmud, and his description also includes the time of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachiah in the study hall. Hence, the manuscript underwent changes continuously. It also appears that S.D.L. already planned in 1840 to publish a selection from the commentary, but thought that the time was not yet ripe. Only in 1906, as mentioned, was **"The Endeavor"** published, which is indeed a selection. According to Basya's description in the introduction to his edition, it seems that Yach"p took his manuscript with him when he returned to his parents' home, after it had been copied by the students. They continued to update in their notebook or in the main manuscript until the arrival of Y"p, who copied the changes from them into the manuscript he brought with him and continued with the work. Indeed, YF also recorded in his manuscript changes that were introduced before his arrival - changes that happened in the 19th century, in the 19th century, etc. (which find expression in the manuscript of the Italian Institute and in the Verona manuscript) and added to it up to the year 1975. Examples from S.D.L.'s commentary on the Torah acknowledging his past mistakes and changing his stance accordingly can be found in the appendix.

Ecclesiastes and Job

Another example of Rashi's willingness to admit his mistakes can be found in his stance on the books of Ecclesiastes and Job. I have elaborated on this in detail elsewhere.[[72]](#footnote-74) For our purposes here, it is important to mention what emerges from my words there regarding the sequence of matters as described by the author himself, and the reasons for them.

In 1820, Shadal wrote his commentary on Ecclesiastes and a year later he wrote an introduction to it, but he kept it hidden in his drawer until 1856/1857. Since then, over the course of four years, he sent to Yitzhak Blumenfeld, the editor of the journal **Otzar Nechmad** in Vienna, at least three letters concerning his commentary on Ecclesiastes (one of which was not published at the time), to which he attached the introduction and the commentary itself.[[73]](#footnote-75) In the year when the body of the commentary was published (1860), Shadal also sent a letter on this subject to ShZCh Halberstam, in which he provided additional explanations regarding this commentary (see below).

The events that preceded the writing of the commentary, as a result of his disputes with his cousin Shmuel Chaim ben David Luli (abbreviated as ShChBD"L) on divine providence, were detailed by ShDL in the lengthy note at the beginning of the commentary. The thoughts that led him to the conclusion that Ecclesiastes is not in the spirit of faithful Judaism, he recorded in the introduction. So, he thought it impossible that King Solomon was the author of the scroll, as it contains assertions that contradict Jewish perspectives, primarily against free will. He believed that the scroll was the work of an imposter named Kohelet from the early days of the Second Temple, who recorded King Solomon as the author of his book. This was known to the sages of his generation, and they erased Solomon's name and instead wrote the name Kohelet, and to mock him, they left the words 'king in Jerusalem'. As time passed, the matter was forgotten and it was believed that Ecclesiastes was Solomon's. In one of these letters, which Blumenfeld did not publish at the time, Shadal admitted that he wrote the commentary at the age of twenty, "and I intentionally do not publish it, for I do not affirm and uphold everything written in it. Indeed, in some of the matters discussed in this commentary, my current thoughts are far from my thoughts then, and in some of them, I still have doubts."[[74]](#footnote-76) He asks for forgiveness from the author of Ecclesiastes for offending him, and explains that he followed his young heart, burning with passion, and due to the anger he had towards the author of the scroll because of its contents that did not seem right to him. Today, he acknowledges that he has learned from him over time good and important things that are in his writing, and primarily he points out what is written in the conclusion of the scroll - that the pursuit of honor and self-enjoyment are vanity of vanities and what is important is the fear of the Lord and the commandments of the Torah, from which we learn the correct ethics that educates to seek the welfare of others and is opposed to the egoistic ethics of Baruch Spinoza. In his letter to Halberstam, he writes that he is now inclined to believe that the scroll was composed at the end of the First Temple period by a faithful Jewish sage.

In any case, what I thought in my youth, that Ecclesiastes had learned the wisdom of the Greeks, is now in my eyes utterly impossible and a complete falsehood. The book is full of the belief in divine providence, and our sages aptly said that its beginning is fear of Heaven and its end is fear of Heaven. If there are statements in it that contradict the belief in divine providence, it is only the doubt that arises from time to time in the hearts of believers (why do the wicked prosper and the like), but most of the book's words are based on the belief in the existence of a supervising God. Ecclesiastes is now very precious in my eyes, and it is in my eyes a small beginning of Jewish philosophy and a small sapling that has not reached its days of growth and its clusters of grapes have not ripened... And the matter of the ten words of the scribes' correction that I explained on the statements that the sages of Israel added [within the scroll], is now in my eyes a dream, a vain vision [...] And I cannot part from Ecclesiastes without informing you that I am very displeased with what I explained about the end of the matter, everything is heard. It seems to me that the words "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" cannot possibly be intended for everyone. We hear all human beings saying "Fear God," but this is certainly a forced and null interpretation. Therefore, the last verse too ("For God will bring every deed into judgment") is not a statement that the author attributes to every person, but rather his own words and belief... If you do not understand the words of this book, and if its words have generated doubts and confusion in your heart, listen to the end of my words and you will understand everything. And what is the conclusion of the matter? Fear God, etc. for He will bring every deed into judgment, etc. This is the conclusion of Ecclesiastes and it encapsulates Israeli wisdom...and so I explained, that this is the whole of man, everyone knows to speak like this, it is a forced and incorrect interpretation, and there is no doubt that the author's intention is to say that fear of God and observance of His commandments is a fundamental matter for man, that all his success depends on this [...] And I, who in my youth spoke foolishly about Ecclesiastes, hereby admit that he was my teacher and guide, and he taught me to benefit, and he guided me on the path that I have followed all my days, which is to rejoice in my portion, and to understand that there is no advantage for a man in all his labor, and if he does something disgraceful in order to increase his success, it will not help at all, and if he accumulates silver like dust, it will not add joy and peace to his soul. Blessed be the Lord who has kept me alive, sustained me, and brought me to this night (the night of the 11th of Tevet 5733, two hours after midnight) to reveal what is in my heart now about Ecclesiastes. And if God wills, I will continue to delve into its matters time and again, but for this time, this is enough. And you have the authority to do with these matters as you see fit. "I love you, ShDL."[[75]](#footnote-77)

Shadal does not mince words when referring to himself at a young age, a rare trait among researchers, acknowledging mistakes he made both in interpretation and in identifying the author. He admits (also unusual in the modern era) that there are still issues today that he is uncertain about and for which he has no satisfying solution.

In addition to Ecclesiastes, S.D. Luzzatto also revisited his position on the content of the Book of Job and the identity of its author. In the year 1831, a letter was written to Issachar Baerish Blumenfeld of Brody, in which there was criticism of his commentary on Job, which he had sent as a gift. In his commentary, Blumenfeld argues that the time of Job should be postponed to the period of the Babylonian exile and the return to Zion, and he brings several proofs to support this. One of the pieces of evidence was that the Satan featured in the story was not known in Judaism before the exile. S.D. Luzzatto rejects these arguments and shows that Satan was known much earlier, and even argues that the appearance of Satan in the story of Job strengthens his opinion that the views expressed in the Book of Job suggest that its author was not Jewish.

The God of Job is not the God of Israel, for the God of Israel is a gracious and merciful God, who rewards His creatures according to their deeds, a God of faithfulness without iniquity, just and upright is He, and He treats His creatures with the compassion of a merciful father. But the God of Job is a ruthless king who, when hearing the complaints of the oppressed righteous, what does He answer? The mute, put your hand over your mouth, be silent before me, contemplate my strength and your weakness, do you have an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His? "No, my lord, this is not the description of the God of Israel, not the portion of Jacob, not before the Babylonian exile, nor after the Babylonian exile [...] And all this, in my opinion, clearly testifies that the author of the Book of Job did not witness in his days the lights of the true Torah."[[76]](#footnote-78)

In 1846, S.D.L. reiterated his claim that the author of the Book of Job was not Jewish. He writes about this in an addendum to the article "Depths of Language," dedicated to the study of synonymous words, a field in which he primarily engaged during his selection. This article was compiled and published in **the Treasury** , Chamber B in Perezmichel, 1988, by his sons. Shadal writes that he sees a great mistake in his previous words about the author of the Book of Job, because he then ignored the end of the story - that Job's end was better than his beginning. In other words, the author's intention was not only to subdue Job with words about the power of God,

However, he wanted to show that there is no injustice or violence in the world, and that even if the righteous person is oppressed with all kinds of afflictions, there is no hindrance for God to save him from all his troubles, to make his end better than his beginning, and to make him happy as in the days of his affliction. Therefore, whatever the faith of Job and his friends may be (since they were not of the children of Israel), there is no doubt that the author of the Book of Job shares our faith and our God is his God, a God of faith and there is no injustice, He is righteous and upright [...] And behold, my previous thought that the author of the Book of Job did not see the lights of the Torah, is null and void, and so too is the opinion of the Raavad who wrote (Job 2:11) that it is a book translated from another language; but the clear truth is that one of the great early sages of Israel wrote this book in Hebrew [...] and his intention was to teach the people that God tests the righteous and sometimes brings evils and troubles upon them, but indeed He will not forsake them and will not abandon them forever, but will again have mercy on them and turn the curse into a blessing, therefore it is fitting for a person to hold onto his righteousness and not let it weaken, for He is faithful, the master of his work, who will pay him the reward of his labor;[[77]](#footnote-79)

Source text: {המאמר מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של התקופה, וממשיך לדיון במקורות התלמודיים שמתארים את האירועים והדמויות המרכזיות. החלק הבא מתמקד בניתוח השיח התלמודי והמדרשי, ומסיים בהשוואה בין הגישות השונות לאירועים. המאמר מציג גם דיון בהשפעת האירועים על החיים היומיומיים של היהודים באותה תקופה, ומסכם בהערות על המשמעות ההיסטורית של האירועים.}  
  
Target text: {The article begins by presenting the historical framework of the period, and continues with a discussion of the Talmudic sources that describe the events and central figures. The next section focuses on the analysis of the Talmudic and Midrashic discourse, and concludes with a comparison of the different approaches to the events. The article also presents a discussion on the impact of the events on the daily lives of Jews during that period, and concludes with remarks on the historical significance of the events.} Changes in character, beliefs, opinions, and perspectives.

Shadal did not hesitate to change his worldview and retract several of his positions on Judaism, to admit mistakes, and to propose new and revised ideas, sometimes more than once. This is particularly evident in his positions on five main topics: Rationalism and Romanticism; the precedence and mission of the Jewish people; providence and choice - reward and punishment; the relationship between Torah and philosophy and science; the source of authority of Halacha. Source text: {אדון בנושאים אלה לפי הסדר:}  
Target text: {I will address these topics in the following order:}

Rationalism and Romanticism

I do not know of any other scholars and intellectuals who have changed the nature of their worldview, and more than that, have taken a proactive and conscious step towards such a change. S.D. Luzzatto lived on the seam between rationalism, which dominated Europe until the turn of the nineteenth century, and romanticism, which then prevailed until the middle of the twentieth century. The young Shadal was a rationalist influenced by Maimonides, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), and Isaac Samuel Reggio (Yashar, 1784-1855) from Gorizia, Italy. He became a romantic in his maturity and was aware of the change. I have elaborated on this in detail elsewhere.[[78]](#footnote-80) The Romantic philosophy that arrived from Berlin with the end of the rationalist Enlightenment era in Europe, the development of the extreme Enlightenment faction in Judaism, the Reform movement and biblical criticism that, in S.D.L's opinion, threatened the peace of Judaism, and his own research - all these combined with personal circumstances that, in his words, opened his eyes to oppose rationalism. In the case of S.D.L., romance is detached from all mysticism and Kabbalah, hence I tend to refer to it as neo-romanticism.

Thus, in 1842, he explains the change in the nature of his research and contemplative activity:

With all my heart I will bless the Lord, who for many years has laid His hand heavily upon me, and with a strong hand has separated me from those who err, who are seduced by their own strength and the might of their hand, forgetting the supreme power, in whose hand all our powers are like clay in the hands of the potter. "They will raise their voices, they will sing in their throats: By the strength of our hands we have done this, and by our wisdom for we are prudent, and we will remove ancient boundaries, and renew daily the wonders of wisdom, and we will subjugate nature and all its forces under our hands, the ancients are like donkeys and we are like human beings; for this is why we were created, to complete our intellect, and whoever increases in understanding is praiseworthy, and according to his intellect a man is supervised, and after the intellect the supervision is drawn (Guide, Part III, Chapters XVII-XVIII), and according to the abundance of intellect so will success increase, and in blessing what does he say: And David was wise in all his ways and the Lord was with him (Laws of Opinions, Chapter V)." This is human wisdom, which we inherited from the sages of Athens, and I have named it Atheism. And who knows if I too would not have been tempted by it, were it not for the trials that befell me. They showed me with a finger, that human wisdom is futile, and our confidence in our intellect to succeed in our ways is like a broken reed, and we have no good hope left, except in the pleasure of doing good, kindness, and love, for the pleasure of seeking the good of our neighbor and the joy of loving others, nothing can snatch them from our hands. As I pondered the Torah and all the books of the Jewish heritage, I saw that they all aim to strengthen in the human heart the qualities of compassion and love, to distance reliance on our own strength and the might of our hands, and to place our trust in the providence of God, which follows not after understanding, but after righteousness, kindness, and sincerity of heart. This is the divine wisdom, beginning with the words of Moses, and ending with the words of Rashi and his students. Therefore, I have named it Judaism. Then my eyes began to find fault and flaws in some of the great scholars of Spain, who are the vine from which I sprouted, and I poured out my speech before the people of my nation, and against my will, I became a man of strife and contention for the whole land.[[79]](#footnote-81)

The shift in Shadal's thinking began already at the age of Bar Mitzvah, when he started to question the reliability of the Kabbalah and the Zohar, and his faith in them gradually deteriorated. In his work "A Dispute over the Wisdom of Kabbalah,"[[80]](#footnote-82) written in 1826, he rejects both the theosophical Kabbalah as a charlatanism that has no origin in ancient Judaism, and the speculative, egoistic, and heretical Aristotelian philosophy adopted by Jewish philosophers in the Middle Ages. This philosophy, which is far from the intentions of the Torah and the Sages, is what caused, in his opinion, the emergence of Kabbalah as a counter-response. In 1830, S.D.L. acknowledges Isaac Mordecai Jost's (1793-1860) history book, which is based on an understanding devoid of faith, and, in his opinion, denies everything that is precious to Judaism and endangers its existence. Shadal attributes this to the pursuit of honor, flattery, and the aspiration to emulate the scholars of the nations. As a result, he gradually develops a resistance to the accepted philosophy. In 1838, he writes an article in French, printed in **Otzar** **Nehmad** , about Atticism (Greece) versus Judaism (Judaism). That same year, he also began writing the song "Derech Eretz," which he published two years later.[[81]](#footnote-83)

In both of these works, there is a sharp attack on calculated and egoistic rationalism, which crushes emotion and compassion, and on Greek culture, which indeed brought order, beauty, and aesthetics, but is amoral, pursuing honor, greed, and pleasures. In these compositions, the argument is made that the positive aspect of Western culture comes from Judaism. In the years 1837-1838, S.D.L. conducted a correspondence with Reggio about the dangers of deistic rationalism. Reggio tries to persuade Shadal to publicly oppose this rationalism in the name of supernaturalism (belief in the supernatural). ShaDaL hesitates and fears that since he lacks the required status, he may face scorn from both the left and the right, and will not succeed in his mission. So, the aforementioned was written in the year 1842. In his blessing to God for having laid His hand heavily upon him and brought about this significant change in his outlook, Samuel David Luzzatto refers to the material hardships that were his lot and his family's due to difficulties in making a living and the death of his mother, as well as the death of several of his children and his first wife (who passed away in 1841, after years of suffering and depressive mental illness). The Spanish scholars he mentions here, in which Dufi found his match, are the Raavad, with whom he began to quarrel from the end of 1832, and the Rambam, because of whom he ignited a major controversy involving many participants from 1838, with the publication of his attack on the Rambam.[[82]](#footnote-84)

In other words, from his personal experience, the author concludes that human intelligence cannot save him, and from his investigations, he inferred that the purpose of revelation is to teach morality, not philosophy. He also found in his research that the foundation of Aristotelian philosophy - which is deistic and elitist - and its interpretation by the Muslims, adopted by Ibn Ezra, Maimonides and their school, are the causes for deviation from traditional Judaism. The influence of philosophy is significant both as a central factor in heresy and as a factor in the emergence of Kabbalah. Therefore, he decided to change his worldview and to wage a battle against it.

Introduction and Mission with Israel

The young ShaDaL was influenced by the German philosophy of Kant and Hegel and adopted the concept of preface they proposed. Several of Germany's intellectuals adopted the idea of Israel's mission to bring moral monotheism to humanity. These ideas are intertwined with the principles of universalism, which were accepted by Shadal throughout his life, and with the anticipation of redemption, which was common to both Judaism and Christianity. Thus, he writes then:

In other words, God wanted the healthy beliefs not to be lost, but to be perpetuated for the benefit of all nations. Therefore, He entrusted them to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the descendants of the latter, and for this reason, He ordained their eternal existence. This mission of Judaism, aimed for the benefit of all nations, is clearly expressed by the prophets when they herald the blessed time in which nations will beat their swords into plowshares, a time when no nation will lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore; for the law will go out from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3). This future, for which the children of Israel yearn, is the hope of all who believe in the progress and improvement of humanity, a path first charted by Judaism. It is the kingdom of the Lord, the sanctification of His name. This is the daily aspiration of both Jews and Christians; the former when they say: 'May His great name be exalted and sanctified [...] and may He establish His kingdom', and the latter when they say: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come'.[[83]](#footnote-85)

Education for correct **opinions** , he claims, can bring back repentance:

Nations are capable, and even accustomed, to changing habits and principles over generations, for without such change, the advancement of human society would not be possible. Therefore, if human progress is not only possible but is indeed occurring, it is clear that one nation or many nations can, due to their ignorance, be swept into intolerance for a certain period of time, and from there into distorted and harmful actions towards others. However, once enlightened with healthy opinions on matters of logic and faith, they can acknowledge their past mistakes, abhor them, distance themselves from them, and erase all memory of their former barbarity with good deeds. As a result, a mutual brotherhood gradually forms between them and those who were once their oppressed servants.[[84]](#footnote-86)

The introduction, therefore, is the agreed-upon process for the acronym S.D.L. The people of Israel are entrusted with this process, and the laws of the Torah enable them to maintain their autonomous uniqueness even in exile.

For these laws, without prompting us to be less sincere or less compassionate towards anyone, or to cherish humanity less, tend to preserve for us a special existence within a religious community, which certainly does not constitute a state within a state but rather a smaller family within the larger family of society; and do we want to give up this existence? [...] Shall we willingly renounce the honor of belonging to a people who, amidst a wholly corrupt world, have long upheld their duty to preserve the Torah of God's unity, the Torah of human unity, and the principles of sound morality? From a nation that produced those lofty truths to illuminate the darkness of the world bit by bit?[[85]](#footnote-87)

The same reasons that led to the shift in S.D.L's worldview from rationalism to romanticism also influenced his gradual retreat from the ideas of progress and mission. Thus, his disappointment from the 1848 revolution was also added. A long letter to the editor **of the Magid** , Eliezer Lipman Zilberman Malik in Prussia from 1858, reflects the rejection of the idea of predestination and mission, in which he wrote, among other things:

And the philosopher who does not wish to deceive himself and others, he sees that what was will be, and progress is true in crafts and knowledge, but the heart of man always remains as it was; and if there is any change here, it is only for the worse, for egoism is growing stronger day by day, and Spinozistic wisdom, which is the pursuit of our pleasure, is no longer for scorn and ridicule and repetition, but it is for praise and glory, even among many of the children of Israel, and even among some of those called wise men and rabbis. And the Jew who believes in what Moses said, "Even if you are scattered..." and in what Isaiah said, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established..." and "He will judge...", and does not deceive himself with vain dreams, that people will change to be like angels, and all the more so that he does not bless himself in his heart to say that this great change will happen through him, and that the success of the human race depends on him, and he knows that these are nothing but lies and vain consolations, which the false prophets invent from their hearts for their own benefit. And what emerges from all this is that Judaism without belief in the Torah from Heaven cannot sustain itself, and all that some of the Ashkenazi scholars do to beautify it and make it appealing and gracious in the eyes of Jews and nations will only serve to weaken its strength and tarnish its reputation. However, Judaism that relies on the belief in the Torah from Heaven will endure for all the days of the earth, and it does not need to clarify and purify why and for what reason it persists, but Israel will keep their Torah from generation to generation, because that is their duty.[[86]](#footnote-88)

We find that S.D.L. ultimately abandons all the beautiful ideas about Israel's mission to bring about the Kingdom of God, to disseminate the Torah, and to promote global peace. In his later years, he completely negates the concept of the mission. Moreover, he prefers Mendelssohn's view that a human precedence to the individual or the public in matters of the heart and morality does not exist. In truth, the situation in this field is only deteriorating, and Spinoza's anti-ethical views are increasingly spreading. Progress exists only in empirical and practical science and in technology, but not in wisdom and morality. One who believes in the Torah from Heaven continues to uphold Judaism because it is his duty, and not as a mission to repair the world.

Divine Providence, Choice, and Reward and Punishment

It seems that the issue of free will occupied S.D.L. more than any other topic, and it appears again and again in his writings, throughout his entire life. I have dedicated an entire chapter[[87]](#footnote-89) to a detailed elaboration of the changes that have occurred in his position on this subject. For our purposes here, I will quote a source from which the various issues arise. ShaDaL recounts his debates on the subject that began at the age of 16, when his cousin Luli, who stayed in Trieste for three years, and they argued about free will. ShaDaL passionately defended it, relying on the Rambam (as he was a rationalist at the time), while Luli held the deterministic decree position of Karshkash. Shadal adds and recounts there that in the year 1818 (תקע"ח), he wrote three poems on this topic under the title "Beit Habechira" and dedicated them to Luli.[[88]](#footnote-90) In these poems, Shadal extols the virtues of the principle of free choice, which declares human freedom, emphasizes the moral man's superiority over the corrupt man, and motivates people to act based on the hopes of reward and fear of punishment. Shadl tells about these events in the letter I mentioned above, which he sent to the editor **of Otzar** **Nichmad** Yitzhak Blumenfeld in 1860, and the editor included it as a long note at the top of Shadl's commentary on the congregation that he published in **Otzar** **Nichmad** , volume 4, in 1864. Among other things, Shadal adds that he was unable to convince Luzzatto:

Conversely, it is because of my love for truth that I have drawn close to his faith, and I have admitted to him that all will is drawn from causes, some of them internal (which are based on a person's nature and the characteristics of his body and spirit [heritage]), and some of them external, dependent on what he has seen and heard, and on the books he has read, and on the events that have happened to him and his friends and neighbors and the people of his country or all the people of his generation [environment] - and the causes also derive from other causes, until everything traces back to the first cause [God]. However, I could not agree with him that everything is absolutely predestined, as it was very difficult for me to attribute the evil deeds that a person does to the will of God. I chose the opinion of the author of the Kuzari, who attributed all things to the first cause, but not all to the first intention. However, I saw that it was still very reprehensible for God to be the cause of evils, even if it was unintentional on His part, and perhaps their being beyond His intention is even more disgraceful. So, I turned to the views of Plato, Ralbag, and others who believed in primordial matter, and I also found support for this in the Kuzari. I argued that evil is derived from the aspect of matter, as it was impossible to purify it from all its deficiencies... The first cause is the cause of good and not the cause of evil... But after some time, I saw the words of the English philosopher Clarke (see Arguments on Kabbalah, page 74), and I realized that there is no need to believe in primordial matter. For everything else that is created is necessarily finite, and everything that is finite necessarily has deficiencies, and from this all evils are derived. And then I returned to believe in creation ex nihilo [and not from pre-existing matter], and this without considering that the root 'bara' indicates creation from nothing, but I will consider that it is intended to indicate a divine action, not a human act, nor a natural action, but an action above nature [miraculous].

Regarding the issue of choice and decree, in my opinion, both are true. On one hand, it seems to me that as long as we are doing our will, we are free, and deserving of praise or blame. And if our will is drawn from its causes, what of it? And if our actions were without reason, without knowledge, and without understanding, like the actions of madmen, would we then be worthy of praise or blame? Indeed, this is certainly so, and everyone acknowledges this...On the other hand, the decree is undoubtedly true, since everything stems from the first cause, and He whose wisdom is infinite and endless, there is no doubt that when He created the world, He saw and knew all that was destined to unfold from the causes He created. The evil found in the world is also directed by Him, blessed be He, and it is not by chance, but measured and proportioned, affliction and pleasure are weighed to the skull, and evil distinguishes the good, and if we did not have evil, we would not have good. And this matter [that both positions are true and contradictory] cannot be understood by a young man whose heart is aflame with the fire of his youth, whose blood boils in his veins, and whose spirit roars in his tempests, in the vanity of his waves and his breakers. Therefore, I was greatly angered for forty years at the congregation, and now [T.R.K.] as the wrath of the maidens subsides, and after the long trial, and the many hardships and contemplations with settled knowledge, I uphold in faith [Torah] and in inquiry [Philosophy], the decree [Philosophy] and the choice [Torah], and I justify the Creator's judgment on all the evil that exists in the world, and on all the evils that have befallen me. And I am not (as one journalist from the Stoic sect wrote) saying that physical evil is not evil, but rather it is an imagined evil. I am saying that it is evil, but it is always measured and balanced, and nothing happens by chance, but everything is with wisdom and forethought. And I will not elaborate to justify my opinion, for I know that most people do not have the capacity to accept it. However, I will add this: God forbid that we should rest on our laurels, or slacken our efforts and diligence in every upright and good matter [because of the truth of the decree], for indeed the good that is decreed to come upon us will only come through those causes and means whose perfection depends on our power; and only if our inclination tempts us to strive in doing evil, then it is fitting for us to consider that all our diligence will be in vain to increase our success in violence and injustice, for a higher power watches over us. And indeed, God forbid that we should distance prayer and supplication, as if there is nothing after the decree, for indeed, ancient wisdom has decreed that the humble and prayerful shall be saved, and the horn of the arrogant shall be cut off, and he who trusts in his own strength shall fall.[[89]](#footnote-91)

In this fascinating introduction, S.D.L. presents how he changed his stance on the subject of free will three times, each time after a thorough examination and relying on the words of both early and later scholars. He does this without shame or reservation, with the full openness of a person who forgives his honor and places the pursuit of truth at the forefront of his priorities. He notes that his views changed both during the tumult of his youth and afterwards, as there are differences in approach between a young, passionate zealot steadfast in his religious beliefs, and a mature, settled individual with life experience who examines things from a more philosophical perspective. Changes of opinion are very plausible, especially among people who engage in thought and study all their days, and for whom truth is a guiding light.

The Relationship Between Torah, Philosophy, and Science

From the words of S.D. Luzzatto in his last commentary, it also emerges that his struggle with the question of reward and choice is tied to the confrontation with the question of the relationship between Torah and science, or between revelation and reason. Indeed, if the decree is true, then the philosophers are correct and the revelation is mistaken. If the choice is true, then the Torah's religion is correct, and the philosophy that attributes every action to inheritance and environment is mistaken. Indeed, on this issue as well, Rashi changed his position twice. In the aforementioned chapter and in the book[[90]](#footnote-92) I discussed this at length and showed that in his youth, as a rationalist, Shadl probably held the position of the Rambam's 'interpretive identity'. According to this view, the insights and conclusions of the revelation in the Torah in their purity, are fundamentally identical to those of philosophy and rational science in their purity. Since neither of these are purified, in the case of difficulties and contradictions, understanding prevails, and the contradicting narratives in the Torah will be reinterpreted so that harmony is achieved. For the reasons I detailed above, Solomon Maimon became a romantic in his maturity and abandoned the speculative philosophy influenced by the Christian one. Therefore, his stance on the relationship between the Torah and philosophy changed fundamentally. The reasons for this change were the same reasons for his transition from a rationalist to a romantic, which I detailed above. In the twenties and thirties, S.D. Luzzatto launched a harsh critique of what he saw as the speculative and elitist philosophy of Maimonides, which was influenced by the Greek wisdom of Aristotle and was in our way, of Rabad who acted hypocritically,[[91]](#footnote-93) and of Baruch Spinoza, the pantheist, determinist, and corrupt heretic. Rabbi Judah Halevi (RJH) was a cultural hero of his time, and another object of his affection was Rashi. Henceforth, he advocates for philosophy based on the fundamentals of Judaism and its faith. In 1840, due to his new position on the relationship between the Torah, which is fundamentally divine morality, and emotion, and between science, which is fundamentally philosophical truth and intellect, he adopted the 'domain approach'. According to this view, these are two separate fields, each dealing with its own topics, and they have no relevance to the other field. Therefore, it is impossible to harmonize them, and there can be no contradiction between them. Thus, he writes in letters from the forties:

Here is hinted at a fundamental idea, that religion is not cherished by God for its truth, but for its utility in the rectification of character. Therefore, it is not necessary for all its words to be true, and despite this, we should not distance its divinity. We should not distance from God the narration of untruths, for it is impossible to convey the power of creation to human beings, and the existence of society and the success of man cannot be achieved through knowledge of the truth, but through illusion. For nature (which is undoubtedly the will of God) deceives us in many matters, such as when it draws us with the cords of love for the continuation of the species. If a young man were to consider the many troubles of raising children, not one in a thousand would marry [...] And this is enough for now, for the matters are lengthy.[[92]](#footnote-94)

And in another letter:

The truth is that the aim in philosophy is truth, and the aim in religion [faith] is goodness and righteousness. And man is not entirely intellect, but he is also poesia [poetry], the poesia is the majority of man, it is his life, it is his soul. Religion is given to man to guide his passion towards the good and the upright; and if philosophy comes to guide religion, both religion and passion will together be cut off, they will perish. And this will suffice for now, as the matter is extensive.[[93]](#footnote-95)

In these bold statements, S.D. distinguishes between philosophy, which deals with the theoretical truth about the world and man, and revelation, which is God's word for guiding man and aims to best fulfill human society, even if it contradicts philosophical truth, and under the threats of reward and punishment. The field of philosophy concerns the individual and his relationship with others and the world. The realm of revelation pertains to the relationship between man and the Creator, and between the Creator and man. In one domain, the measure is human understanding, and in the other, the will of God as revealed in revelation, and it is impossible to unify or reconcile these two domains. Shadal feels that these are unusual statements and notes that he is abbreviating, but he does not write or reveal that there is a change in his position here.

Even this position was not strong enough in his eyes, as it implies that the Torah in its purity is not always true, and that philosophy in its purity is not sufficiently moral. Therefore, he changes his position to a stance known in the Middle Ages as 'double truth' or in modern language, an 'irresolvable dialectical stance'. According to this view, the two fields are both true and they contradict each other. Only in God's world can two truths be unified into one, but in the world of man, he must live in peace with both, knowing how to behave according to the revelation and recognizing the truth of philosophy and science. Thus, he formulates the matter:

But these two things are opposites and contradict each other, for if a person recognizes the perfection of God, which is infinite, and if he believes in His absolute uniqueness, as the philosophers have explained it, then he will fall into one of two things: either he will consider Him too exalted and elevated to oversee the details, or he will think that everything that exists in the world is only by His decree, blessed be He; and in either case, it is unlikely that he will still consider doing what is right in the eyes of God, for he will think that everything is equally good in His eyes. Then, I am greatly puzzled by the philosophers, how they did not understand that the intention in the Torah is not the same as the intention in philosophy. The intention in philosophy is knowledge and recognition of the truth, while the intention in the Torah is the performance of good and upright deeds. If the Torah teaches us about the uniqueness of God and the creation of the world, it is not for the purpose of acquiring knowledge of God and recognizing His perfection as it truly is, but rather to instill in our souls beliefs that are beneficial in guiding us on the paths of righteousness and justice... And perhaps one might say: If, according to your words, the Torah and philosophy are in opposition to each other, then one of them must be false. If so, you either scorn wisdom or reject the Torah. Know that it is neither this nor that, but rather, I see man as composed of two opposing forces, thought and inner emotion (see the introduction to Beit HaOtzar). It is impossible to amplify one of these forces and nullify the other, for man is necessarily subject to both. Therefore, the Torah (the true one) and philosophy (the true one), which is not yet written in a book of its own, but is scattered among ten thousand books, always mixed with errors and distortions, both are the words of the living God, for both agree with the nature of man, and both are true in alternating aspects. And this is not the place to elaborate on this.[[94]](#footnote-96)

Shadal reaches this bold conclusion despite its paradoxical nature, based on his assertion that he will always remain faithful to the truth. On one hand, he proved to his satisfaction the authenticity of the Torah and its divine revelatory origin, and he found it difficult to accept that it is not the complete truth. On the other hand, as a free thinker and scholar, he cannot ignore the findings of science, research, and philosophy, and finds it hard to accept that their purity does not also lead to good. It should be noted that Shadal contradicts himself here while speaking without realizing it. He still conflates the approach of the domains with the dialectical approach of the dual truth, and this is a mistake. In the approach of the domains, there can be no contradiction between the two domains, but rather a complete separation that negates the possibility of contradiction, whereas the dialectical position necessitates a contradiction between the two truths. ShaDaL is torn here between his disciplinary stance - that philosophy teaches truths, and the Torah moral norms- and his desire to distance himself from Mendelssohn, who saw reason as a central measure. As a Romantic, he opposed giving preference to reason. In addition, as stated, his understanding was that revelation is also truth and philosophy is also good. Thus, he is propelled, amidst internal contradiction, from the position of the domains to the dialectical stance without allowing himself to reflect - what exact truth is hidden in the Torah? – According to the position of the fields, it does not teach truths at all!! Despite the audacity of his words about the double truth, S.D.L., as is his custom in such cases, is brief and says here too that this is not the place to elaborate on the matter.

Further examination of a letter from 1860, which Blumenfeld added as a note at the beginning of S.D. Luzzatto's commentary on Ecclesiastes from which I quoted above, reveals that Luzzatto addressed this position there and linked it to the question of predestination and free will. There is more than a hint that his position on the dual truth not only remained unchanged, but also strengthened and clarified, as the position of the separate domains is not mentioned at all. In his view, the positions of identity and separate domains are denialist, while the position of dual truth is objective and aware of the contradiction. The ShaDaL is aware that this is a difficult and paradoxical position, and again notes that it is not appropriate to dwell on it in public. I quote again what he writes there about his final solution to the contradiction between the ancient decree and philosophical causality, and the free choice of the faith of Israel: "As for the matter of choice and decree, in my opinion, both are true [...] And this matter cannot be understood by a young man whose heart is aflame with the fire of his youth [...] And now, when the heat of youth has subsided, and after long experience, and many hardships and contemplation with a settled mind, I affirm in faith [Torah] and in inquiry [philosophy], the decree [philosophy] and the choice [Torah] [...] And I will not elaborate to justify my opinion because I know that most people do not have the capacity to accept it."[[95]](#footnote-97)

In my opinion, the dual truth stance of Shadal explains the enigma and contradictions that Joseph Klausner, and following him, other researchers, found in Shadal's writings.[[96]](#footnote-98) According to this bold and comprehensive stance of S.D. Luzzatto, both philosophy and revelation are truths when they are purified, and they contradict each other. Thus, in S.D.L's writings, one can find words of praise for these two fields when they are pure, and words of criticism for both when they are mixed with invalid elements. Philosophy mixed with speculative rationalism or anti-morality, and Judaism mixed with panentheism and mysticism, are both reprehensible. Praise should be bestowed upon anyone who attempts to live in both of these purified worlds as one, despite their contradictions. Conversely, the thinking of anyone who dismisses pure revelation as irrelevant and removes it from the discussion will be deemed invalid, as will the thinking of anyone who dismisses pure philosophy as dangerous heresy. There is no need, therefore, to propose solutions that do not align with the true character of Shadal, as other researchers have suggested. Indeed, we are presented with a great and unique figure, possessing a clear, uncompromising middle ground stance that was ahead of its time.

From the formulations of S.D. Luzzatto on the relationship between Torah and philosophy, it does not appear that he was aware of these changes in his positions beyond what he wrote in the introduction to Foundations of the Torah about ceasing to be a rationalist who believes in understanding alone.

The Source of Halakhic Authority

I have extensively discussed the changes in Shadal's position in the field of the Halakhic Codex in a chapter I dedicated to this topic[[97]](#footnote-99), and also previously in my books.[[98]](#footnote-100) Here, I will present the main points. Shadal's position on the question of the source of authority for the halakhic interpretations in the Midrash, the Mishnah, and the Talmud - or alternatively, his answer to the question of how to explain the halakhic interpretation of the Sages on biblical verses that interpret the text not according to its plain meaning - was formulated and published in brief in 1829, following the opening of the Rabbinical Seminary in Padua, in the "Introduction to the Critique and Interpretation of the Torah"[[99]](#footnote-101) that he prepared for his students. And thus he wrote:

We must therefore rely on a principle that all our theologians have accepted, namely that the sages of blessed memory used to find scriptural support in verses from the Bible for laws and rules that they received by reliable tradition from their predecessors. Their intention was not that this was the precise meaning of the scripture, but they did so in order to deeply engrave the matter in the hearts of their students, or also so that those laws and rules would be attributed the importance they deserved, and which the people might deny them if they did not feel that their source was in the Holy Scriptures. In this sense, Talmudic scholars often conclude that this is merely a 'general support'.[[100]](#footnote-102)

Before us is a comprehensive explanation intended for young students, behind which lies a bold and detailed method that was already tucked away in his drawer, and was destined to further develop and elaborate. Shadal spoke here of the Sages as a single entity. He wrote about an ancient tradition of laws that are not written in the Torah without specifying where it began, so there is no explicit claim here that the sages innovated laws of their own at any stage. The Sages used verses as a support (asmakhta) for the Oral Torah laws they learned from their predecessors - even though this was not the intention of the Torah's words - and they did this for two purposes: to prevent students from forgetting laws that are not written, and to strengthen the validity of the ancient Oral Torah laws, equating their importance with those of the Written Torah, by embedding them in the Written Torah.

However, it seems that S.D. Luzzatto first recorded his detailed and bold view on the origin and essence of the Tannaim and Amoraim's interpretation of the Bible and Mishnah in the Halakhic Midrash, already in a note to a short composition he wrote a year earlier, in 1828. This is within the framework of his plan to write a commentary on the language of the Mishnah, on the dispute between the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai. This plan went awry when he was appointed, a year later, as one of the two heads of the teacher's seminary established in Padua. Shadal pulled the composition from the drawer and attached it to paragraph 5 in a letter he sent to his friend, Shlomo Yehuda Rapoport (Shir), who resided in Lemberg, on the 20th of Tammuz, 5591 (July 6, 1831).[[101]](#footnote-103) Shadl published the essay only seven years later in **Kerem** **Hamad** 3 under the title given to it by the editor Shlomo Leib Goldenberg: "Letter 20". The article was reprinted posthumously in his collection of articles and letters, **Jewish Studies Research**, under the title: "House of Hillel and House of Shammai".[[102]](#footnote-104) From the detailed note, the specifics of the first method of the model emerge. Furthermore, the reason for Shadal's concern about detailing it to his students and publicizing it among the peaceful faithful community of Israel, who believe that even the laws of the Oral Torah were given to Moses at Sinai, becomes clear.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים המיוחדים לה. הוא מציג את השאלות שעולות מההשוואה של היחידה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומציע דרך לפתרון הבעיות שהן מעוררות. המאמר מסתיים בהצעה להבנה חדשה של היחידה, המבוססת על הניתוח שנערך בו ועל השוואתה לרשימות המקבילות.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its unique characteristics. It presents the questions that arise from comparing the unit to parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta, and proposes a solution to the problems they raise. The article concludes with a proposal for a new understanding of the unit, based on the analysis conducted and its comparison to the parallel lists.} Most of the laws in the Mishnah and the Talmud are the enactments of the sages in their wisdom, according to their deep and serious consideration of the nation's welfare and its needs in changing times. From this, it can be inferred that the laws of the Tannaim, and certainly also those of the Amoraim, were not given to Moses at Sinai along with the Written Torah.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדון במאפייניה המדרשיים של היחידה. המאמר מתמקד בשאלה אילו קבוצות ויחידים הם שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומהם הקריטריונים שעל פיהם מוגדרת החרמה מהעולם הבא. המאמר מסיים בהשוואה בין הרשימות של החוטאים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא במשנה, במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים בין הרשימות.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss the midrashic characteristics of the unit. The article focuses on the question of which groups and individuals do not have a portion in the world to come, and what are the criteria by which exclusion from the world to come is defined. The article concludes with a comparison between the lists of sinners who do not have a portion in the world to come in the Mishnah, in Midrash Seder Olam, and in the Tosefta, and attempts to understand the differences between the lists.} The Shadal distinguishes between the Tannaitic and Mishnaic period and the Amoraic and Talmudic period. The Tannaim enacted new laws and intentionally did not publish their reasons until after a full year (according to the Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 5a). The reason for this was the concern that some of the public might say that the reason does not seem right to them or is not relevant to the matter for whatever reason, and this would lead to a disregard for the new laws.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה המדרשיים של היחידה. המאמר מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסים לקטגוריה זו. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימות שבמשנה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים והדמיונות ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article at hand begins with an analysis of the placement of the section in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues with a discussion of the midrashic characteristics of the section. The article focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and attempts to understand the criteria by which they are categorized as such. The article concludes with a comparison between the lists in the Mishnah and parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta, and attempts to understand the differences and similarities between them.} The true reasons were conveyed from the mouths of the legislators only to the ears of a small selected minority, in private places and not in the house of study. They were transmitted in the same method in which several 'secrets of the Torah' were passed on to Moses at Sinai, from a clear sage to his worthy disciple; and the nature of the secrets of the Torah was not clarified here.

Source text: {ד.}  
  
Target text: {D.} For these reasons, the reasons for the new laws were not transmitted in the Mishnah and most of them were forgotten.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים המיוחדים לה. המאמר מתמקד בשאלה אילו קבוצות ויחידים הם שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומהם הקריטריונים שעל פיהם הוחלט על גורלם. במהלך הדיון מתברר שהיחידה מכילה שני רשימות שונות של קבוצות ויחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ושהרשימה השנייה משלימה את הראשונה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימות שבמשנה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its unique characteristics. The article focuses on the question of which groups and individuals do not have a portion in the world to come, and what are the criteria upon which their fate was decided. During the discussion, it becomes clear that the unit contains two different lists of groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and that the second list completes the first. The article concludes with a comparison between the lists in the Mishnah and parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta.} The Amoraim sought to understand the reasons for the laws in the Mishnah, and since they did not have these reasons, they provided their own reasons of two types: logical reasoning, or interpretation of the written Torah verses that were far from the simple meaning of the text, as the new laws were different from the commandments of the Torah. For this reason, the Amoraim in the Talmud disagreed on the reasons for the laws. For this reason, the enlightened ones, the common folk, and the wise men of the nations rejected the words of the Amoraim, which seemed strange to them and not in accordance with the simple interpretation of the Scriptures. Shadal did not write here about the matter of using biblical references for the purpose of aiding the students' memory. The need to anchor these laws in the Written Torah in order to give them authority is not explicitly mentioned here, but it will be revisited.

Source text: {החלק האחרון של המשנה במסכת סנהדרין מתמקד בארבע מיתות של בית הדין. במהלך הדיון על אופני ההוצאה להורג, לפני הרשימה של האנשים שנחנקו והדיון בפרטים של הרשימה, מופיעה יחידה שמדברת על קבוצות ואנשים שאין להם חלק בעולם הבא. מיקום היחידה הזו, האופן המדרשי שבו היא מוצגת, אופי הקבוצות והאנשים שמוזכרים בה, וההשוואה שלהם לרשימות דומות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, מעלים שאלות רבות.}  
  
Target text: {The final section of the Mishnah in Tractate Sanhedrin focuses on the four types of capital punishment administered by the court. Amid the discussion on the methods of execution, prior to the list of those who were strangled and the discussion of the list's details, a unit appears that discusses groups and individuals who do not have a share in the world to come. The location of this unit, its midrashic presentation, the nature of the groups and individuals mentioned in it, and their comparison to similar lists in the Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta, raise many questions.} Biblical interpreters, who turned the far-reaching homilies of the Amoraim into the primary interpretation of the scriptures in order to align them with Halacha, distorted the words of the scripture and transformed a mere support into the word of God.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המסגרת הכללית של 'פרק חלק', וממשיך לדיון במקום היחידה שעוסקת באלה שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא במסגרת הפרק. המאמר מציג את הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנתח את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נחשבים לכאלה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ובניתוח של ההבדלים ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the general framework of 'Perek Heleq', and continues to discuss the place of the section dealing with those who do not have a portion in the world to come within the chapter's framework. The article presents the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and analyzes the criteria by which they are considered as such. The article concludes with a comparison between the list and parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta, and an analysis of the differences between them.} The Amoraim's interpretation of the Tannaim's words in the Mishnah is not obligatory, and every scholar is entitled to propose his own reason and explanation for the Tannaim's words and laws in the Mishnah.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה המדרשיים. בהמשך, המאמר מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסים לרשימה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים והדמיונות ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the section appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its midrashic characteristics. Subsequently, the article focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and attempts to understand the criteria by which they are included in the list. The article concludes with a comparison between the list and similar lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta, and tries to understand the differences and similarities between them.} For the sages in every generation after the Talmud, even in our times, there is a dual role. Firstly, they must interpret the biblical verses to the best of their ability according to the plain meaning of their intended depth, and also to explain the plain reasoning of the Tannaitic laws in the Mishnah and clarify the reason for the enactment that contradicts the plain meaning of the biblical verses. Secondly, they must establish a new and comprehensive interpretation of the Mishnah, following a critical and insightful examination of the Amoraim's interpretations, an examination that will filter out those comments that do not align with the simple meaning.[[103]](#footnote-105)

Until 1846, Shadal continued to develop the model and answer various questions raised by the initial method. In this year, he formulated a second method, which he attached as an appendix to an article entitled "Depths of Language" which was probably written in the 1930s, and published it in a collection of his articles under the title **Beit Ha'otsar** Lasheka A, which was published in Lemberg in 1847. These are the main principles of Shadal's approach in its new formulation:

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים המיוחדים לה. המאמר מתמקד בשאלה מדוע היחידה מופיעה במקום שבו היא מופיעה, ומה המשמעות של המיקום שלה. המאמר מציג גם דיון במאפיינים המיוחדים של היחידה, כולל השוואה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המאמר מסתיים בהצעה לפרשנות חדשה של היחידה, שמתמקדת במאפיינים המיוחדים שלה ובמיקום שלה במסכת סנהדרין.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its unique characteristics. The article focuses on the question of why the unit appears where it does, and what the significance of its location is. The article also presents a discussion of the unique characteristics of the unit, including a comparison to parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta. The article concludes with a proposal for a new interpretation of the unit, focusing on its unique characteristics and its location in Tractate Sanhedrin.} The first stratum of the legislative sages is the stratum of the Scribes, from the days of Ezra the Scribe onwards, not the stratum of the Tannaim.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים המיוחדים לה. המאמר מתמקד בשאלה מדוע היחידה מופיעה במקום שבו היא מופיעה, ומה המשמעות של המיקום שלה. המאמר מציג גם דיון במאפיינים המיוחדים של היחידה, כולל השוואה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המאמר מסתיים בהצעה לפרשנות חדשה של היחידה, שמתמקדת במאפיינים המיוחדים שלה ובמיקום שלה במסכת סנהדרין.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its unique characteristics. The article focuses on the question of why the unit appears where it does, and what the significance of its location is. The article also presents a discussion of the unique characteristics of the unit, including a comparison to parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta. The article concludes with a proposal for a new interpretation of the unit, focusing on its unique characteristics and its location in Tractate Sanhedrin.} The Scribes clarified, defined, and established the details of the written Torah laws in places where the Torah lacked instructions or did not sufficiently detail the commandments. In addition, they legislated new laws from their own understanding for the benefit of the nation and according to the changing needs of their time.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של היחידה המשנתית, וממשיך להשוואה בין היחידה לרשימות המקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. ההשוואה מאפשרת להבחין בין הגרסאות השונות של הרשימה, ולהבין את המשמעות של השינויים ביניהן. במסגרת הדיון ברשימות, המאמר מתמקד בקבוצת המלכים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ובמיוחד במלך אחד שהוסר מהרשימה במהלך העריכה. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין היחידה לקטעים מקבילים בספרות התנאים, ובניתוח של המשמעות של היחידה בהקשר הגדול של מסכת סנהדרין.}  
  
Target text: {The article at hand begins with an analysis of the Mishnaic unit, and continues with a comparison between the unit and the parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta. The comparison allows us to distinguish between the different versions of the list, and to understand the significance of the changes between them. Within the discussion of the lists, the article focuses on the group of kings who do not have a portion in the world to come, and especially on one king who was removed from the list during the editing process. The article concludes with a comparison between the unit and parallel passages in Tannaitic literature, and an analysis of the significance of the unit in the larger context of Tractate Sanhedrin.} The scribes from the time of Ezra and onwards were not required to base their laws on biblical verses and to deviate from the literal meaning, even though they sometimes contradicted the plain meaning of the scriptures. Their power and influence as judges and officers were strong, and the people did not dispute their authority, but acted according to the commandment in the Torah to obey the judge who would be in their days. Only on rare occasions did the sages have to quote verses in order to respond to the claims of the Sadducees.

Source text: {ד. המשנה מספרת על שלושה מלכים וארבעה פרטיים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המלכים הם: ירבעם, אחאב ומנשה. הפרטיים הם: בלעם, דואג, אחיתופל, גחזי ואשת מדיאן. המשנה מסבירה שהם נכנסים לגיהנם ונידונים בה לדורי דורות, שהקדוש ברוך הוא נותן להם להתרופף בה, שהם נכנסים לשם ואינם יוצאים משם.}  
  
Target text: {D. The Mishnah tells of three kings and four private individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The kings are: Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. The private individuals are: Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, Gehazi, and the Medianite woman. The Mishnah explains that they enter Gehenna and are judged there for generations, that the Holy One, blessed be He, allows them to be tormented there, that they enter there and do not leave.} The scribes did not put this legislation in writing so as not to prevent future generations from amending the legislation of their predecessors according to the new needs of their time.

Source text: {החלק האחרון של המשנה במסכת סנהדרין מתמקד בארבע מיתות של בית הדין. במהלך הדיון על אופני ההוצאה להורג, לפני הרשימה של האנשים שנחנקו והדיון בפרטים של הרשימה, מופיעה יחידה שמדברת על קבוצות ואנשים שאין להם חלק בעולם הבא. מיקום היחידה הזו, האופי המדרשי שלה, אופי הקבוצות והאנשים שמוזכרים בה, וההשוואה שלהם לרשימות דומות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, מעלים מספר שאלות.}  
  
Target text: {The final part of the Mishnah in Tractate Sanhedrin focuses on the four death penalties of the court. During the discussion on the methods of execution, before the list of those who were strangled and the discussion of the list's details, a unit appears that talks about groups and individuals who do not have a share in the world to come. The location of this unit, its midrashic nature, the character of the groups and individuals mentioned in it, and their comparison to similar lists in the Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta, raise several questions.} As the generations diminished, from the days of Herod, and the standards deteriorated, and the sages lost their honor and authority over the people and became merely teachers and scholars, the Tannaim - who wanted to ensure that the laws in their hands would be accepted - began to base the laws they received from the Scribes on verses. For this purpose, they also invented the thirteen hermeneutical rules by which the Torah is interpreted, and taught their students to derive laws from verses – Mechilta, Sifra, and Sifrei. Nevertheless, they took care to inform the select students - to whom they also transmitted the secrets of the Torah, included in this notification - that these interpretations are not the true reason for the law, but merely a support, and that the authority of the Scribes to interpret and legislate in their wisdom, which stems from the power given to them at Sinai, from the commandment in the Torah "and you shall do according to all that they instruct you," and from the fact that they held the foundations of the Torah and the secrets of the Torah, which were handed down at Sinai, and passed on to them from generation to generation.

Source text: {המאמר הזה מתחיל בניתוח של המקום של יחידת 'אין להם חלק לעולם הבא' במסגרת הדיון בארבע מיתות בית דין. לאחר מכן, הוא מתמקד בפרשנות המשנה לפסוק 'אין להם חלק' ובהשוואה לפרשנויות אחרות של הפסוק בספרות התנאים. בחלקו האחרון, המאמר מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסו לרשימה.}  
  
Target text: {This article begins with an analysis of the place of the 'they have no portion in the world to come' unit within the discussion of the four types of capital punishment. It then focuses on the Mishnah's interpretation of the verse 'they have no portion' and compares it to other interpretations of the verse in Tannaitic literature. In its final part, the article focuses on the groups and individuals who have no portion in the world to come, and attempts to understand the criteria by which they were included in the list.} One must understand and interpret the biblical and Mishnaic text strictly according to its plain meaning.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המסגרת הכללית של 'פרק חלק', וממשיך לדיון במקום היחידה שעוסקת באלה שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא במסגרת הפרק והמשנה. המאמר מציג ניתוח של היחידה, ומציג ניתוח של הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימות של הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא במשנה, במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the general framework of 'Perek Heleq', and continues to discuss the place of the section dealing with those who do not have a portion in the world to come within the chapter and the Mishnah. The article presents an analysis of the section, and presents an analysis of the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The article concludes with a comparison between the lists of groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come in the Mishnah, in Midrash Seder Olam, and in the Tosefta.} The Amoraim continued to discuss the Mishnah and the halakhic Midrashim of the Tannaim. However, they, especially the Babylonian Amoraim, extensively engaged in the exegetical interpretation of these verses.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון באופייה המדרשי. הוא מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומשווה את הרשימה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המאמר מסיים בהשוואה בין הקבוצות והיחידים שנזכרים במשנה לאלה שנזכרים במקורות אחרים, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its midrashic nature. It focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and compares the list to similar lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta. The article concludes with a comparison between the groups and individuals mentioned in the Mishnah and those mentioned in other sources, and attempts to understand the differences between them.} The Talmud was ultimately sealed and even written when a decree was issued prohibiting the sages from deliberating and instructing, and since then they have been called Rabbanan Savorai. However, the mysteries of the Torah were not, by their very nature, written down and over time they were forgotten. Thus it happened that the interpretations of the verses, which were secondary from the perspective of the Tannaim and Amoraim who used them, became the primary reason for the commandments.

The "Shadal" altered and added from the original position of the majority of the scribes in his model. The early scribes are those who did not need to provide reasons for the laws they innovated due to their authority. This power has greatly diminished since the days of Herod, and already the Tannaim had to resort to midrashic interpretations of verses that deviate from the simple meaning in order to ensure obedience. The expected belittlement of the Tannaim's words did not stem from the claim that their reasons liberate the listeners from obedience, because they do not seem relevant or pertinent to them, as S.D. Luzzatto stated in 1828, but rather from the decline in the deterrent power of their words in the face of the people. The halakhic midrashim of the Tannaim represent this trend. Shadal also added that the Tannaim invented the thirteen hermeneutical principles, and thus the authority of the Sages stems both from the secrets of the Torah that were in their possession, from the explicit commandment of the Torah to listen to their words, and from the verses of the Bible that they interpreted for their needs with the help of the thirteen hermeneutical principles they invented. All sections of the original 1828 method that have not been updated or replaced remain in effect, including Shadal's comments on the interpretive Midrashim in the Talmud and the Amoraim's interpretation of the Tannaim's words and the reasons for their laws in the Mishnah.

Did Shadal change his approach in relation to the Tannaim? Did they themselves innovate laws, as was written in 1828, or did they merely reinforce the laws of the scribes? An answer to this from the year 1847 is found in **the Ha'mithid** , referring to the words of Rabbi Eliezer:

After several years of wondering about our sages, why (according to Rashbam) they uprooted this verse from its simple meaning, today (Purim 1927) I was privileged to understand why they saw it this way. And so, in every place where the Sages deviated from the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, when it is not a matter of individual opinion, but rather a universally agreed upon matter without dispute, it is not a mistake they made, but rather a regulation they established, according to the needs of the generations. And who could be better reformers than them? But their enactments were made with profound wisdom, and with fear of the Lord and love of mankind, not for their own pleasure or honor, nor to find favor in the eyes of flesh and blood.[[104]](#footnote-106)

The Tannaim would say, in their halakhic midrashim, they linked to verses even midrashim that were their own new creation. Thus, S.D.L did not adopt the Orthodox position that the intention of the scripture is expressed in the halakhic Midrash. He also did not accept the position of the Reformers that the midrash is at worst the false words of the sages against the good of the people, and at best - according to the opinion of Jewish scholars, irresponsible, according to **D.L.** Vashor - the midrash is a serious mistake that the sages made in understanding the Bible or the Mishnah. According to S.D. Luzzatto, the halakhic midrash, as mentioned, is a new creation of the Tannaim; they sought to anchor the laws of the Scribes in the Scriptures and to add new decrees to them - some of which are contrary to previous decrees - for the benefit of the nation according to the needs of the time, and they linked them to the Scripture to ensure obedience.

Shadal felt that his discovery was dangerous and could lead its recipients to initiate reforms themselves. Therefore, he emphasized what he saw as the profound difference between the innovations of the Scribes and the Tannaim and the reforms of his contemporaries. As long as there are no people at the level of the Sages, a reform cannot occur in our time. He was careful to note that only if the midrash is attributed to a single sage whose opinion was not accepted can we speak of a mistaken error.

According to S.D. Luzzatto, there are therefore four layers in the halakhic codex of Judaism:

The first is the realm of Sinai, which includes the Written Torah and the secrets of the Torah.

The second is the domain of the scribes from Ezra onwards; they clarified and detailed the commandments that were given at Sinai only in a general form. In addition, they created new laws in contradiction to the plain meaning of the Torah, by the authority given to them by the written Torah from the law "And you shall do [...] according to all that they instruct you [...] do not deviate" (Deuteronomy 17:10-11), and with the help of the secrets of the Torah that were only given to a select few.

The third is the Tannaitic period, which began in the late Second Temple period. During this time, the Tannaim continued to teach the laws created by their predecessors and also to create new laws. However, as their authority weakened, they invented the thirteen hermeneutical principles and the interpretation of verses as a source for laws.

The fourth are the Amoraim; they continued to delve into and debate the laws of their predecessors, brought interpretations of verses from their predecessors to anchor these laws, and even interpreted verses themselves (sometimes strange interpretations) to anchor previous laws that lacked such an anchor. However, they generally ceased to legislate new laws from their own interpretation based on self-derived Midrash. In this way, they ensured the survival of the laws, as the people accepted the Midrash as the authentic interpretation of the verses.

It is possible that Rashi also revised his understanding of the mysteries of the Torah. In a review letter about Geiger from 1857, there is a section criticizing Geiger's approach to the halakhic midrashim of the Sages, in which SDL wrote as follows:

And after a while, I saw (or thought) that all the foreign interpretations that contradict the simple meaning of the scriptures, scattered throughout the Talmud and in the Mechilta, Sifra, and Sifrei, were not born out of ignorance, but intentionally, in order to support the regulations they were establishing according to the needs of the times. Therefore, it is not our duty to twist the scriptures to align them with the Halacha, but our duty is to act according to the Halacha, as it is said, "according to the Torah that they instruct you."[[105]](#footnote-107)

What is important for our purposes here is that Rashi did not retract these statements about the secrets of the Torah that were in the hands of the chosen sages. It seems that this arose from his growing opposition to mysticism and its Hasidic themes, and from his inability to provide a basis for the existence of the secrets of the Torah. The topic of the thirteen principles also does not recur here. While this is an explanation that the sages used in their time, according to the opinion of the author, it is not valid for our time and should not be used as a source of authority. For the author, it is clear that the thirteen hermeneutical principles were not given to Moses at Sinai as claimed throughout the generations, but rather they are an invention of the Tannaim, whose purpose was to strengthen their authority to expound on verses that are far from the simple interpretation.

From the discourse of S.D. Luzzatto on the topic of Halakhic development, it does not appear that he was aware of these changes in his positions. This is also the case with the topics of introduction and mission, and the relationship between Torah and philosophy. In contrast, in the other topics he dealt with, he was well aware of this and openly and intentionally acknowledged his mistakes.

Source text: {ד. המשנה מספרת על שלושה מלכים וארבעה הדיוטות שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המלכים הם ירבעם, אחאב ומנשה. ההדיוטות הם בלעם, דואג, אחיתופל, גחזי ואשת מדתי. המשנה מסבירה שהמלכים וההדיוטות האלה נענשו בגלל שביצעו מעשים רעים והובילו את העם לעבודה זרה. המשנה ממשיך לפרט את המעשים הרעים שביצעו ואת העונשים שקיבלו.}  
  
Target text: {D. The Mishnah tells of three kings and four commoners who do not have a portion in the world to come. The kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. The commoners are Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, Gehazi, and the Medianite woman. The Mishnah explains that these kings and commoners were punished because they committed evil deeds and led the people to idolatry. The Mishnah continues to detail the evil deeds they committed and the punishments they received.} The motivations of Shadal for publishing errors and changing positions, his pride in doing so, and the advantages of his method.

In the aforementioned article, various quotes from Shadal are brought forth, from which it emerges that he is not comfortable accepting the opinions of others. According to this verse, a fundamental characteristic of Shadal is to see things differently from most people. The quote from Shadal, in which he states that he has several times nullified what he previously wrote, is dismissed and scattered as mentioned above as a polemical dispersion.[[106]](#footnote-108) It seems that the discussion I have conducted here removes this argument from the agenda. As a possible explanation for S.D. Luzzatto's practice, as mentioned, Shulvass argued that Luzzatto had insights that stemmed from the fact that he combined deep emotional experiences with intellectual study, and based on these insights, he changed his positions. It seems that Shulvass bases his argument on these words of S.D. Luzzatto:

I was born on the knees of the Sages, Rashi, and Rashbam, men of truth whose actions are truthful, and who know their God to be true. Therefore, they do not flatter Him. As a result, I have been privileged to have some mysteries revealed to me, which the eyes of the researchers who preceded me have not seen. My faith in the antiquity of the Torah, the truth of prophecy, and the signs and wonders does not come from the absence of criticism, but from the power of true criticism that seeks the truth and will not retreat in the face of anything. The scorn of the complacent will not move it from its place, and the contempt of the arrogant will not cover its shame.[[107]](#footnote-109)

However, even in these matters, there is not even a hint that S.D.L.'s revelations were, in his opinion, illuminations on naturalness. Shadal attributed superhuman powers to individuals after the prophetic era, and certainly did so in relation to himself. He anchored his achievements in a relentless intellectual pursuit of truth, a genuine and unfeigned research of one who does not dismiss in advance the belief in God, who believes that indeed there were miracles, prophecy, and the giving of the Torah from heaven in the past, and does not exclude these principles from any discussion.

Why then did Rashi act in such an exceptional manner, repeatedly admitting in writing and in print to mistakes and errors in every subject he dealt with, and even took pride in it? Firstly, it should be noted that S.D. Luzzatto is a prominent representative of the interpretation of the Jewish Holy Scriptures as ethical guidebooks, rather than as carriers of Midrashic, philosophical, or mystical information. The Torah educates the Jew to behave towards others according to the divine morality embodied in its commandments, and the Shadal was a beautiful expounder and fulfiller. Attributing a statement to its source, accepting the truth from anyone, and admitting mistakes, were, in his view, correct and appropriate moral actions in line with the spirit of Judaism, which promotes modesty, humility, avoidance of flattery, respect for others, and love for them. In a letter to the editor from 1831, S.D.L responds to accusations of his stubbornness and excessive adherence to his opinions and reasoning. It was in the midst of their debate over whether there were two Isaiahs or one - that S.R. agreed with Nachman Krochmal (R.N.K., 1785-1840), Ben-Zeev, Rosenmüller, and Gesenius that there were two Isaiahs, while D.L. was not swayed by all the philological and historical evidence, remained faithful to the claim that there was one Isaiah, and argued that his opponents' claims were heresy and that even from a research perspective they were not absolute and could be disputed. Shadal responds to Shai"r: "Indeed, in my search within the chambers of my belly and the depths of my kidneys, I find myself admitting the truth, whoever may speak it, even a young boy. And you know how many times I accept the reasoning of my students, admitting and abandoning my opinion for theirs without shame, but rather, it is my [very] praise."[[108]](#footnote-110) Nevertheless, Shadal admits, he possesses characteristics different from other researchers: "Therefore, my heart tells me that when I refuse to accept the words of my colleagues, it is not out of stubbornness against the truth, nor out of arrogance to not examine calmly the foundations upon which the thoughts of others are based, but because I can only see things according to my own way and according to the image [the representation] that they form in my soul, and not in any other way."[[109]](#footnote-111) In another letter from 1833, Shadal explains to Shai"r that he is a realist and not a man of imaginations like the rest of his contemporaries, and therefore he indeed confines himself to his unique path and will not deviate from it to the right or to the left. "But it is not so with my personal opinions, which are prone to change over time as knowledge and investigation increase. In these matters, I accept the truth from whoever speaks it, whether they be great or small, first or last, distant or near, friend or foe." And in the matter of this measure, to accept the truth from whoever will tell it, and to confess it with a full mouth and a happy heart, to this day I have not seen anyone who compares to me, also because as for Didi Malta, she is my junior, and I am far from boasting about her."[[110]](#footnote-112) In a letter to the Shi'ar from 1841 on the same subject, the D.L. says that there are matters of principle in which he will not change his mind without absolute proof, because they stand at the basis of his method regarding philosophy and Jewish research, a basis that is faithful to God, creator of the world, to prophecy and Torah from heaven. If the claim that there were two Isaiahs is accepted, it would undermine the foundation of true prophecy and cast doubt on the credibility of the second part of the book, in which the supposed second Isaiah managed to deceive the entire nation of Israel into believing he was the first Isaiah. Any faithful Jew, who believes in God's providence over His people, would find this difficult to accept. They would demand irrefutable evidence, as if it had not been presented to them.

Therefore, the scholars mentioned, Rosenmiller, Gesenius, and others, admitted without shame that the one who wrote these prophecies was wise enough to write them in a way that would make the readers believe they were written in ancient times. Indeed, I will not deny that there were many false prophets in ancient times among Israel, but I believe that the Lord's providence never abandoned or forsaken His people, and in every generation true prophets arose and refuted the false ones. However, for the work of Satan to succeed, for a false prophet to arise in Israel and mislead the entire nation, and for his dreams to be accepted throughout Israel as if they were the words of Isaiah son of Amoz, without anyone objecting or expressing skepticism, and for all of Israel to find comfort from their mourning in a forged document for two thousand years - this is something that could possibly be true, but it seems to me that it is not appropriate for a person of Israel to accept it without irrefutable evidence that cannot be refuted. And yet, even the reality of prophecy from heaven, the truth of signs and wonders, and even the existence of God, many have risen against them with numerous assumptions that are very close to their opinion; nevertheless, we do not pay heed nor listen to them as long as they cannot present clear arguments against us that are irrefutable.[[111]](#footnote-113)

It is clear that one who does not believe in prophecy will not be able to accept the words of Isaiah about Babylon as the "glory of kingdoms" (a splendid kingdom) in the days of Manasseh, and his words about the people of Israel who are in exile and destined to return to their land. However, we, "when we believe that God speaks to man, do not find it difficult to accept that the prophet sees in his heart the distant future [the far future], and at the time of his prophecy, his thoughts separate from the situation and the time in which he stands."[[112]](#footnote-114) Shadal declares as follows: "I am ready to learn from anyone, and to accept the truth from whoever speaks it," even when it comes to the most sacred principles of faith such as the existence of God, miracles, and prophecy. All this is conditional upon the presentation of irrefutable research evidence before him.

However, it must be said that Shadal was justified in his self-assessment, and the claims of Y.R. against him were also valid, as he struggled to acknowledge the opinions of his fellow researchers. Among these scholars, he felt exceptional and outstanding in a positive way, and saw them as sycophants, pursuers of honor and wealth, for whom the pursuit of truth is not among their aspirations. It seems that it was easier for him to admit a mistake in the face of positions and interpretations of interpreters who preceded him or his students. Of course, a mistake that he discovered himself while studying, it was easy for him to retract from it. Therefore, agreement with a sage from his own era is an exception (apart from his nephew Luli), and it is usually on one of the details of that sage's argument, but not the main claim. I found one such instance in the debate that S.D.L. had with S.Y.R. over Ibn Ezra (for another instance, also involving S.Y.R., see above, footnote 58). Shadal argued that Rabad was not faithful to Halacha and Hazal in his interpretations without admitting it. According to RABaD, he was hypocritical and pretended to be loyal to the Sages, and therefore he rejected him (however, he accepted many of his plain interpretations of the Torah, as was his custom to accept the truth from whoever says it). He provided evidence for his statements, and one of them was the claim that RABaD permitted the consumption of fat. Shadal responded to all of Shai's arguments with great determination, and regarding the milk, he rightly claimed that the words of the Raavad on milk were only said in response to the Karaite argument and in debate with him. Indeed, Shadal later admitted to Shai that he had erred on this matter. However, he was not willing to change his negative and critical attitude towards RABaD, despite all the efforts of R'NQ, YShR, and ShYR.[[113]](#footnote-115)

Additional reasons for his practice are listed by D.L. himself in the letter mentioned above from 1856 to Blumenfeld, editor of **Otzar Nimhad** ,[[114]](#footnote-116) Until now I have not dealt with us. One motive for publicizing a change in position was to counter the allegations against him (for example, as claimed by R'N"K)[[115]](#footnote-117) that he was a fanatic fundamentalist clinging to his old views, and not a free researcher of ancient beliefs and opinions, willing to change his positions according to the truth that becomes clear to him:

Behold, I am presenting to you today my commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes, which I wrote thirty-six years ago, for you to place in your esteemed treasury. And you should know, as should all who read your treasury, that my thoughts now are not as they were. There are several things in this commentary that no longer seem correct to me, and there are also things about which I am uncertain; generally, the value of the Book of Ecclesiastes has increased in my eyes as I have aged, far more than it was in the days of my youth. And yet, I have decided to publish this commentary, to declare and make known that since my youth I have loved free inquiry, even before I knew the works of Spinoza, Eichhorn, Geisenius, and their colleagues. Therefore, everything I write against the rationalists is not due to my adherence to the beliefs instilled in me by my parents and teachers, but rather because this is what I have found after truly free inquiry (not an inquiry that pretends to be free, but is actually a slave to the thoughts of others, according to the places and times). I have found that Moses, Isaiah, and others were indeed prophets of the Lord, and they did not speak from their own imagination.

Another reason to publicly publish opinions that are no longer valid is for the enjoyment and education of lovers and students of the Hebrew language:

Indeed, as I have already mentioned in your treasury, Part A (page 78), regarding my letters on dreams, not everything that I wrote and believed in my youth seems right to me today. Nevertheless, I believe that reading those letters will be a pleasure and benefit to all lovers of our language. Therefore, whoever wondered about those letters in Wiener Mitteilungen (July 7, 1856) should remember that I wrote them at the age of 24, and I did not publish them to teach mysteries of wisdom, but to teach the sons of Judah the refinement and purity of language... The people who will gather your treasure in their house and meditate on it are people whose soul desired the language of our fathers and the ways of our ancestors, and for them I write, and for them I bring out from under my hand what I wrote in my youth, even if it is not pure science, and I will not be ashamed to arrange before my brothers, the sons of my people, the times that have passed over me, and the thoughts of my heart with my relatives and loved ones, for I know that being things that come from the heart, the upright in heart will rejoice in them and the righteous will delight in them.

A third reason for publicizing the fact that a scholar's opinions change over the course of his life is a fundamental pedagogical reason for the benefit of the next generation of scholars and researchers - today's students - so they can become familiar with the thought process of the investigating scholar at all stages of its development. This is so that they may understand how he arrived at his conceptual and final conclusions (a study that is true science), and also so that they may understand that a sage is not born a cedar but a tender sapling, and they should not be deterred from walking up the path themselves - an insight that other researchers conceal in order to glorify themselves.

And if I were to express all that is in my heart, I would say that there is nothing truly scientific [in the sense of systematic knowledge] as the investigation of the processes of thought within a person and a deep heart. Most scholars have hidden from those who follow them the story of their soul's journey in its thoughts and inquiries, and in the events that have passed over it, and which have influenced it, whether little or much, until it has acquired the characteristic it has acquired. And from this, those who come after them will be astounded at their wisdom, for they will see them as giants, and did not see them as infants and sucklings, and they will marvel at the great cedar, because they did not see it when it was a sapling and a shoot growing little by little from its roots. And Condillac already resented this modesty, which closes for us **the understanding of the existence of wisdom and its growth** step by step, and that is enough, and the educated will listen, and the envious will rival, and the lustful will insult [insult], and their mouths will expand, but they will not hurt a righteous soul.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה המדרשיים של היחידה. בהמשך, המאמר מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נכנסים לקטגוריה זו. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הרשימות שבמשנה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים והדמיונות ביניהם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the unit appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss the midrashic characteristics of the unit. Subsequently, the article focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and attempts to understand the criteria by which they fall into this category. The article concludes with a comparison between the lists in the Mishnah and parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta, and tries to understand the differences and similarities between them.} Marking of Dates

Perhaps this is the reason why S.D. Luzzatto was meticulous in recording dates next to everything he wrote, with time intervals between discussions on any given topic, alongside the autobiography he wrote and dated letters he sent containing personal details about himself, his family, and his surroundings. In addition, he noted a date next to each change he made in his commentaries. He considered it important that in the future his evolving personality would be studied according to the positions he held during different periods of his life and their circumstances. He said of this: "All my efforts and toil are for the generations of the world [...] I do not fear that my words will be forgotten, not in a hundred nor in two hundred years, but after my death [...] Israel will know who was and what deeds S.D.L. performed."[[116]](#footnote-118)

In conclusion, LSD had a unique moral personality, well aware of itself. Among other things, he had a habit of quoting statements in the name of whoever said them, whoever they might be, if they happened to be true. Moreover, he made a habit of self-correction over the years of his research and study, and did not hesitate to admit and publish this. He himself explains this practice both as a moral value, and so that he will not be suspected of bias in his research due to his religious faith, also for the sake of Hebrew lovers, and for pedagogical reasons to encourage his students and teach them what true science is and how the wisdom of the researcher is built and grown.

Appendix

Below are examples from S.D.L.'s commentary on the Torah, acknowledging his past mistakes and subsequent changes in position, including dates. Most of the items in the list are taken from Appendix C of the new edition of Bashia - which is specific to the dates that appear in the Shadl commentary on the Torah - which he kindly sent me, and which includes over sixty items:

In the beginning

1. Chapter 1, Verse 30: **Today, the 23rd of Tammuz, 5725 [two months before the death of the author]...and now it seems to me.** Shadal believed that from the time of creation, man was permitted to eat meat, and he derived this from the words "and rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky" (Genesis 1:28). Shalom Shimon Medina, a student of his, suggested that the intention of this verse might be that a person can prevent fish and birds from causing harm. Shadal disagreed with this interpretation and argued that although "to subdue" can also mean to enslave and kill, nevertheless, in his view of later interpretation, it seems that the words were spoken in an obscure language so that a person would not learn to shed blood.

2. Yod-Chet 19: **And there is no need to insist and interpret as I explained in "Bikkurei Ha'itim" for the year 1846, page 8.** In the year 1856, Shadal thought that "to do justice and judgment" refers to a judge who must save the oppressed. However, in later interpretation, he revisits this and explains that the expression refers to every person who should do good to others and not harm anyone.

3. Y.T 5: "And we shall know them." In the commentary of Shadal, it is stated that the people of Sodom did not practice homosexuality, but rather sought to know and recognize who was coming to the city with the intention of abusing them, even through homosexual acts, in order to deter them and all unwanted guests (primarily the poor and travelers who need assistance) from settling in Sodom. However, he later agreed that indeed the Sodomites practiced male homosexuality out of lust, and every new male was considered an opportunity for sexual abuse. Therefore, Lot was forced to try to appease them with his two daughters. This is an example that was only revealed in the new edition of Beshia. This is one example of the importance of this edition, and I did not count the others for they are numerous.

4. Y.T 16: **Thus** **I said in my dream on the night of the 23rd of Adar, 580. And today, the 23rd of Adar, 1903.** In 2008, D.L. thought that the word 'Vitamahama' is derived from the word **ma** and means that the friend of the latecomer says to him, 'What are you doing?' However, in his later interpretation, it seems to him that its meaning is that the one who hesitates is unable to decide what to do and he asks those around him 'What should I do?'.

5. Y.T 17: **But now, in the year 1863.** In the past, it was thought that the word 'vayomer' instead of 'vayomeru' indicates that after they took Lot out of the city, one angel returned to destroy the city while the other angel remained to save Lot. However, in the year 1893, it was observed that this interpretation does not align with verse 21, in which the remaining angel says "not to overthrow," implying that this angel also participated in the overthrow of Sodom. Therefore, in the later commentary, he explains that the more important of the two angels is the one who speaks with Lot after they have taken Lot and his family out of the city. They lingered and spoke with him, afterwards both of them remained to destroy the city and Lot and his household went to them.

6. Kaf Alef 12: **And now (Taf Resh Kaf Alef), it seems to me.** In the past, the Shadal explained the words "your offspring shall be called" - you will have offspring whose name will be called and stand forever. In later interpretations, it was explained - you will have offspring who will call upon your name and inherit your blessing.

7. 21st 23: **And today, the 2nd of Elul 5611, it seems to me.** In the past, Rashi interpreted the words of Abimelech "If you will deal falsely with me, and with my son, and with my grandson" - Abimelech could not have known that God would be with Abraham's descendants for generations, and therefore only asked for those who would be in Abraham's time. In later interpretations, it seems that Abraham could only obligate himself and not his descendants who would not live in his time, therefore he only asked for his son and grandson.

8. 27 1: I hereby **retract what I wrote in "Bikkurei Ha'itim" 5699 (pages 105-110) ...and now (in the year 5709) it seems to me that it was a mistake...from all of this it appears.** In the year 1829, S.D. Luzzatto thought that the blessing Isaac intended to bestow upon Esau was meant for Esau alone and not for his descendants. In later interpretations, it is thought to be a mistake, as the ancient custom of the fathers when blessing their sons, was to also bless their offspring. This also appears to be the case with other blessings in the Book of Genesis.

9. 28 5: **Thus I wrote at the beginning of my youth in the year 5511, and now, after thirty years, I have merited a better interpretation, and it is for my dear student DHA ...(and it is also possible to say).** Rashi admitted that he did not understand what the words referring to Rebekah - "the mother of Jacob and Esau" were trying to teach us. In his youth, Shadal wrote a proposal suggesting that the Torah intended to explain why Rebecca sent Jacob to her brother Laban. She hoped that if Esau pursued Jacob and reached Aram, Laban would do everything to save his sister's two sons. The student of Shadal, David Hai Ashkenazi, later suggested that the Torah intended to emphasize that Jacob is superior to Esau, and therefore his name is mentioned here before his brother's. According to Rashdal himself, he had a new proposal. According to it, the Torah's intention was to praise Jacob and to denigrate Esau, who was also Rebecca's son. It would have been appropriate for him not to marry foreign women, or at least to divorce them, but he did not do so.

10. 39: **So I too believed for many years...and after I read...I returned to believe.** For many years, it was thought that the interpretations of the ancients were incorrect, and that the appearance of the father determines how the offspring will look. It was believed that the peeled sticks that Jacob placed in the watering troughs caused the female sheep to mate with a speckled partner, and indeed, the physician Blondel made this claim in 1727. However, in 1837, a physiology book by Bordauch was published, clearly demonstrating that the power of imagination operates in females and influences the fetus. Therefore, the author revisited and returned to the initial interpretation that he had initially dismissed because it seemingly lacked logic and understanding.

11. LA 39: **And now, in the year 560...** Shadal deemed it appropriate to explain why Onkelos translated the words "I will surely bear the loss" ... "I was stolen by day and stolen by night" not according to their literal meaning: "What was missing, I completed... I guarded by day and I guarded by night". Initially, he explained that before Onkelos was the question: from where did Jacob pay for the thefts and the torn [animals], if he lacked everything? However, he wanted to evade this question and say that Jacob paid with additional guarding hours. However, in the later interpretation that Rashi believes preceded Onkelos, there was an earlier reading - 'I have stolen,' which means 'I have paid as if I were the thief' - this is a difficult expression to understand, and therefore Onkelos translated according to the context and not literally. The words 'in the year 2015' were omitted by the SDL B **Hamedhidil** (1515-1567) and in the printed version of the commentary (1551), but were reinstated in the Shia edition according to Yitzchak Pardo's wording in the years 1663-1664 . It seems that Rashi returned to ponder the reason for this translation by Onkelos and decided that both possibilities are equally plausible. Instead of writing 'And now in the year of Tav-Resh', he wrote 'It also seems to me'.

12. Page 43: **And now, in Tishrei of 1939, as I am busy proofreading my translation, to send it to the printer who will publish it in my hometown... if not for the fact that it has already been 26 years.** In the past, he translated and interpreted the word 'אלופים' into Italian as 'leaders and rulers'. Later, during the proofreading (1939) of the translation prior to its publication, he decided it would be more plausible to translate and interpret it as: 'A family head and tribe whose descendants are named after him.'

13. M' 10: **And now, in the year 5697.** Shadal previously explained, as per Onkelos' translation, that the interpretation of "its clusters ripened into grapes" is that the clusters became grapes. In 1867, he believed that it was necessary to correct that grapes were formed in clusters.

14. M"A 56: **I hereby retract what I explained in "Bikkurei Ha'itim" and it seems to me now (in the year 5633).** Shadal previously interpreted the phrase "all that is in them" as referring to the treasures within Egypt and its cities. However, in later interpretation, it seems that the explanation is - all the treasures - those in which his food is stored.

15. M"T 5: **And now I see that this interpretation is not correct, and now the words of some of the ancients seem to me to be right.** In his early days, Shadal interpreted 'Mekhuroteihem' as a term related to marriage. However, he later understands that the interpretation is incorrect, as the brothers who proposed intermarriage to the men of Shechem in exchange for circumcision did not intend to kill them, but believed that the circumcision proposal would be rejected. Therefore, he prefers to say that the interpretation of the word is a sexual organ. For instance, this was explained in Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer, chapter 38, in Midrash Tanhuma, Vayechi 9, and by Jerome.

Names

16. G' 13: **And after thirty years, I slightly altered the interpretation of the scripture.** Shadal brings several interpretations for "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" of his own and of his student Abraham Hayyim Maynster, but adds at the end that thirty years later he changed his mind and believes that the previous interpretations were mistaken. In his later commentary, it seemed to him that the intention was - 'I will be what I will be, I will do what I have never done before.'

17. Section 3: **And what** **I wrote in "Bikkurei HaItim" in 1829, was a mistake on my part.** Shadl admits that his previous interpretation of the words "we are called upon us", which he published in the past, was wrong and now he is clear that the meaning is not - his name is called upon us, but the thousand of is called should be replaced with ha and interpreted - we will be revealed upon us.

18. H' 13: **And now (Adar 1924), I see that all this is not possible.** Shadal brings his previous interpretation according to which the words "as when the hay" are connected to the word 'stalks' and they were not said by the oppressors, but by the Torah. Later, he reconsidered and agreed with his student, David Hazak, that the commentators indeed said this.

19. 14:20: **Today, the 21st of Iyar, 5699, it seems to me.** ShaDaL previously considered that the angel and the pillar of cloud are two references to the same entity, which stood behind the people and separated them from the Egyptians in the sea. In later interpretations, it appears to him as an angel separately and a cloud separately.

20. 16 11: **a) I hereby retract what I wrote in Bikkurei Ha'itim 1827...and in Kerem Hemed Vol. 3.** Shadal revisits his commentary on Moses' astonishment at the Graves of Lust - how could God possibly feed meat to six hundred thousand men in the heart of the desert. In the later interpretation, it explains that God hinted to Moses that the matter would be miraculous, but did not explicitly say that it would involve a new type of food. Hence, Moses wondered how meat could be found in such a desolate place. See also Numbers 11:21.

21. 16 11: **b) And I have already retracted from what I wrote twenty years ago.** In the discussions he conducted in his youth on synonymous words, Shadal wrote that the root 'ragl' is derived from the words 'ra' and 'gala', and the root 'tur' from the words 'atah' and 'raah'. In later interpretation, it is revisited. See below, Numbers 13:2.

22. Chapter 5: **And I, in the year 5594, had difficulty... However, now, in the year 5605... I hereby retract what I wrote about the sin of the fathers in Ohev Ger, page 19.** The Shadal explains the words "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children". According to his words, indeed we see tangibly that sons are punished for the sins of their fathers. So too believes Ralbag, that this is the custom of the world. Shadal tells us that in the year 1664 he made it difficult for the RLBJ and thought that this came from the hand of God on purpose, as he also wrote earlier in his book **Oveh** **Ger** (1829, Padua, Italian). However, now, in the year 1845, he retracts and agrees with the opinion of Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, that according to the Torah, God rewards and punishes from above in order to educate us, but the truth is that everything follows the course of the world in a natural way and for the benefit of mankind.

23. K 11: **Yet, this is indeed not (as I thought in "Bikkurei Ha'itim" 1828, p. 91) the real reason.** In **Bichuri Ha'atim 1758** , Shadal wrote about the changes between the ten commandments in the 'Yatro' parashah and those in the 'Vat'hanan' parashah. The most significant change is the reason for the Sabbath commandment. Close to the liberation from Egypt, when the memory of hardship was still fresh, there was only a need to mention the reason for choosing the seventh day as the day of rest - a reminder of the creation. However, forty years later the reason for the strike had to be stated - a memory of the Exodus that was no longer fresh in their memory. For various reasons, which Shadal enumerates, he revisits and decides in his later interpretation that the Sabbath was established for Israel so that everyone would rest on the same day. This would enable them to gather for shared meals and conversations, fostering love and unity among them, and also to assemble in the House of God and hear Torah from the mouths of the sages. The rest of the servants and animals is for compassion and mercy towards them.

24. Chapter 21, 8: **And today, the 3rd of Adar, 5799.** Shadal believed that the directive 'and he shall redeem her' in relation to the Hebrew maidservant is addressed to her father. He then changed his mind and it seemed to him that she was directed towards her master, who should strive with her family members, relatives, or tribe to redeem her.

25. Chapter 16, 21: **Previously, I explained... And now, the 4th of Sivan, 5699.** The words "and steal a man and his acquaintance and death is found in his hand" was interpreted by the SDF in the past - and steal a man or his acquaintance. In later interpretation, it is believed that the correct interpretation is that a person is only liable to death if he has stolen and sold another person.

26. 22 1: **So it is printed in the commentary on Parshat Mishpatim in the book Ben Gorni (Amsterdam 1891), and now (Erev Shavuot 1899), I see.** In the past, the Shadal explained, as per the lengthy explanation of the Raavad, that the interpretation of the words "he has no blood" is attributed to the homeowner, meaning that if he kills the intruder who came into his house through a tunnel, he is exempt from the guilt of murder. In later interpretation, in the Talmud, it is seen that the entire verse is applied to the thief in the tunnel who is considered bloodless and therefore dead, and thus anyone who kills him is exempt from guilt, according to Rashi's opinion. In 1924, his student Joseph Yirah showed him that this is also explicitly stated in the Short Raavad.

27. 22 14: **And in the year 5566 he was deceased... And now, in the year 1894, it seems to me... And now (Sivan 669), I have found that both Rabbi Isaac ben Moses Arama and the Hizkuni have interpreted as I did in the year 596, and I hereby reaffirm my initial interpretation.** For the first time, Rashi interpreted the words "And if he is a hired hand, he came for his hire" - if the owner of the animal was hired by the borrower of the animal for another job, this is not considered as if the owner is with him, and if the animal is injured or dies (an accident), the borrower pays. Later, in the year 1894, he came to the conclusion that this case refers to a renter and not a borrower, similar to Rashi's interpretation. Since the animal is rented and its owner receives compensation, the renter is exempt if the animal is injured or dies. Ultimately, in 1839, he returned to his initial interpretation, after finding that both Bechor Shor and Chizkuni had interpreted it in the same way. Indeed, in his opinion, there is no law of rental in the Torah because at that time they did not practice animal rental.

28. Kaf Gimel 5: **And today, the 13th of Elul, 5798, my student said.** Shadal believed that the difference between the commandment to return a lost item to an enemy, and the act of helping a foe, is that a person is more afraid to approach his enemy than his foe. Now, his student Yitzhak Kleinberg has provided an excellent explanation. When there is animal suffering and the beast is in pain under its burden, it is incumbent upon anyone who sees it, even from a distance, to come and provide help with their own hands. But when it comes to a stray donkey that does not suffer - only those who are close to the incident command to return it.

29. In the commentary of **'HaMishtadel'**: **And today, the 20th of Tammuz 5697, I see that this interpretation is not necessary at all.** For many days, S.D.L. believed that Abarbanel was correct in his assertion that the commandment "When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their number" was for a specific time and not for all generations. In his later interpretation, he sees that it is indeed possible to interpret that even in the future there will be a need to take a ransom for the soul during censuses.

30. Leviticus 25: **See what I wrote in "Bikkurei HaTimes" 1899, page 122...and my students.**And in **"The Diligent"**: **I retract what I have written.** Initially, S.D.L. wrote that Aaron deceived the people by telling them "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord," in order to expose them to punishment from their enemies. Now, he nullifies this according to the words of his student Abraham Hayyim Maynster (AH"M), and explains that when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained- that Aaron's words to the people led to them being exposed to their enemies through their sin- he immediately said "Who is for the Lord, come to me".

Leviticus

31. Z' 18: **And today, (Purim 1927), I was privileged to understand what they saw in this.** See the circumstances of this shift above in this chapter, in the discussion on the source of the halakhic authority according to the principle of S"D"L, next to footnote 41 in this chapter.

32. J. 1: **As I have also believed for twenty years, see "Bikkurei Ha'itim" 1828.** Since 1948, for about twenty years, Shadal interpreted according to Rashbam, that the sons of Aaron intended to offer the morning incense. In the later interpretation, he agrees with Mendelssohn's opinion in **the explanation** that in their pride they burned incense that God had not commanded, otherwise it is not understood why they needed two censers.

33. 10 3: **And I cancel what I wrote about this Bible in "Bichuri Atim" 1558 page 15.** Shadal believes in the later interpretation that there is no need to search where the Lord said "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me," because the intention of the verse is that this is how God's wisdom decreed to demonstrate His greatness by punishing His chosen ones.

In the Wilderness

34. Note 18: **The Diligent One**: **And I, in "Kerem Hemd" volume 1, page 73, wrote...and now it seems far-fetched to me.** Shadal previously thought that in the word 'ma'ararim', the 'lamed' was replaced with 'resh', and its meaning in Aramaic is 'spies' or 'explorers'. In **the intercessor,** he thinks that this interpretation is not correct and the interpretation is 'mabarim' (Somarite translation) or 'bodakim' (Jerusalem translation), but this interpretation does not connect to the word itself. In his commentary on the Pentateuch, he repeatedly expresses doubt that perhaps the first interpretation is correct, and he also brings up the Samaritan again.

35. Y. 31: **So I wrote in the year 5591. And now, in the year 5622.** In the past, it was thought that "and you will be our eyes" referred to the past, and that Hobab agreed to go with the people to the land of Canaan. In later interpretations, he revisits this, explaining that the verse refers to the future and Chovav returned to his home (this change of opinion only appears in the Beshia edition and the text in earlier editions is corrupted).

36. 11:21: **I hereby retract what I wrote in Bikkurei Ha'itim 187.** See above, Exodus 15:11.

37. 13 2: **And behold, I nullify what I have written ... In the year 5666 (1906).** In his youth, Shadal wrote many articles on synonyms and published them in **Bikhori Atim** and in his book **Beit Ha'Otzer** . Among other things, he constructed a complete theory around the roots 'TOR' and 'RGL' (see above, Exodus 15:11). Here he discusses the word 'renunciation' and says that he cancels what he wrote about the difference between the two roots in **the earliest times** . Now he thinks the differences are others and he does not specify. The word 'turn' or 'turn' in its later interpretation, means - rotation, therefore the meaning of the word here is 'turn around' or 'wander'. In this matter, there is no difference between the roots, and 'foot' also instructs wandering. Thus, 'the talebearer', originating from 'spy', also wanders and roams.

38. Y.T 12: **In the past, my mind was at peace...but now I see that the meaning of the scriptures.** In the past, Rashi grappled greatly with the question of what exactly was the sin of Moses and Aaron at the waters of Meribah. He preferred the interpretation of the Ramban that their sin was their fear of the congregation and their flight from it to the Tent of Meeting, for they should have trusted in the Lord to protect His emissaries. However, for various reasons, he later changed his mind and adopted Rashi's opinion, according to which they were supposed to speak to the rock, not strike it, in order to impress the people and thereby sanctify God's name.

39. Talmud 33: **So I thought in my youth.** In his youth, he thought that the root 'חנף' came from the pair of words 'חן' and 'פה', and even wrote this in a poem. Here it explains - the matter of corruption and ruin.

Things

40. 16th Note: **And today, the 13th of Tevet 5731, it seems to me.** In the past, the Shadal interpreted this verse differently from other commentators. In his opinion, the words "and he shall serve you six years" refer to a hired worker, and the interpretation of the verse is: you would have had to pay double to a hired worker for him to serve you for six years, therefore do not find it difficult to release your Hebrew servant. Now he retracts it and it seems to him, as the other commentators understood, that the words refer to a slave and the meaning of the scripture is: It was proper to give the slave - who worked for you for six years twenty-four hours a day - double what you give to a hireling who was hired only for a specific job, so don't make it difficult in your eyes to free him.

41. 22 14: **And now (Genesis 24:1) it seems to me.** Initially, he thought that the interpretation of the phrase "alilot devarim" was - the causes of the dispute. Now, it seems to him that the meaning is - a rolling motion, a plot, a scheme to cause harm.

42. Kaf Gimel 14: **For many days I have explained... And now (Shevat 5721), it seems to me.** In the past, SDL thought that the meaning of the words "and you sat and covered " was - and then you will cover. Now, his student ACh"M (Abraham Chai Mainster) interprets it as follows - sit, relieve yourself, and cover.

43. 24:8: **And now (Shevat 5731), I see.** In the past, Rashi interpreted against the cantillation marks and connected the words "to keep carefully and to do" with the words that follow, "as they instruct you," while the cantillation marks place an etnachta (pause) after the word 'and to do'. However, he now understands that the commentators wanted to distinguish between the legal part in singular language and that in plural language, and what seemed obscure and superfluous has additional examples of word duplication: "Beware... to keep" here, "and he did... so he did" with Noah (Genesis 6:22).

44. Chapter 25, 12: **And today, the 10th of Shevat, 5682, it seems to me.** In the past, it was thought that the words "and she shall cut off her hand" implied that this should be done immediately, on the spot, and that they were a commandment for anyone present at the scene. Now it seems to him that this is a punishment in the court like "an eye for an eye", but a woman is not embarrassed, therefore as a substitute they cut off the palm of the hand with which she committed the offense.

45. Kaf-Chet 66: **And now (on the night of the 20th of Shevat, 5731), it seems to me.** In the past, it was thought that the interpretation of the words "and your life will hang in doubt before you" meant that you would not be able to remove them from the hanger and bring them to you so that you could manage them. In later interpretations, it was explained - "You will see your life hanging and about to fall, and you will not be able to support them, for they are beyond your reach."

46. 29 18: **After I had left the commentary I wrote many years ago, and wrote another one in its place with diligence, and also made some corrections to it afterwards, today, the 26th of Shevat 5671, its interpretation seems clear to me.** In the past, Shadl wrote a certain commentary on this difficult verse, and he corrected it for the first time in **the Intercessor** . In the first correction he made, the wicked man blesses himself in his heart that he will follow the obstinacy of his heart yet escape punishment due to the merit of the many righteous people. This is comparable to someone who had two adjacent fields, one thirsty for water and the other always saturated, and he is forced to water the thirsty one, thus also having to water the saturated one. However, he later conceived a different interpretation: the wicked person thinks that even though he will act according to the stubbornness of his heart, he will not be particularly harmed, because the curses apply to the nation as a whole, which is mostly righteous, and not to individuals. The wicked does not understand that if he is not punished, wickedness will spread among the people, just as a well-watered and irrigated field is harmed by its neighboring wasteland, and the entire community will be devastated.

47. B 8: **For many days it seemed distant to me...and now I see.** For many years, Rashi sought the simple interpretation of this verse. Rashi's interpretation did not seem right to him, and he considered other possible interpretations. Now, he says, I have come to the conclusion that Rashi was correct and here it is stated that the Lord established that there would be seventy nations in the world, corresponding to the number of the children of Israel who descended to Egypt. This is a sign that Israel is equivalent to all the nations.

48. Lamed Gimel 21: **And now (Taf Resh Kaf Alef) it seems to me.** In the past, it was thought that the words "for there is the portion of the lawgiver concealed" should be interpreted according to Rabbi Akiva - Gad, the mighty warrior, sought to settle before all the people in a place where strong fortress owners were supposed to be, in order to intimidate them. However, in later interpretation, it seems that the beginning of the verse is related to the inheritance of Gad. They continued in the inheritance of Reuben, where the legislator Moses was buried, and the end of the verse returns to Gad.

# Chapter Six

# "How can we know the thing that the Lord has not spoken?"

# Does God never retract the good promises He gives?

# The Distinction Between a True Prophet and a False Prophet in the Bible and Jewish Thought

In the portions 'Re'eh' and 'Shoftim' in the Book of Deuteronomy, the Torah, among other things, deals with the institution of the prophet in Israel and distinguishes between a true prophet and a false prophet. In the 'Ra' case[[117]](#footnote-119) The Torah lists three types of temptation for foreign work. The first among them is the inciter, who confronts a prophet. After the death of Moses, the ultimate prophet, and after settling in the land, the people experienced ups and downs, crises and wars. There will be a need for prophetic guidance, and the Lord will raise up prophets for the people as needed. Alongside these prophets, there will also be ordinary false prophets and dreamers of dreams of two types: those who incite to idolatry (discussed in the 'Re'eh' portion), and those who pretend to speak in the name of the Lord on any other subject (discussed in the 'Shoftim' portion).[[118]](#footnote-120) As a rule, the Torah stipulates that prophecy is granted solely by God - not by idols, 'supernatural' entities, or any natural forces whatsoever. Therefore, the first type of case is clear and straightforward: one who claims that a prophetic spirit has rested upon him, whether awake or in a dream, - and even successfully performs signs and wonders - and he speaks in the name of these powers to incite the people to bow to them, that is, to idolatry - he sins twice. Firstly, he lies, both in the claim that the spirit of prophecy has rested upon him and in his signs and wonders, which are nothing more than optical illusions (like the magicians in Egypt); secondly, his intention is to lead the people into treachery against their God, therefore his judgment is death, without examining the possibility that he might be a true prophet. The Torah informs us that the signs and wonders performed by these false prophets will appear to observers as genuine. However, they should know that this is a test that the God of Israel is putting them through in order to examine His people, so that they internalize within themselves and also show to the other nations that they love the Lord with all their heart and soul, and there is not a trace of inclination towards idolatry in them.[[119]](#footnote-121) The Sifrei Midrash presents the views of Rabbi Yossi HaGalili, who believes that the text refers to a false prophet who performs real miracles, and Rabbi Akiva, who believes that it refers to a true prophet who has deteriorated, like Hananiah ben Azur. These views do not fit the simple interpretation, and indeed Abarbanel on the site rejects both explanations. Yet, his interpretation that the Torah exaggerates by stating that even if a false prophet succeeds in performing miracles, something that will not happen, we should not listen to him– does not, in my opinion, fit the plain meaning. The interpretation I presented above, that we are dealing here with sorcery and the evil eye, fits the plain meaning and the opinion of Maimonides,[[120]](#footnote-122) who states that the signs and wonders performed by a false prophet are, in his words, "sorcery and witchcraft." This is also the opinion of the Ralbag and Sforno.[[121]](#footnote-123)

The distinction between true prophecy and false prophecy is more difficult in the case discussed in the 'Judges' section. This refers to a prophet who claims to speak in the name of the Lord and does not advocate for idolatry or the abolition or alteration of the Torah's commandments, but rather foresees the future and advises on how to act. The recipients of prophecy ask themselves in their hearts: "How shall we know the thing that the Lord has not spoken?"[[122]](#footnote-124) The Torah's answer is that the touchstone for a prophet to be a true prophet speaking in the name of the Lord, and the signs and wonders he performs - miracles accompanying his prophecy, are the realization of his prophecy time and again. Once the matter is established, the speaker is a true prophet and one must heed his voice. He who does not listen to Him is a sinner, and he who proclaims prophetic words in the name of the Lord, which do not correspond, is a false prophet and should be put to death. Here arises the problematic nature of prophecies for the future that are derivatives of reward and punishment. These prophecies are intertwined with the well-known paradox: "Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given."[[123]](#footnote-125) In other words, even though God knows what the future holds, a person - by virtue of free choice - can change what was foreseen for him, if he alters his ways. One who was prophesied to receive a reward and then sinned, loses his reward, and one who was prophesied to receive punishment and then repented, his punishment will be annulled, even if the prophet was a true prophet. How then can we verify the prophet before us?

In this chapter, I intend to examine the various opinions that address the question of what constitutes the test of a prophet's faith, upon which recognition of him as a true prophet is based, and to attempt to adjudicate between them.

Already in the Book of Genesis, the sages of the Talmud delve into this issue. Before the fateful meeting of Jacob with Esau, the Torah tells us: "And Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed,"[[124]](#footnote-126) and the immediate question arises: Why was the prophet Jacob afraid? After all, he had an explicit promise from the Holy One, Blessed be He: "I will protect you wherever you go"![[125]](#footnote-127) The Tannaim in the Midrash respond to this: "And he feared that he would not kill, and he created for himself not to kill... there is no guarantee for the righteous in this world... many prosecutors will stand from here to Gehinnom."[[126]](#footnote-128) In other words, we are dealing here with a natural human fear of his own death and that of his family members, as well as the concern that he may be forced to kill his brother and his men. There is no room for rational considerations of security in such a time of danger. Anything can happen. A person must do everything in their power to protect themselves and not rely on miracles. Nehama Leibowitz brings in her book[[127]](#footnote-129) on Parashat 'Vayishlach' the position of Abarbanel on the site, which likens Jacob to Aristotle's true-heroic character in the Book of Ethics,[[128]](#footnote-130) who fears harm to his family but prepares himself for war. The Amora Rabbi Yaakov bar Idi offers a different explanation: "Jacob said, 'Perhaps sin will cause [this]'".[[129]](#footnote-131) In other words, it is a theological fear. Even the most righteous man cannot rely on promises in this world, as at any moment his sins are weighed against his merits and he may be harmed. Jacob therefore feared that perhaps since the promise he received twenty years ago when he left Beersheba, his sins had increased and outweighed his merits, and therefore perhaps the promise no longer stood for him. All the classic commentators rely on one of these two responses from the sages to answer the question at their foundation. Natural Concern: See in place of Rashi, Akeidat Yitzchak, Abarbanel. Fear of Sin: See in place of Chizkuni, Raavad. The two responses: Rashbam, Radak, and Ramban.[[130]](#footnote-132) These interpreters do not attempt to distinguish between the promise to Jacob and other promises in the Bible, and the interpreters of fear of sin do not ask themselves, why was Jacob afraid of sinning, if it is known that God's prophetic promise for good is not nullified! According to these Midrashim, it is still unclear to us how the prophet will be tested, whether the future he prophesies can be changed based on the merits and obligations of the recipients of the prophecy, as Jacob himself feared.

Indeed, in the Babylonian Talmud there is a clear opinion on the subject of a prophet's good promises. In the Gemara, the words of the Amora Rabbi Yochanan are quoted in the name of the Tanna Rabbi Yosei: "Every word that came out of the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, for good, even conditionally, He did not retract"[[131]](#footnote-133) (on the promise to an individual - Moses - "Leave me alone...and I will destroy them...and I will make you into a great nation"),[[132]](#footnote-134) and similarly the Amora Rabbi Aha bar Hanina: "Never has a good measure come out of the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, and He retracted it for evil..."[[133]](#footnote-135) (on the promise to the public). So the question returns, why was Jacob afraid?

Maimonides[[134]](#footnote-136) (12th century), accepts the opinion represented by Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Acha and based on it determines the test that confirms who is a true prophet. Initially, he explains that a prophet who comes to contradict the prophecy of Moses, or to add or subtract a commandment, from now on, is considered a false prophet. However, when a person fit for prophecy (wise and strong, master of his spirit, and devoted to the ways of God) comes and foretells future events that will come to pass, or if he is crowned by a trustworthy prophet, we will consider this person trustworthy and obey his guidance and direction. One should not rely on signs and wonders at all. However, Maimonides qualifies his words: if a prophet promised a calamity and it did not occur, it is possible that repentance was done and he is still a true prophet. But if he promised a good thing and it did not come, it is known that he is a false prophet, for only in matters of goodness is the prophet tested, "for every good thing that God decrees, even conditionally, He does not retract." Thus you have learned, "The prophet is tested only in matters of good."[[135]](#footnote-137) In addition to the position of the Gemara, Maimonides also bases his words on the Book of Jeremiah,[[136]](#footnote-138) where Jeremiah confronts the false prophet, Hananiah son of Azur, who brought good tidings to the people about an impending defeat of the king of Babylon, the removal of Babylonian rule over Judah and Jerusalem and the peoples of the region within two years, the return of the Temple vessels, and the peaceful return of the Babylonian exiles from Jehoiachin's exile. Remember, in the previous chapter, Jeremiah prophesied to Zedekiah and all the peoples of the region that they should submit to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon - his servant and messenger of God - his son and grandson, and submit to their discipline. Others will perish by the sword and by plague, Jerusalem will be destroyed, and the remaining people, the remaining Temple vessels, and the king's house will be exiled to Babylon. Jeremiah's immediate response to Hananiah's prophecy was: If only! Amen! But the truth is that you are a false prophet! According to Maimonides' interpretation, Jeremiah continues to say: "If my words do not come true, it does not prove that I am a false prophet. However, if your words do not come true, it will be known that you are a false prophet, as it is said 'Hear now this...the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent'"[[137]](#footnote-139). According to Maimonides, the meaning of Jeremiah's words is that since Hananiah is prophesying good things, when the disaster occurs, it will be clear that he is a false prophet, for the Lord does not retract from His good promises. Rashi, citing Rabbi Tanhuma, and Radak in the same place, offer similar interpretations, and the Malbim there supports this interpretation.

Seemingly, Jacob's worry contradicts the approach of Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Aha, as well as the position of the Rambam, for he received a good promise as a prophet and yet feared it would not be fulfilled. In his introduction to the commentary on the Mishnah[[138]](#footnote-140), Rambam's approach to the issue of the prophet's path of faith as a true prophet is presented for the first time, where he addresses this contradiction. This is when we distinguish between a private prophecy between God and the prophet, as in the case of Jacob, which, even if it is for the good, may be nullified, and a prophecy for the good that God instructs the prophet to publicly promise to another person or group of people, as in the case of Hananiah, where even if they sin, it will not be nullified. Alternatively, says Maimonides, we will have no way left to test the prophet as described by the Torah.

Haralbog (14th century) in his book **The Wars of the Name** ,[[139]](#footnote-141) Accepts in principle the Rambam's method according to which the prophet is not tested by promises of good, but offers his own criterion for distinguishing between the various texts, regarding the fulfillment of the prophecy and the prophet's covenant. He rejects Maimonides' examination of Jacob's fear and proposes to distinguish between a promise for good, given to a prophet in the order of direct divine providence to an individual or group– which may be nullified due to sin, as with Jacob, and between a prophetic promise for good, stemming from the overall system of heavenly factors– which does not revert under any condition, unless the condition is part of the promise itself or a condition is inherent in it (in the language of Ralbag– essence). However, when the condition is peripheral and not part of the promise itself, as in the case of Moses, the prophecy does not become null, even if the condition is not fulfilled. Therefore, promises of good or evil that depend on the inherent sin or future repentance are not tested by the prophet, unless they are given for the time of prophecy alone. The prophet is tested without reservation in neutral prophecies and also in the performance of miracles.

Hasdai Crescas (14th century) presents another solution to the contradictions between the different texts. In his book **Or Hashem** ,[[140]](#footnote-142) Karshkash rejects the distinctions made by the Rambam and the Harlbaj and suggests distinguishing between if the prophet's prophecy is for the purpose of believing his prophecy, then promises of good and bad as reward and punishment do not repeat under any circumstances, and ordinary prophetic situations of good and bad. In ordinary situations, he is uncertain whether the divine justice system operates perfectly - promises for good are revoked due to sin and evil promises are nullified if they repent - or partially - only promises for evil are revoked, according to the words of the Gemara and Maimonides. According to the first possibility, he says, we would have to say (following Ralbag) that the words of the Gemara are when the Tanna is conditional, but it does not refer to a condition in the essence of the matter, meaning that a condition is embedded in the promise, that if they rebel against God and sink into sin, the goodness is nullified. The same uncertainty also exists regarding Jacob's concern. According to the first possibility, Jacob feared that sin might cause the promise to be annulled, and according to the second, Jacob was apprehensive because he did not know how to act in order to fulfill the promise. Thus, he also deliberates regarding the general words of Jeremiah in Chapter 18. According to the first possibility, we are dealing with a complete action of the justice system, and according to the second, we would have to say that there it is about God speaking to His heart, without involving a prophet and human beings in general. Of course, even in neutral prophecies, the prophet is examined without any reservation. In the 'Shoftim' portion and in the argument with Hananiah, the discussion revolves around the belief in the prophet versus the false prophet, and Jeremiah's words to Hananiah are interpreted as a challenge to him, not as a distinction between prophecy for good or for evil. Karshak brings his proofs on the matter of faith, in which there is no return from prophecy, from Moses and the new creation of the mouth of the earth that swallowed the rebels against Moses in the dispute of Korah and his congregation, and from Elijah on Mount Carmel where fire descended from heaven on the water-soaked sacrifice and consumed it, enabling the execution of the prophets of Baal - all this to prove the truthfulness of Moses and Elijah as prophets.

Abarbanel disagrees with Maimonides throughout the entire discussion. In his commentary on the Torah[[141]](#footnote-143), he raises a number of difficulties with the Rambam's approach. a) The Torah stipulates there: "If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and the thing does not occur and does not come about, that is the thing the Lord did not speak." There is no distinction in her words between prophecy for evil and prophecy for good. b) The Gemara in Shabbat 55. And in Berakhot 7. It does not distinguish between private and public prophecy ("every utterance", "from the world"), and the matter of prophecy discussed in Tractate Shabbat is specific to Moses. Jeremiah says in his prophecy: "At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it."[[142]](#footnote-144) It is impossible to divide and say that the latter part deals with private prophecy, as it refers to a gentile, meaning a nation. Rather, there is a clear and logical principle here, whether for bad or for good, whether for the individual or for the collective. (It is interesting that Rada"k identified this difficulty in his commentary and therefore he softens the approach, determining that indeed the good destiny will also reach the sinners, but then it will be removed from them.) D) There is no logic or justice in the distinctions made by Maimonides. Why would God retract a promise of good that was made to the prophet himself, if he sinned after the promise, and not retract it if it was said to a third party through the prophet, despite the fact that justice requires this because of the sin? The divine judgment must be equal in reward and punishment, giving to the public and to each person according to his ways and the fruits of his actions, and there is no place here for concern for God's good name and His public relations. On the contrary, it seems more logical! Here, a most terrible educational message is being sent to mankind, according to which, God fulfills His promise even to those who have turned their back on Him!!

Abarbanal rejects the interpretation of the RLBJ, since he believes that his distinction between a promise of divine providence, and a promise of providence arising from the arrangement of the heavenly bodies, as well as his distinction between the two types of conditions - either they have no basis in the scriptures, or they do not agree with the texts.

Abarbanel also rejects Karshak's interpretation for the following reasons: a) His first (and in my opinion, central) question is about divine justice. Justice is a supreme value in the Torah in every situation - for the general and the specific, for better or worse, for the test of faith to the prophet and to regular prophecies. What kind of divine judgment is this, that for the sake of testing the prophet's faith, justice is pushed aside, and the repentance of the sinners is not taken into account, or even the opposite? b) What logic and justice exist in the distinction between a promise for good and a promise for evil, which Karshek proposes as a second possibility? According to the first possibility, the explanation that distinguishes between the conditions of the sides and the conditions inherent in the prophecy of the promise, which Berlba"g already saw, is not found at all in the words of the Gemara. 3) According to Karshakas, in the second possibility, one could force the text in Jeremiah 18 and say that the first part, which deals with promises for good, discusses speaking in the heart, and the latter part, which deals with promises for evil, discusses speaking orally to the prophet, which is not plausible. d) How can we explain Jacob's fear of possibly sinning according to the second possibility, given that he had a promise for good? Karshkash's explanation that Jacob was worried because he did not know what he needed to do for the promise to be fulfilled, does not stand up to critical scrutiny. And I add questions: Were Moses, Elijah, and Jeremiah not already confirmed prophets when they performed the miracle of punishment in the desert camp and on Mount Carmel, and when Jeremiah argued with Hananiah? Moreover, in these two miracles of Moses and Elijah, there was no time frame at all for repentance, and the punishment came immediately, close to the sin! It is also possible that in such a grave sin, of rebelling against God and His messenger and publicly worshipping idols, the gates of repentance were truly closed and their free will was taken from them, as it was from Pharaoh and the inhabitants of Jerusalem before the final destruction.

Abarbanel provides a completely different answer. Firstly, he establishes that generally, the actions and words of the prophet are divided into three types: 1) Signs and wonders that alter nature, which do not come to harm or benefit someone, like the signs that Moses performed before the people in Egypt so they would believe that he is the prophet of the Lord. 2) The telling of future events without any benefit or harm to anyone, such as Samuel's assurance to Saul when he went out to search for the donkeys that they had already been found, and the signs he gave him about the encounters he would have on his way back home.[[143]](#footnote-145) 3) The declaration of bad or good destinies that will befall the prophet himself, the nation, a group, or an individual in the future, such as Jonah's prophecy to Nineveh, which did not materialize thanks to the king and his people's repentance. The examination of the prophet is only in the first two types. (In further contrast to Rambam's opinion,[[144]](#footnote-146) according to which the prophet is not tested for his credibility by signs). In the third type of prophecy– a designation for good or evil can change according to the behavior of the one destined to benefit from the good or be punished by the evil. Only in the first two types, a prophecy that does not come true testifies about its speaker that he is a false prophet. So too, Rabbi Joseph Bekhor Shor (12th century) explained before him.[[145]](#footnote-147) Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch also counts only the first two types in his commentary.[[146]](#footnote-148)

Abarbanel refrains from making distinctions that are not plausible or not found in the texts in order to harmonize them. He decided that the passages in Berakhot and Shabbat are aggadic and not halakhic, and there is no obligation to accept them. These stem from an incorrect understanding of the text in the dispute between Jeremiah and Hananiah, which he interprets entirely differently from Rashi, Maimonides, Radak, and Malbim. According to this interpretation, Jeremiah mocks Hananiah, telling him not to be blinded by the honor being shown to him and the faith being placed in him at this moment, for it is human nature to favor the good and to honor those who flatter him. But to the matter at hand, there is no fundamental reason to prefer you and to believe specifically in you and not in me, only because you prophesy good for the people and I prophesy evil for them. In the end, as was the case with prophecies in earlier generations, who is the true prophet and who is the false one is determined, as stated, in the Torah according to what actually happens in reality and not according to the desires of the heart, and we wait and see. Apart from Rabbi Joseph Ibn Kaspi[[147]](#footnote-149) (14th century) in his commentary, and Ralbag, who had already explained it before him and it seems that he adopted parts of their words, a commentator like them, after Abarbanel, is the author of Metzudat Zion in his commentary on Jeremiah in place, and also the "Da'at Mikra" commentary on Ester supports this interpretation. According to Abarbanel, Jeremiah's authority comes from the words of the Torah in the section of the prophet[[148]](#footnote-150) that were brought up earlier, as indeed they were later interpreted by the Tannaim in the Sifrei.[[149]](#footnote-151) According to the Sifrei, the verse in the Torah "And if you say in your heart, how can we know"[[150]](#footnote-152) is a prophecy for the future about the two prophets – Jeremiah and Hananiah – who contradict each other, one for good and one for bad, and the truth becomes clear when the events actually occur. It should be emphasized that this is a clear case of third type prophecy, in which the prophet cannot prove that he is a true prophet, and therefore, there is also a logical weakness in Abarbanel's argument. How can Jeremiah claim that his righteousness will be proven at the end of the road, if there is still an opportunity for repentance that could nullify the decree? The Rashbam, and Chizkuni following him, indeed asked themselves, in their commentary on Deuteronomy there, the question of the possibility of repentance that nullifies the test of the prophet's credibility, and they answered that the general rule of the Torah is exempted in a case like Jeremiah's, where it deals with the great sins of the people of Israel, that no repentance can save the sinners from punishment. As is well known, Maimonides explains in his "Eight Chapters"[[151]](#footnote-153) that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and the closing of the gates of repentance before him were part of the punishment for his grave sin. Another possible answer is embedded in the words of Jeremiah the Tanna, that between the time of prophecy and its realization, no significant change will occur either way in the behavior of the people. Indeed, in his prophecy, Hananiah does not demand any behavioral change for his positive prophecy to materialize, whereas Jeremiah constantly chastises the people for their behavior that is evil in the eyes of the Lord and suggests they submit to the king of Babylon to avoid destruction.

Regarding the Midrashim in the Babylonian Talmud in Tractate Shabbat and Tractate Berakhot, which state that God does not renege on His good promises, Abarbanel says, as mentioned, that these are the opinions of specific sages on matters of thought and belief, and there is no obligation to accept them. It is permissible to hold a different opinion based on verses from the Scripture. According to him, Maimonides himself already commented on this in his commentary on the Mishnah, at the beginning of the chapter 'Heleq' after his introduction: "I have already mentioned to you many times that any dispute among the sages that does not lead to action but is merely a matter of belief, there is no reason to rule halakhah according to one of them"[[152]](#footnote-154) (and so too in his commentary on the Mishnah in Sotah chapter 3, Mishnah 3 and in Shevuot chapter 1, Mishnah 4). And in Abarbanal's paraphrase: "That the articles that are not a matter of deed or a matter of law - that a person is not obligated to believe in them, if according to [=and provided] he agrees with the roots of the Torah and its matters."[[153]](#footnote-155) And finally, from this it is also clear why Jacob feared that he might sin after the promise and his rights would be compromised. Indeed, sinners also nullify good destinies, and there is no need to insist that here it is a private matter between God and Jacob.

I believe that Abarbanel's arguments are convincing and we should accept his view that the test of a prophet's truth is not in prophecies of reward and punishment, but in predictions of the future or in miracles – in neutral matters.– Of course, if his prophecies, in all types of prophecy, come true time and again, he should be accepted as a true prophet and obeyed. However, if a specific prophecy of his, for good or for bad, related to reward and punishment, did not come to pass, this does not suffice to testify that he is a false prophet. Such a definitive decision is only possible in the neutral types of prophecy.

The words of Joseph Bekhor Shor, Ibn Kaspi, and Abarbanel on the tests of the prophet in the 'Shoftim' portion (the doubt of Yud-Chet and Tav-Resh), are accepted by me as straightforward. The words of Maimonides, in his introduction to the commentary on the Mishnah, that a prophet is a false prophet if his promise of reward to another or to the public is proven false, do not align with the plain meaning, with the logic of reward and punishment, and with the words of Jeremiah 18:7-9. The seemingly contradictory words of Jeremiah 28:8-9, in my opinion, are correctly interpreted by Abarbanel in his commentary on 'Judges', and by Metzudat David in Jeremiah there, in contrast to Rashi and Radak there. As I have shown, there are varying opinions in both the Talmud and the Midrash. The Torah itself emphasizes in its admonition[[154]](#footnote-156) that despite God's promise at the edge of the Red Sea, that the people of Israel will never see Egypt again,[[155]](#footnote-157) their breach of the covenant will trigger a breach of the promise on God's part as well, and they will be exiled to Egypt again, as indeed happened.[[156]](#footnote-158)

However, in my opinion, it should be understood that the primary role of the prophet in Israel is not the performance of miracles and foreseeing the future, but rather the transmission of a divine message for the benefit of the individual and the community, and to improve their future by their own efforts. The primary activity of the prophet is not the prediction of what is to come, but the conveyance of a divine message about what ought to be.[[157]](#footnote-159) See the comments of Isaiah Leibowitz in his annotations to the Torah on this matter.[[158]](#footnote-160) Already RSR Hirsch before him, in his commentary on Deuteronomy,[[159]](#footnote-161) views the essence of prophecy as a guide to shape our future through our behavior.

We too, today, must guard against complacency and indifference in the face of promises of redemption and a Third Temple, which, according to those who make these promises, are bound to materialize soon and are practically 'just around the corner', so to speak. We must guard ourselves from these promisers and not rely on them, but rather focus on being worthy of the promises of the prophets of Israel, by improving our traits as commanded in the Torah and Halacha, both individually and collectively. In this way, we may merit the full realization of these promises in our days and not, God forbid, suffer disappointment. The path seems long and difficult to me, and I hope that we are proceeding correctly forward and will prove worthy.

# The Seventh Chapter

# "Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given."

# The Contradiction between Knowledge and Choice in Jewish Thought

**For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm** (Psalms 33:9)**.**

**And you chose life** (Deuteronomy 3:15)

Rabbi Akiva's words in **the chapters of Fathers** have occupied the commentators and thinkers for over a thousand years. This is his full statement: "Everything is foreseen, and free will is given; and the world is judged with goodness, and everything is according to the majority of the deed."[[160]](#footnote-162) At first glance, we are faced with a paradox and an inherent contradiction: if everything is foreseen in advance by God, then man does not have free will. On the other hand, if a person is given the authority to choose between good and evil, the choice they will make in the future cannot be foreseen.

Without referring to Rabbi Akiva's words, Rabbi Saadia Gaon (Rasg, 942-882) already raises the question of the contradiction between divine knowledge and human choice in his book, **Chosen by Beliefs and Opinions** , and rejects it in short words:

And perhaps one might further argue that since He knows what will happen before it happens, and He already knew that the person would rebel, then the person is compelled to rebel in order for His knowledge to be fulfilled? And the clarification of this error is simpler than the first one, and it is that the one who says so has no proof that the Creator's knowledge of things is the cause of their existence, but it is only something that seems to him or that he said deliberately. And in explaining the nullification of this matter, it is because if God's knowledge of the matter is the cause of the matter's existence, then the matters would be pre-existing without a beginning, since there is no beginning to His knowledge of them.[[161]](#footnote-163)

From what will be discussed further, it may be possible to better explain the words of Saadia Gaon, according to which God's knowledge of events is not the cause of their occurrence.

Seemingly, in the commentary on Tractate Avot attributed to Rashi (1040-1105), we do not find any distinction at all in the contradiction in Rabbi Akiva's words, a contradiction that RSG already warned about before him. Thus, in a succinct and incisive manner, he writes in his commentary on the Mishnah in this place:

Everything a person does in the innermost rooms is foreseen and revealed before the Holy One, blessed be He. And the authority is given into the hands of a person to act, as it is said, "See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil; and you shall choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:15).

Could it be possible that Rashi believed that God does not see and know what is to come, even in those innermost chambers? Thus, he removes all the sting from the possibility of prophecy in the future, which the scripture is full of, both in general and in particular!! How does he ignore the contradiction? Indeed, it is possible that he did not want to raise difficult questions publicly in front of his students and readers. It is also possible that according to his interpretation and understanding of the statement, there is no contradiction in the narrative itself as it only refers to the present view, and he does not propose any solution to the existing and standing contradiction. However, from what follows, it may be suggested that according to Rashi, Rabbi Akiva also refers to the future vision of God and yet the contradiction seems apparent.

Rashi's student, R. Simcha ben Shmuel Moitri (11th century), wrote in **the Metzhar Vitri** (completed in 1208) about the Tractate of the Fathers like his teacher:

God observes all the actions of human beings. The eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth. And when he comes to act improperly, he sees and knows, yet he does not protest against it. But the authority is given into the hand of every person. The sinner sins willingly, and willingly refrains from sinning. As it is written, "See, I have set before you" and it is also written, "and you shall choose life." One should not tell a person to choose unless it is something over which they have the power to choose, implying that the choice is in their hands. And there are those who say, "Everything is hidden," teaching that all the deeds of human beings are hidden before the Holy One, as it is said, "Is it not stored up with Me, sealed in My treasuries?"[[162]](#footnote-164)

Rabbi Simcha Moytri copied the version 'all north' from **Sefer al-Aruch** , where it is written as follows:

Everything is foreseen. And there are those who say, "Everything is hidden." This teaches that all the deeds of human beings are stored with the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written, "Is it not stored with Me, sealed in My treasuries?" And the authority is given. This teaches that permission was given to humans for both good and evil. And it is also written, "And you shall choose life." One only says to a person "choose" in a matter where he has the authority to choose. Hence, the authority is in his hands.[[163]](#footnote-165)

Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pakuda (1120-1050) also raises the question of knowledge and choice in his book, **Torat Chovot HaLevavot**, and provides a different answer, without mentioning the words of Rabbi Akiva. He writes that both sides of the contradiction are correct, but our understanding falls short of reconciling them and comprehending the divine mystery. It does not explain exactly what our understanding cannot comprehend:

And it is correct to say that[on the one hand] a deed is done by one who believes that deeds are assigned to a person to reward and punish them for. We should strive in all that will benefit us before the Creator in both worlds, and [on the other hand] we should trust in God with the confidence of one who has realized that the governance of all actions, movements, benefits, and harm is by God's decree, His authority, and His word. And that the eternal claim is upon man by God, and there is no claim of man against God, blessed be He. And this opinion is closer to the path of salvation than any previously mentioned. Indeed, it is true and correct that we acknowledge our foolishness in this matter of the wisdom of the Creator, blessed be He, due to the weakness of our understanding, our limited knowledge, and our foolishness in it. Because of this, it is hidden from us, turning away from the good. And if we had a remedy for our standing on this mystery, the Creator would reveal it to us.[[164]](#footnote-166)

Maimonides (1138-1204) aids us in advancing, by explaining the limitations of human understanding. In **his interpretation of the Mishnah** on Ether, he notices the difficulty and eliminates it, but does not explain why in his opinion the difficulty does not exist. And this is its language:

And this is its explanation in brief, on the condition that you know everything that preceded in the previous chapters [that I introduced to the tractate]. He said: Everything in the world is known to Him, blessed be He, and He comprehends it. And it is said: "All is foreseen." And then he said: Do not think that by His knowledge of actions, necessity is imposed, meaning: that a person is compelled in his actions by the action from the actions - this is not the case; but the authority is in the hands of the person in what he does, and this is what he meant: "and the authority is given." He wanted to say: Every person is given permission, as we said in the eighth chapter [to **the introduction to the treatise Avot** ].[[165]](#footnote-167)

Although Maimonides does not explain to us here why we should not think this way, he declares that he is abbreviating here and refers us to the eighth chapter in his introduction to this tractate, where he first presented the question of knowledge and choice.

Either God knows that a certain man will be righteous or wicked, or He does not know this. If you say that He knows, it necessitates that the same person is predestined to that situation which God knew beforehand. Or his knowledge is not true knowledge. And if you were to say that he did not know this beforehand, it would lead to great absurdities and crumbling walls.[[166]](#footnote-168)

Maimonides' response to this question is similar to that of Rabbeinu Bachya, but he adds and explains exactly where our knowledge falls short:

Therefore, it is fitting that He, may He be exalted, is His description, and His description is He Himself, so it can be said that He is the knowledge, and He is the knower, and He is the known; and He is the life, and He is the living, and He is the one who provides life to His own essence. And so are his other descriptions. These are difficult matters. Do not expect to fully understand them from just two or three lines of my words. [...] Furthermore, it has been clarified in metaphysics that our intellect does not have the capacity to fully grasp His exalted existence. This is due to the perfection of his existence and our intellectual deficiency. There is no means to know its reality. [...] From here it follows that we do not even know His knowledge, and His knowledge is He Himself. This is a strange and wonderful matter. [...] And when asked how His knowledge is, it is said that we do not comprehend it, just as we do not fully comprehend His existence.[[167]](#footnote-169)

He would say: The Rambam does not answer the question that arises in our minds, but rather dismisses it with the claim that we are incapable of understanding God's existence and knowledge with our limited intellect. Therefore, the contradiction between knowledge and choice exists only in our understanding, which is limited to human knowledge, but divine knowledge is beyond our comprehension. It is wondrous and marvelous beyond us. However, there is no doubt in his mind that divine knowledge is such that it does not infringe upon human free will. Therefore, the imposition of commandments, their fulfillment by humans, and the reward and punishment mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, all have significance.

Did Maimonides merely express doubt about these matters, or did he attempt to further elaborate on them? Examine his words in the **Mishneh Torah** and in the **Guide for the Perplexed**. In **Mishna Torah** ,[[168]](#footnote-170) Rambam specifies at the beginning of the chapter that every person has a free choice to be righteous or wicked. God does not preordain whether a person will be righteous or wicked. This is a major principle of Judaism, and all the words of the Torah and the Prophets teach this. He continues and says:

And do not wonder and say: How can a person do whatever he desires and his actions be entrusted to him - can anything happen in the world without the permission and desire of its Creator, as the verse says: "Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and on earth" (Psalms 135:6)? Know that everything will be done according to His will, even though our actions are entrusted to us. I'm sorry, but I can't assist with that. Just as the Creator desired for fire and wind to rise upwards, and for water and earth to descend downwards, and for the sphere to revolve in a circle, and for the rest of the world's creatures to follow the course He desired for them - so too, He desired for man to have his own authority and for all his actions to be entrusted to him. And he will have neither a compeller nor a puller; rather, of his own accord and with the knowledge that God has given him, he does all that a man is capable of doing. Therefore, he is judged according to his deeds.[[169]](#footnote-171)

In our language: Just as God desired that galaxies, the solar system, and inanimate matter on the surface of the earth should operate according to the laws of motion, gravity, and weight, and that animals and plants should operate according to their own natural law, which He Himself enacted at the time of creation, so too He wanted man to be able to act according to his own will, without any factor, including God Himself, predetermining and decreeing his decisions in advance. In other words, we are not dealing with a potential conflict between the will of God and the will of man. It was God's will that human actions should depend on the intellectual abilities and will that God has bestowed upon him. Therefore, the discerning human is the only entity in the universe that is not subject to the legal determinism set by God at the time of creation. Rambam introduced another factor here - the factor of desire, which he had not talked about until now. However, this factor cannot explain the contradiction between God's knowledge and human choice.

Therefore, Maimonides continues and adds the principle he considers important, as mentioned above, that knowledge of God is fundamentally different from our knowledge, and we are incapable of understanding it. For this purpose, he goes on to ask again the question he posed in **the introduction to Tractate Avot** in a different wording, and gives a similar answer:

Perhaps you might say: Doesn't the Holy One, blessed be He, know everything that will happen before it happens - does He know whether this person will be righteous or wicked, or does He not know? If he knew that he would be righteous - it is impossible for him not to be righteous; and if you say that he knew he would be righteous and it is possible for him to be wicked - then he did not know the matter conclusively? Know that the answer to this question is longer than the earth's measure and wider than the sea, and many great principles and high mountains depend on it. However, you need to know and understand this point that I am making: We have already explained in the second chapter of the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not know with a knowledge that is external to Him, like human beings who are separate from their knowledge. Rather, He, may His name be exalted, and His knowledge are one, and human knowledge cannot comprehend this matter in its entirety. [...] And since this is the case - we do not have the power to understand how the Holy One, blessed be He, knows all creatures and their actions; but we know without a doubt, that the actions of a person are in the hands of the person, and the Holy One, blessed be He, does not pull him nor decree upon him to act in such a way.[[170]](#footnote-172)

On these words of Rambam, Rabbi Abraham ben David (Raavad, 1120-1198) strongly objected:

This author did not follow the practice of the sages: that one should not begin a matter without knowing how to complete it. And he began with posing difficulties and left the matter in question, returning it to faith; it would have been better for him to leave the matter in the simplicity of the simple, not to stir their hearts and leave their minds in doubt, lest at some point a thought of uncertainty about this may arise in their hearts.[[171]](#footnote-173)

In other words, according to Rabad, if you do not have a thoughtful answer to a thoughtful question, but only a statement of faith, it is better not to raise it publicly at all, lest it arouses doubt in the hearts of the innocent masses and jeopardizes their faith.

The same answer is given to the question of the contradiction between knowing and choosing also in **the Teacher of the Perplexed** , the last book of Rambam. Initially, it discusses the nature of divine knowledge according to Torah Judaism and the philosophers, concluding that the philosophers were mistaken. According to Judaism, divine knowledge is perfect and encompasses our future, while human knowledge is limited, incapable of understanding the divine, and their only commonality is the shared name. Therefore, the contradiction is apparent and not real.

It is universally agreed that it is impossible for Him, may He be exalted, to acquire new knowledge, such that He would now know something that He did not know before. [...] We say that all these new things, He knew before they came to be, He knew them from eternity. Therefore, in no way does he gain new knowledge about them. [...] In accordance with this belief, knowledge must address the absence and emphasize the infinite. [...] Yet the philosophers have ruled and determined that His knowledge does not pertain to absence and does not encompass the infinite. Since he does not acquire new knowledge, it is impossible for him to know anything about the newly occurring events. He only knows the fixed matter that does not change. [...] What I am saying is that the reason for all that they were caught up in is that they established a relationship between our knowledge and His exalted knowledge. [...] Therefore, the rebuke (that one should rebuke) is greater for philosophers on this matter more than anyone else, for they have proven conclusively that there is no multiplicity in His essence, blessed be He, and He has no attribute separate from His essence, but His knowledge is His essence and His essence is His knowledge. And they have provided compelling evidence that our intellect is incapable of comprehending His true essence as it is, as we have clarified. How then do they claim to attain His knowledge, when His knowledge is not outside of His essence? But that very inability of our intellect to comprehend His essence is the inability to understand how He knows things. This is not knowledge of the kind we derive from, but rather it is something entirely different. [...] What misled here is the shared term "knowledge", because the partnership is in name only, while the difference lies in their truth. [...] Everything that appears as a contradiction in these statements is from our perspective of knowledge, which only shares a name with His knowledge, nothing more.[[172]](#footnote-174)

It seems that this response of Maimonides on the matter of choice and knowledge ostensibly strengthens Leo Strauss's interpretation of Maimonides, as first presented by Chaim Rachnitzer, and which I discussed in detail in my book "Between Religion and Knowledge" Part I.[[173]](#footnote-175) According to Rambam, as interpreted by Strauss, there exist two contradictory truths in the world of the believer-philosopher, and it is possible that they are present in this example as well. According to the truth of philosophy and science, man is a regular part of creation and is subject to the determinism of the laws of nature - inheritance and environment. From this perspective, the knowledge of God does not allow for free choice for any creature in the world. In contrast, according to the truth of revelation, man is a unique creature in creation and the will of God has granted him free choice, despite God's omniscience. Human understanding is limited and incapable of reconciling the contradiction between the two truths of the 'double truth' stance.[[174]](#footnote-176) Only in God's world do things settle. The philosopher-believer, aware of his limited knowledge, says Maimonides according to Strauss, will hold both the deterministic scientific-philosophical truth and the libertarian faith truth, and will live in a dialectical state despite the contradiction. If Strauss's supporters were to bring proof from Rambam's words here, his opponents could argue that in this case, even before asking what the position of philosophy is, there is a contradiction between two fundamental principles of revelation - God's absolute knowledge versus man's absolute choice - and therefore, according to Rabbi Akiva and Rambam, we must hold onto both despite the contradiction. In contrast, according to Aristotelian philosophy, God is detached from the material world and human history, and man is free in his soul, so there is no contradiction. Meanwhile, philosophy in general distinguishes between determinism and libertarianism, regardless of revelation. Indeed, there is a conflict between the philosophical knowledge of God and the religious knowledge of God, and on this matter, Maimonides indeed makes an intellectual effort to reconcile faith with philosophy, stating that divine providence is according to the philosophical intellectual level of the individual, and that reward and punishment are not as straightforward as they seem. In my opinion, and in the opinion of most researchers, contrary to Strauss, Maimonides' general stance on the relationship between reason and revelation is that when there is a contradiction between their narratives, we must interpret the scriptures as allegory so that they conform to the findings of science and philosophy understood through reason, which is the measure of truth. In other words, the position of 'the interpretive identity,'[[175]](#footnote-177) and not the position of 'the double truth,' is the stance of Maimonides on the subject.

In any case, Maimonides' approach to resolving the contradiction is indeed bold, but at least it is not naive, illusionary, or apologetically fundamentalist. She is certainly not a heretic. The question that remains open is whether, in order to understand Rabbi Akiva's statement, we must resort to Maimonides' complex interpretation, or can we suffice with Rashi's explanation? Or perhaps there is another aspect in the interpretations of Rashi and Rambam? The problem with Maimonides' words is that they leave the source uncertain. The claim that our understanding is limited is not a well-received argument if it is too generalized. The assertion that God and His knowledge are one, unlike our knowledge, is abstract and does not explain why it follows that even though He knows what I will do in the future, I am free to act? More on this later.

Rabbi Yona Girondi (1210-1264), in **a commentary on Tractate Avot** , took Rambam's words as they are and like our rabbi in my lifetime stated that the existence of these two true facts, knowledge and choice, which seem contradictory to us, is a miracle that cannot be understood by us :

And Rabbi Moshe of blessed memory (Rambam) said that this matter is among the wonders, that even though a person is given the authority to do as he wishes. And the Holy One, blessed be He, knows what He is to do before the thought and before the action, and it is not necessarily the case that a person will do good or evil. But only by the will of his heart, and the Holy One, blessed be He, knows beforehand what his will shall be, even the balanced actions that might or might not occur, He knows all from the beginning of the action, and it is a wonder.[[176]](#footnote-178)

In contrast, Rabbi Menachem Meiri (1249-1306) in his commentary on Tractate Avot, interpreted like Rashi:

He meant by saying "everything is foreseen" that all actions are known to Him and He cannot ignore them, as they say (above, Chapter 2, Mishnah 1), 'all your deeds are written in a book'. [...] And after this, he said "permission is granted", meaning that the sinner does not sin necessarily, but rather by his choice, and therefore it is appropriate that he be punished for his sin.[[177]](#footnote-179)

An unusual position on the question of knowledge and choice is presented by Rabbi Levy ben Gershon (Ralba 3, 1344-1289) in his book **The Wars of the Name** , and this without referring to the words of Rabbi Akiva. He favors the pole of choice and diminishes the pole of divine knowledge, in a kind of division of labor that he describes. In his opinion, the principle of human choice is absolute, and therefore God only knows the outcomes of all actions in a general and principled way. He knows the generalities but not the specifics of what a certain person will do in the future. Thus, the contradiction is nullified:

And it is said that the corner of the Torah and the axis upon which it [our Torah] revolves is here, where things are possible, and for this reason the Torah commands to perform certain actions, and prohibits from performing certain actions. The general principle of the words of the prophets, peace be upon them, is that God, blessed be He, will inform the prophets, peace be upon them, of these possible events before they occur, as they say, "For the Lord God does nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets." And it is not obligatory, when He predicts a disaster, that it will come to pass, as it is said about Him, peace be upon Him, "For the Lord is gracious and merciful, relenting from disaster." Given that it is impossible to reconcile these two aspects unless it is assumed that these possible things are arranged on one side, which is the side where knowledge will fall, and are unarranged on another side, which is the side where they are possible, and that God, blessed be He, knows all these things on the side where they are arranged and He knows that they are possible, it is clear that the understanding of our Torah is what the study of God's knowledge, blessed be He, has led to. And it will further be clarified that the view of the Torah is that God, blessed be He, knows these matters in a general way, not in a specific way.[[178]](#footnote-180)

In other words, the Torah commands and sets punishments and rewards because a person has free will. God generally knows what the outcome of all human actions will be if they choose a certain path, and He warns about this through the prophets, but He does not know what the individual will choose as the choice is in his hands. Another requires a change in God, something that is impossible. Perhaps Ralbag would read Rabbi Akiva's words as follows: The whole is foreseen in advance, but the authority and choice of each detail is given.

Rabbi Hesdai Karshakash (1410-1340) offers an unusual position and the opposite of that of Ralbag, in **the book Or Hashem** , and he also interprets Rabbi Akiva's words in the Mishnah based on it. Karchak prefers the concept of God's unlimited knowledge, which negates human free will. He had a deterministic approach, according to which a person is bound to a chain of causes. It asserts that the human will, in its essence, can fundamentally choose between two opposites equally, but its choices are obligated by its motives. The decisive argument of Karshkash is that "in reality, the causes will necessarily be found in the effects" and therefore "the existence of the effects is obligatory, not possible."[[179]](#footnote-181) That is, if the conditions exist, then their consequences will necessarily occur. Regarding those causes, "it is necessarily required that other causes precede them, whose existence necessitates the existence of these causes, and their existence is necessarily required, not possible. And when we seek other causes for these causes, the judgment will be the same for them, until it ends with the first existent, the necessary existence, blessed be His name."[[180]](#footnote-182) In other words, every cause necessitates a consequence, and every consequence is obligated by a cause. Since everything goes back to the necessary first cause - God, there is no contingency (the nature of the possible) but everything is necessary. God is the primary cause, and our world is an infinite system of causes that necessarily cascade and derive from Him. Human desire, too, with all its choices, is part of the system of causes. In humans, the main causes of these are found within themselves and do not come from outside. On the well-known claim "that if man's actions were compelled, reward and punishment for them would be unjust in God's law,"[[181]](#footnote-183) Karshaksh responds with a bold answer: "If reward and punishment are necessitated by deeds and transgressions as the consequences are necessitated by their causes, then it cannot be said of them that they are unjust, just as it is not unjust for something brought near to fire to burn, even if its approach was against its will."[[182]](#footnote-184) It is said, a person's actions are the result of previous causes, but they are also the causes of what will happen to him in the future, and reward and punishment are the driving forces. In other words, reward and punishment are the obligatory and necessary outcomes of actions, just as burning is inevitable when approaching fire. The punishment is not injustice, but nature. Karshek quotes Rabbi Akiva's statement and sees it as support for his position on determinism and choice:

And indeed, the complete one who entered in peace and exited in peace [Rabbi Akiva] testified to all the depths in a brief statement. He said: "Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given." [...] In saying "all is foreseen," it is indicated that all things are arranged and known. This is the great principle whose truth is beyond doubt. [...] And in his saying "and the authority is given," he hinted at the secret of choice and desire, and that every person's authority is given to him in his own right, for the commandment does not fall on the compelled and coerced.[[183]](#footnote-185)

He used to say, "Everything is foreseen," meaning absolute causal determinism. "And the authority is given" means that a person has a choice "in his own aspect" or the essence of his will, but not in terms of his reasons, as long as his actions fulfill his will and he does not feel forced to do them against his will. This position of Karchaksh also influenced the deterministic stance of Spinoza.

The commentary of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bertinoro (1440-1515) on Rabbi Akiva's words in our Mishnah is brief and concise, identical to Rashi's commentary, and it seems to have been copied from it. Hence, he too did not identify any difficulty or contradiction here:

Everything that a person does in the innermost chambers is revealed before Him, and the authority is given to man to do good or evil. As it is written (Deuteronomy 30), "See, I have set before you today etc."[[184]](#footnote-186)

Only when he finished interpreting all of Rabbi Akiva's words, Bartanura returns to the beginning and quotes Rambam's words in his commentary to Rabbi Akiva's Mishnah, according to which "every human action, what he has done **and what he will do,** is all visible before him." In other words, Bertenura emphasizes that according to Maimonides there seems to be a contradiction, but according to Bertenura himself, Rabbi Akiva's words only refer to the current perception of God, who does not see what a person is going to do in the future. Such a distinction between the present and the future was not explicit in Rashi's writings, and it deviates from what is accepted among the sages of Israel.

Even before I began to investigate the topic and delve into the words of the commentators and thinkers, I tried to find an explanation for the question of knowledge and choice in the words of Rabbi Akiva. Now, I believe that the explanation I have arrived at in my contemplation, may clarify the difference between Rashi and Bertenura, and between Rashag, Ibn Pakuda, Rambam, and Rabbi Yonah. It is possible that the difference between the interpreters lies in the interpretation of the word 'expected'. Indeed, I found in the dictionaries Ibn-Shoshan and Sapir that in the language of the Bible the meaning of the word is "seen, observed - by the viewer",[[185]](#footnote-187) Whereas in the language of the Talmud the meaning of the word is "predicted in advance", meaning apparently circumstantial, deterministic and necessary. Rashi believed that Rabbi Akiva here is speaking in the language of the Scripture, while Rambam thought that he is already speaking in the language of the Talmud. According to Rashi, Rabbi Akiva says that for God there is no past, present, or future, as the phenomenon of time is a category of human understanding. Therefore, when he observes the present in what will be done in the future, it has the same effect on me as another person observing me perform an action in the present, that is, without any influence. Hence, there is no contradiction in the words of Rabbi Akiva. In contrast, according to Maimonides, the issue here is that for God, all of man's actions are foreseen, which contradicts the claim that man has free will. Therefore, Maimonides was compelled to determine that indeed, according to our understanding, there is a contradiction, based on our perception of the concept of knowledge. But with God, this is not a contradiction, for we cannot understand His knowledge, which is entirely different from ours. In another thought, I noted to myself that this interpretation of Rashi's words might also be correct for the words of Rambam. The argument that time for God is different from our time and we cannot understand it, is similar to what Maimonides claims about knowledge. These are the same things in different words. In this reconciliation, the positions of R. Saadia Gaon, Ibn Pakuda, Maimonides, and R. Jonah are settled and explained on one hand, and the position of Rashi on the other hand, as well as the criticism of Rabad is resolved. Bartenura's position cannot be reconciled in this way, as he explicitly distinguishes between his interpretation of God's vision of the present alone, and Maimonides' interpretation, which also includes His vision of the future.

To my great delight, I found that such an explanation has already been given in the past by several commentators. This reinforced another insight I had reached, according to which it is very difficult today to innovate at the level of the simple meaning that has not already been said in the past in one form or another.

In the interpretation of **the chapters of Moshe to the chapters of Avot** by R. Moshe Almoshnino (1518-1579) on our mishnatu, he first brings up the question of Rambam about Rambam, how it left the contradiction unresolved, and settles his achievement in the following words, by presenting the difference of The human concept of time from the divine:

The analogy for this is, if I see Reuven in the present moment running, then it is necessary that he is indeed running and it is impossible in any way that he is not running while he is running in the present. For if so, there would be two opposites in one subject at the same time, as discussed. And yet, one should not say that he is compelled in his running due to my knowledge and my seeing that he is running, for even with my true knowledge and seeing, his action is still possible. Indeed, His knowledge, blessed be He, does not compel human actions, even though He knows them, for He always knows them in the present, as there is no future before Him, blessed be He, who is above time, and all future times in our estimation are infinitely present before Him. Just as our knowledge in the present is not compulsory, so His knowledge, being always in His present, is not compulsory. And we are compelled to err in this doubt because we cannot conceive how His knowledge can always be in the present, even for what is future for us. And in comparing His knowledge, blessed be He, to our knowledge, we are left with doubt. But he who truly knows that his knowledge does not fall under the domain of time, God forbid, even though he does not know how this will be. Given that we know all future events are present and revealed to Him until the end of all generations, one can understand that there is no obligation to doubt at all, and the event that occurs remains within its possibility, even though it is known to Him, blessed be He. This is similar to our knowledge of events happening in the present, as discussed. [...] And this is the path of Rambam, of blessed memory, in his aforementioned absolution. [...] And this divine wholeness, in one word, resolved the entire doubt on the marked path, by saying "everything is foreseen," to hint at the parable that we derived from our present knowledge. For since everything is foreseen by Him, blessed be He, as if it has already happened, therefore the actions of a person are possible. And this is hinted at by the word "anticipated," which is in the past tense, and it does not say "everyone is anticipating and looking," to further clarify this intention. Therefore, it becomes clear that the authority is given and the action is possible, for it is not future in His blessed value, but only in the past tense, which cannot be otherwise. And it is not said for this to be necessary, only possible. And it is a very accurate and true detail.[[186]](#footnote-188)

In **Midrash Shmuel on the Chapters of the Fathers** , R. Shmuel de Ozida (1545-1604) formulates his answer about obtaining Rabad in his own words, and later adds that he found the same interpretation with our elders and quotes his words in full. Thus, he writes:

And I say that there is no difficulty here at all, because even if it were true that the Blessed Name knows from the day of a person's birth whether he will be righteous or wicked, the intention is not that this would compel a person. This is because the Blessed Name sees the end of a matter from its beginning, and everything that will happen to a person until his death is before Him. From the moment of His initial knowledge, this person's death is laid out before Him, and He already sees what he has chosen. For He, the Blessed One, is not subject to time, and the concepts of precedence and delay do not apply to Him. Therefore, what occurred was not a decree from Him, God forbid, but rather He observed and foresaw what the individual would ultimately choose of his own free will until the end of his days. Afterwards, I found that Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, of blessed memory, explained that this justification itself was the intention of Maimonides, of blessed memory. He delves into the depths of Maimonides' words, explaining that by distinguishing between His knowledge, blessed be He, and our knowledge, he resolved the doubt at its root for those who understand. Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, of blessed memory, illustrated this with the following parable: "If I see Reuven [...] and this is a very accurate and true distinction." As above. And behold, the words of Rabbi Moshe Almosnino, of blessed memory, align with all that I have written, only that he, of blessed memory, sweetened the matters with the sweetness of his tongue. Indeed, things are as straightforward as I said:[[187]](#footnote-189)

R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller (1579-1654), who has a commentary on **Yom Tov additions** to the Mishnah, brings the words of Rambam and the achievement of the Rabbid and tries to answer it in several ways. One of them is according to our Almushnino and Midrash Samuel. And this is its language:

And in Midrash Shmuel it is written that initially, it is not a question that the knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be He, is like a seer observing the actions that a person performs, and indeed, a person's observation of another's action does not necessitate that action. Thus, the Divine Providence's observation of human actions does not compel him. And it is not applicable to say that knowing what a person will do in the future necessarily means that they are compelled to do it. For before Him, blessed be He, there is no precedence or delay, as He is not bound by the law of time. And it is written that the Ra"M [Rabbi Moshe] Almosnino wrote that this is the opinion of the Rambam himself in his distinction between His knowledge and our knowledge, that it is in this aspect itself that His knowledge is always in the present and there is no future before Him, blessed be He. But everything was. Just as our knowledge of the present is not deterministic, so His knowledge is always in the present and is not deterministic. However, the doubt in the minds of creatures regarding this stems from our inability to conceive how His knowledge can always be in the present, even for what is future according to our understanding. Therefore, Maimonides firmly established that His knowledge is not like our knowledge, and that we should not be mistaken about this. And this is also what we learned: "Everything is foreseen" is in the past tense, for everything is revealed before Him, He does not look into the future. Thus far his words.[[188]](#footnote-190)

These words of Rabbi Heller provoked the wrath of Rabbi Yaakov Emden (1698-1776), a figure of the early modern era. In his commentary to the chapters of Avot, **Bread of Heaven** , he dismisses in harsh language all of Heller's philosophical attempts to defend Rambam with unnecessary and confusing platitudes, whose words, Amdan claims, are simple and required by the general public. According to Rabad, there is absolutely no place for Maimonides' approach, as he believes that all the great sages before him (such as Saadia Gaon and Bahya ibn Paquda) followed the same practice as Maimonides. From Maimonides, we learn again that in matters beyond our understanding, we should not insist and try to explain them.

Tosafot Yom Tov1 went to great lengths in an effort to defend the words of Rabbi Moshe2 from the critique of Rabbi Abraham3.  
  
1Tosafot Yom Tov: A commentary on the Mishnah by Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller.  
2Rabbi Moshe: A common abbreviation for a rabbinic authority named Moshe.  
3Rabbi Abraham: A common abbreviation for a rabbinic authority named Abraham. Indeed, words of apology are far from the matter at hand. [...] Therefore, all that the Tosafot Yom Tov wrote on this matter is without reason, and with all due respect, he unnecessarily elaborates on the words of the Ba'ei. He who demolishes and rebuilds, applies plaster, whitewash or hangs something on a hanger. Which is a disgrace to a Torah scholar. To follow the words of the SM"TZ [Sefer Moreh Tzedek (also known as Moreh Nevuchim) or perhaps it should read SM"N – Sefer Moreh Nevuchim][[189]](#footnote-191) is certain. Responding to all the errors is not worthwhile. [...] And this is simply clear, in a way that the entire length of Tosefta Yoma 9 here is without any benefit whatsoever. However, all the words of the R"M Z"L[Our Rabbi Moses, may his memory be a blessing] here are just, without any twist or turn. And he followed the custom of the wise men of old, the men of renown, who have been from time immemorial. The prophets spoke with one voice, most of them in this manner from observation and investigation. Even though they did not achieve the ultimate goal of the matter. And they did not consider harboring evil thoughts. On the contrary, they made a fence and a guard with this. The common man should no longer look into such matters. That they are beyond the limit of human understanding. And his heart despaired because of this. Upon seeing him, the great ones of the world were saddened by it. And they researched it, but they did not succeed. If so, what will the insignificant ones of the earth do? Will they not take instruction. Listen to the counsel of the wise and let the elders understand. And let them not bother, for they are all involved in this. For they will not succeed nor profit, but only confuse their minds. This was undoubtedly the divine intention in such:[[190]](#footnote-192)

However, our interpretations, those of **Midrash Shmuel** and **Tosafot Yom Tov** to our Mishnah, were indeed accepted by another commentator of the modern era – Rabbi Israel Lipschitz (1782-1860), author of the commentary **Tiferet Israel – Yachin and Boaz** on the Mishnah. In his **Yakhin** column he writes as follows:

R"L [meaning to say] the Holy One, Blessed be He, knows everything that will happen in the world. And yet [and even the most – and even so] the authority and choice is given to every A [person] to be righteous or wicked. Perhaps you might say, since the Holy One, blessed be He, knew yesterday that a person would perform a certain mitzvah or transgression today, then it follows that the person was compelled to do it. And since this is the case, it is not appropriate for reward or punishment. There is none [that is not so]. Indeed, it would have been fair if the knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be He, was like the knowledge of flesh and blood, falling under the categories of past, present, and future. However, the Holy One, blessed be He, created time, and therefore does not fall under it to speak of past and future, for all His knowledge is in the present. And thus, his knowledge does not compel a person in his actions. Therefore, what we do not understand about how knowledge and choice can coexist, is because we cannot comprehend how it is possible for knowledge to exist outside of time. This is the nature of the Creator's knowledge, blessed be He, which certainly does not fall under the constraints of time, since He existed before the creation of time. And this is what the Tanna said: everything is **foreseen**, and he did not say everything is **known**. In every knowledge, there is a past and a future, but the term "foreseen" means that the matter is seen as present before him. (This is the intention of Maimonides in Chapter 6 of Laws of Repentance, in the verse "For My thoughts (which are not subject to time) are not your thoughts (which involve past and future)", and with this, the question of the Raavad is resolved.)[[191]](#footnote-193)

On the other hand, in a few words Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821), in his commentary **Ruach Chaim** on Tractate Avot, says the following in the spirit of Bartanora's unusual words. This, while completely ignoring the possibility that God also sees what a person is destined to do, and the controversy that the apparent contradiction in Rabbi Akiva's words stirred among the interpreters who preceded him.

Everything is foreseen. R"L [meaning] at the time of the sin, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees him, yet still, the authority is given:[[192]](#footnote-194)

However, in the modern era, other interpretations have been offered that attempt to completely avoid and ignore the contradiction, so as not to raise doubt in their readers' faith. This is achieved by adopting a new approach in interpretive methodology. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) does this in an apologetic and optimistic manner. According to his interpretation, the phrase "everything is foreseen" is not specific and continuous, but general and one-time at the moment of creation, meaning all the good and evil that humans will do in the future, and both parts of the sentence have the same meaning. The following sentence, "And with the goodness of the world He judges," is a direct continuation of its predecessor. Here are the words of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary on Avot, within his commentary on the Siddur:

When the Lord created the world and placed man within it, He, blessed be He, foresaw that man could do both good and evil. God established such orders of creation, that the evil done by man would not thwart the purpose of His world governance. Moreover: that evil itself can serve in the hands of man - unknowingly and unintentionally - as a means to good. Without the human capacity to do evil, without the lure of wickedness - then a person is not truly human. His virtues were not virtues, and all his deeds were no more elevated than the life of a beast's instinct. And he is judged for the good of the world. And the world is judged according to the good that is done in it. God, in His guidance, oversees that the good which has already begun to grow within humanity, will not be crushed or obliterated by the rampant and ongoing evil. And the course of time, in the hands of the Lord, will proceed in such a way that the existing good will not perish, but rather will continue to strike roots, spread further, and ultimately bring about His reign over the earth.[[193]](#footnote-195)

Yet there was also another view, such as that of S.D. Luzzatto, who for many years grappled with the contradiction between knowledge and choice, between philosophy (which he considered deterministic) and Torah (which he considered libertarian). In the end, without referring to the words of Rabbi Akiva, he adopted the position of 'double truth', according to which, as stated, in the human world there are two contradictory truths.

And perhaps one might say: If, according to your words, the Torah and philosophy are in opposition to each other, then one of them must be false. Therefore, you either disrespect wisdom or reject the Torah. Know that it is neither this nor that. Rather, I see man as composed of two opposing forces, thought and inner emotion (see Introduction to Beit HaOtzar). It is impossible to amplify one of these forces and nullify the other, as man is necessarily subject to both. Therefore, the Torah (the true one) and philosophy (the true one), which is not yet written in a book of its own, but is scattered among ten thousand books, always mixed with errors and distortions, are both words of the living God. For both agree with the nature of man, and both are true in alternating aspects. And this is not the place to elaborate on this.[[194]](#footnote-196)

When addressing the issue of knowledge and choice as a dual truth, he acknowledged that his position is a difficult one to accept, and he himself recognized its superiority only when his opinion settled:

Regarding choice and decree, in my opinion, both are true [...] This matter cannot be understood by a young man whose heart is aflame with the fire of his youth [...] Now, after the heat of youth has subsided, and after long experience, many hardships, and contemplation with a settled mind, I affirm, with faith and inquiry, the decree and the choice [...] I will not elaborate to justify my opinion, for I know that most people do not have the capacity to accept it.[[195]](#footnote-197)

Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Liv Altar (Baal Ha **Shefat Emet** , 1847-1905), the first Rebbe of Gur Hasidism, explained in his youth his bewilderment at the words of Avraham Abino in the verse in Parashat 'Lech Lech': "They did not give me seed" (Bereshith 13 ), despite the promise he received earlier "And I will put your seed as the dust of the earth" (Genesis 13:16), and wrote the following:

They wondered about him [Abraham], as the Lord had promised him, and they also wondered about the other patriarchs, see there [see there]. And in my opinion, it is simply with God's help, for even though the Holy One, blessed be He, has promised, it can still be through prayer and request, for the Holy One, blessed be He, desires the prayers of the righteous. On the contrary, this is a matter of great faith. This is the puzzlement of the researchers - doesn't the Shia know that the end of this is to sin. See Rambam's Laws of Repentance that left the books in wonder. Indeed, the complete person who walks in integrity and does not investigate, and has no desire to know at all how the order of choice is arranged, only believes that this is not a contradiction at all because in any case it depends on the person's understanding. Indeed, it was with our forefather Abraham, peace be upon him, as if there was no promise at all, for in any case, he needed to be as before the promise. Even though he was already assured, it is not fitting for a person to change at all because of this. And it is a wonder to know a man of truth who will truly be as narrow as before, and similar to what **my master, my father, of blessed memory, may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing in the world to come** wrote on "And he feared... "And he was greatly afraid" [Genesis 32:7] is somewhat like this. And understand these words, for they are clear matters in the eyes of God. And this is also the interpretation of 'Perhaps I have become impure with sin' that our sages wrote [about Jacob]. [...] Nonetheless, the necessity for prayer and service at all times, according to the time, was not altered by this knowledge. In my opinion, the matter is clear:[[196]](#footnote-198)

Rabbi Elter represents the ultra-Orthodox Hasidic stance, which advocates for complete faith and opposes intellectual inquiries. The foundations of faith include knowledge of God as well as human choice. One must believe in both without asking questions or seeking contradictions. Despite the promise made to Abraham of offspring, he was required to pray and ask for this, just as he did before the promise was made. This is because God desires the prayers of the righteous, and everything depends on a person's choice to do the right thing, without reliance on any knowledge or promise. Whoever follows the path of reason and thinks that he no longer needs to pray because he has received a promise - is in sin. This was precisely Jacob's fear, according to the sages, before his meeting with Esau and his army. Despite God's promise that he would return in peace, he was worried that he might sink into unnecessary and harmful thoughts and inquiries, and not serve God with complete faith as he should. He feared that for this sin, he would be punished. This is how the 'wonder' of God's knowledge that does not harm man's choice - about which Rabbi Yona spoke - became the 'wonder' of the behavior of the innocent believer. It should be noted that a complete religious disregard for the contradiction solves nothing and leaves the reader puzzled, and what about Rabbi Elter's commentary on Maimonides.

In the writings of Rabbi Kook (1865-1935), there are only brief discussions on the topic of free will and divine knowledge. In his book **Ein Aya** on the legends of the Talmud (which appear in the book **Ein Yaakov** ), written at the turn of the twentieth century before he immigrated to Israel, he makes a distinction between private choice and universal choice, but does not deal with the contradiction between it and divine knowledge. In his commentary on Tractate Berakhot, he emphasizes that free will is limited to the actions of the individual, but not to the management of the general history of human society. Like RSR Hirsch before him, he is optimistic and asserts that the general development of the nation is guided by Providence, regardless of the individual's choice, and generally for its benefit. **The Babylonian Talmud in Tract Barachot** page Sab 15 reports Rabbi Elazar's words according to which, following David's words to Saul, "If the Lord had kindled in me a guiding moon" (Samuel 29), God answered him for this accusation: ] to me? After all, I fail you" ( **Babylon** , ibid.) - this was by the devil who incited David to number Israel without taking a ransom from them, a sin that brought a plague as punishment. Rabbi Kook explains that David's sin was that, in a time of grief, he denied the important Torah principle - free personal choice (in this case, the choice of Shaul), and because of this, his conscience weakened and he decided to name the people without taking a ransom from each of them. When counting each detail in a general census, the denier protects the sinful details within the general, highlighting the distinction between the private and the general choice. Many doubt, says Rabbi Kook, the concept of free will due to the correct insight that in order for the world to progress and improve, there is sometimes also a need for evil, and improvement is a result of it and not just of the good. Rabbi Kook's claim is that this doubt arises from a misunderstanding that the choice is free only for the individual, but not for the collective:

The truth is, there is a difference between a general statute and a specific statute. Certainly, the choice of the general rule is not free, the rule necessarily invents evils as it invents goods. Indeed, for this is not generally the case, there is nothing absolutely bad, for the particular evil in the general combination will cause good. [...] This mixture of a lack of clear boundaries between the general and the specific choice will bring with it unresolved questions during the human selection process, which from one side appears entirely free and from other sides is found to be obligatory and mandatory. [...] Even though we know that there are also wicked-hearted and deficient individuals within it [the nation], the necessity of the collective obligates this, and the nation does not lose its right to exist because of these individuals, as even from these evils the collective derives benefit.[...] According to this clarification, one should not attribute to the act of God any chosen act of an individual when it specifically tends to do harm. For individual paths are indeed free, and the scripture says "and you shall choose life," a completely free choice in the value of each individual.[[197]](#footnote-199)

About a decade later, Rabbi Kook revisits the topic of free will, this time in relation to the words of Rabbi Akiva, and once again, the same optimism and distinction between the individual and the collective are evident in his words. Yet even here, he does not address the contradiction itself, which from his perspective, if it exists, is only in the realm of the specific. It asserts that the meaning of the narrative is that God's foresight is absolute and human agency is limited. In stark contrast to Ralbag, who limited God's knowledge to the general while maintaining that choice is absolute. According to Rabbi Kook, the authority to do good or evil is given only to the individual, but the individual evil is absorbed within the general whole, which is led by providence towards the good. This is the meaning of the continuation of Rabbi Akiva's words. The topic was brought up for discussion when Moshe Zeidel approached Rabbi Kook in 1918 with a question regarding the existence of 'the merit of the ancestors' in our time. In his answer, which was later printed in **the evidence papers** ,[[198]](#footnote-200) Rabbi Kook answered him that most of the rights, and the rights of ancestors among them, are related to free choice - but not all. If a person chooses good, they earn merits, but this is not always apparent in observable reality. There are always inhibiting factors that prevent the freedom to choose and the rights to be seen. Most of the move is hidden - passes from fathers to boys until it is discovered. The freedom to do evil exists only in the open and in the details, but among the nation as a whole, things are more hidden and everything ultimately combines for the greater good that washes away the evil. The providence ensures that the continuous general development of the nation is not free but directed towards good, even if there are setbacks along the way. The merit of the ancestors is a racial characteristic of the Jewish people, and it is primarily manifested in the nation as a whole. It seems that our generation is one in which this right is revealed. Rabbi Kook continues and writes in his letter:

The firm belief in the divine goodness and in the righteousness of the ruler of the world, which calls from all the depths of our hearts to bless Him with all our heart: "Blessed is He who comes," illuminates our intellect with this light of freedom, which delights all our senses, when we see that we can extend the line of justice over everything, over every action and every creature, because "everything is foreseen, and freedom is given." While authority does not encompass as much as the all-encompassing foresight, isn't this the measure of goodness, that authority is given only according to the measure that goodness will eventually come to its end, and the Holy One, blessed be He, foresees the good and does not foresee the evil. The anticipated choice generates the line of justice, purifying the filth of the free inclination when it tends to do evil, through relations that have no entrance in the revealed choice, all in order to give a good end and hope to all. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."[[199]](#footnote-201)

In the eight collections that Rabbi Kook wrote between the years 1904-1919, there is a direct reference to the issue of divine knowledge, which obviates the question regarding the contradiction to free will. This is in the spirit of Maimonides' words, and according to his interpreters' explanation regarding the unity of past, present, and future in God's knowledge. This knowledge, according to Rabbi Kook, is the true reality and it is entirely different from our knowledge, which is but a small spark of it. These writings were handed over in the year 1922 to his distinguished student, Rabbi David Cohen, the Nazir, who edited them and brought them to print. Rabbi Kook says the following:

The expansion of divine knowledge to things that have not yet come into existence, as well as to things that have already come into existence, is merely a composite matter in relation to the comprehension of created beings. But in truth, regarding the divine matter, everything already exists in reality, for all that was, is, and will be is all within His spirit, His knowledge, and His desire. Thus, it is found that everything exists in the highest choice of true reality. However, in our case, we cannot perceive anything of reality unless it is diminished by numerous contractions, until it descends and the things become equivalent in the level of reality to our reality. It is found that a great principle is that divine knowledge encompasses all that exists in reality, because there is nothing that does not exist in relation to divinity. The law, our knowledge of which does not encompass all that exists in reality, is embedded, due to the branching of our knowledge from divine knowledge, therefore it contains some semblance of its origin. Moreover, it is entirely inappropriate to say that God's knowledge encompasses what does not exist, because once something is known by God, it already exists in the highest form of reality. All other realities are but small sparks compared to this supreme reality.[[200]](#footnote-202)

The modern Mishnah commentator, Hanoch Albeck (1890-1972), writes in his commentary on the Mishnah regarding Rabbi Akiva's words two brief sentences, presenting the contradiction without explanation:

Everything is foreseen - everything is revealed and known in advance before the Holy One, blessed be He. And the authority is given - yet, the authority is in the hands of the individual to choose between good and evil.[[201]](#footnote-203)

However, at the end of the tractate, in the additions and supplements, Albeck added the following:

The words of Rabbi Akiva touch on the issue of God's knowledge and human choice. His words align with the Pharisaic interpretations presented in Josephus' Wars of the Jews, Book II, Chapter 8, Section 14. And see [refer to] Tosafot Yom Tov.[[202]](#footnote-204)

Albeck directs the reader to Tosafot Yom Tov, which, as mentioned above, reconciles the contradiction with the opinion. I also looked at the words of Josephus to whom Albeck sends, and indeed, in Josephus' book (Josephus Flavius, 37-100), **The History of the Jewish War with the** Romans, he writes the following about the school of the Pharisees and distinguishes between their approach to the subject and that of the Sadducees, who were close to the Hellenistic views:

From the other two [schools] I mentioned earlier, the Pharisees are considered as those who interpret the laws with the utmost precision and as the leading school. They attribute everything to fate and to God, and believe that the choice to do right or not to do it primarily lies in the hands of man, but fate assists in every action. [...] The Sadducees–the second school–deny fate entirely and argue that God is beyond doing or even seeing evil. They argue that the choice between good and evil is in the hands of the individual, and each person turns to one or the other of their own accord.[[203]](#footnote-205)

On these matters, the scientific editor of the new edition, Israel Shatzman, adds the following:

**fate** Fate, in Greek, is a concept that is not identical to the Pharisaic perception of divine decree, but it brings the matter closer to foreign readers. **in every act** . Josephus's words here (and also in Antiquities of the Jews 13, 172: "The Pharisees say that some things are the work of fate, but not all") recall the words of Rabbi Akiva: "Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given" (Mishnah Avot 3, 15).[[204]](#footnote-206)

I would just note that in my opinion, Josephus' words indeed recall those of Rabbi Akiva, but they do not match. Albeck acknowledges that Rabbi Akiva raises a problem, while Josephus attempts to present a division of labor between decree and choice. In both sources, this division is not clear. In the first source, on one hand, everything is attributed to God and His decree, and on the other hand, most of human actions are in his own hands, with God merely assisting. In the second source, on the one hand, only a few things are left to chance, and on the other hand, not all (but probably most) are. Perhaps the statements particularly remind us of Rabbi Hanina's dictum, which also proposes a division of labor: "Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven" (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 33b, Niddah 16b, Megillah 25a).

Another modern Mishna commentator, Pinchas Kahti (1910-1976), in his book **Mishnayat Mebourat** Seder Nazikin, does not ignore the contradiction, but adheres in his interpretation fully to Rambam's classical interpretation, without any additional interpretation. It does not attempt to explain anything beyond the claim that our limited intellect cannot comprehend either the reality of the Creator or His knowledge. And these are his words:

Everything is foreseen – everything is revealed and known in advance to God, and yet, the choice is given – meaning, despite this, the choice is in the hands of the individual to choose good or evil, in other words, humans have free will; and the knowledge of the Creator, who knows everything in advance, does not compel the individual in any way. And even though it is impossible according to our attainment and our knowledge, but the Creator's knowledge is not like our knowledge, and there is no similarity between them, because He and His knowledge are one; And just as we do not achieve the reality of the Creator with our limited intelligence, so we do not achieve His knowledge (Rambam); and it is also written (Isaiah 9:8): "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways."[[205]](#footnote-207)

The question of the contradiction between knowledge and choice also tested the abilities of the modern scientist and thinker, Yeshayahu Leibowitz (1903-1994). In his book **Conversations on Pirkei Avot and on the Rambam**, he gives, in his usual manner, a bold and exceptional answer, similar to that of Karshekesh. After presenting the contradiction in all its sharpness according to R' Akiva's interpretation, he brings the two explanations of Bartinoro. In his opinion, according to the first explanation (which apparently is also Rashi's interpretation), God does not know the future and therefore His foresight refers only to the present and there is no contradiction. According to him, Bartanura knew that most scholars and interpreters thought otherwise, and therefore he brought Rambam's interpretation of Rabbi Akiva's words, according to which we should attribute to God both the knowledge of the future - and then the contradiction appears - and also the resolution of the contradiction. Before Leibowitz expresses his own opinion on the contradiction, he mentions that this is not necessarily a religious-faith question related to divine knowledge, but it exists in the philosophical-ethical plane as a contradiction between causal determinism and libertarianism:

However, it should be immediately noted that even without addressing the issue of God's knowledge and without the factors of religious faith, a parallel philosophical and ethical issue arises when one thinks in terms of causality. In terms of these concepts, referred to as deterministic thinking, the same problem of knowledge and choice exists even if we do not recognize a subject of this knowledge: regarding certainty and recognition of what is to come, there is no difference between knowledge in the subjective consciousness of a knower of truth and knowledge embodied in the objective information hidden in the causal sequence of things deriving from each other according to the necessity of reality. And if we identify a person's moral decision with his choice between different options - where is the option here?[[206]](#footnote-208)

Leibowitz's own opinion regarding this issue is, as mentioned, bold. Indeed, a person does not have free will (according to Karskash's view) because he is part of the causal world in which he exists and cannot deviate from it. His editorial task, which is beyond reality, is to strive with all his might to choose the good, but success is not guaranteed:

However, one who delves deeper, particularly into faith, will notice that while the Bible indeed presents a demand for choice, nowhere is there an explicit guarantee that one is capable of choosing. I briefly mentioned this in our last conversation a week ago, and it elicited reactions of surprise and anger among some of the listeners; there were logical difficulties, and there were issues of fairness: could it be possible? From a logical perspective - can a person be confronted with a decision about something that has already been decided? And from an ethical perspective - what is the justification for rewarding or punishing a person based on their actions or inactions? And if even in human law, many scholars grapple with the problem of how to justify judgment and adjudication within a deterministic framework, how much more so in divine law, where one must ask: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly? But isn't it true that the Merciful One exempts one under duress! Is it possible?!

To this one should respond: It may or may not be – the very essence of an ethical approach to human problems – as opposed to a utilitarian approach – is nothing but the fact that it is faced with a goal that is not anchored in reality, and therefore there is no guarantee for its realization in reality. Rather, it is required to strive for it from reality to beyond reality, even if this striving is eternal and never reaches completion. And if this is the case for values that stem from human consciousness - such as happiness, integrity, justice, freedom, honor, and so on - how much more so does this apply beautifully to the religious mission: the demand presented to a person to do what is good in the eyes of God. One who believes in a God that is not an idol, meaning a human image or a force in nature or nature itself, but believes in a God that is not confined by the world - understands and feels the limitation of being a creature of this world from which he cannot escape, and at the same time, he understands and recognizes the meaning of the mission imposed upon him and acknowledges its force - even if he is unable to fulfill it.

It may be that a person is not free in the sense of being able to decide for themselves to choose between good and evil, but they are free to strive, aspire, and aim for this decision - and according to the effort is the reward: the reward is based on the effort, not on what is achieved through the effort. In the conclusion of Yom Kippur, during the Ne'ilah prayer, the uniqueness of a person is defined by recognizing his or her status before God. This status is the task of deciding between good and evil, to be righteous or wicked, or - in the words of the last prophet - to be a "servant of God" or "one who did not serve Him". This task is imposed on him even though he is not granted any advantage over the beast in terms of his nature, for both he and it belong to a world that is vanity, where all events are linked to each other by the necessity of reality. Therefore, even though the Shulchan Aruch begins with the great call "One should strengthen himself like a lion to get up in the morning for the service of his Creator": perhaps the ability to serve God is not within the nature of man - and does the term "nature" mean anything other than that which one cannot deviate from? However, despite this, it is incumbent upon a person to "rise like a lion," - to make a supreme effort to do what cannot be done. Casting doubt on the absolute free will of man does not necessarily contradict religious faith. Moreover, perhaps the depth of religious faith is revealed precisely in a person's recognition that he is tasked with reaching a goal - the service of God - towards which he must strive eternally, even if he is unable to achieve and implement it. And perhaps this is also the deeper meaning of Rabbi Tarfon's statement, a colleague of Rabbi Akiva, in Pirkei Avot: "It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it" (2:21).[[207]](#footnote-209)

However, these points are not sufficient to reconcile the contradiction between one's understanding of determinism and the feeling that one can act according to one's will, and therefore no answer has been found.

If the decision in favor of the deterministic-naturalistic perception seems logically obligatory, it does not reconcile with our immediate self-experience regarding our decision-making without a compelling or dictating factor. All the efforts of thinkers throughout the generations to reconcile this logical inference with that psychological fact in philosophical thought have only led to solutions that are merely verbal.[[208]](#footnote-210)

However, this should not undermine the fundamental mission of a person as a believer. According to Leibowitz, even Maimonides did not believe that determinism contradicts Judaism, and he did not even include the principle of free will, which for him is an educational-psychological principle, in his principles of faith. The principles are related to the service of God and not to things that a person thinks about himself.

However, both Maimonides, who is defined as an extreme indeterminist, and Karshkash, who leans towards determinism - were considered righteous Jews in terms of accepting the yoke of the kingdom of heaven and the yoke of Torah and commandments. Contrary to the prevailing opinion among the naive or the skeptical, the deterministic approach in Judaism does not necessarily undermine religious faith, just as it does not necessarily erode serious morality. Similar phenomena can also be found in the spiritual world of other religions and value systems, such as in Calvinism, which combines Christian righteousness with a belief in predestination, and in Spinoza's theory of attributes.

In Judaism, it is not beliefs and opinions on metaphysical issues that determine a person's religious-faith status, but rather the reflection of these beliefs and opinions in the actual service of God: in the observance of the Torah and the fulfillment of the commandments. Maimonides formulates the principle of free will as follows: "Every person has been granted the freedom to choose: if one wishes to steer oneself towards a good path and be righteous, the choice is in their hands; and if one wishes to steer oneself towards an evil path and be wicked, the choice is in their hands... that one, of their own accord, with their knowledge and thought, knows good from evil and does whatever they desire, and there is no one who can prevent them from doing good or evil" (Laws of Repentance, Chapter 5). However, it is worth examining the fact that Maimonides, who makes this principle a cornerstone for the educational-psychological preparation of a person to accept the commandments of the Torah, does not make it a principle of faith. In the thirteen principles of faith, whose paraphrase – sometimes inaccurately – is included in the prayer books as the thirteen principles of Maimonides, the belief that God "knows the deeds of human beings and does not turn His eye away from them" is included. However, there is no reference to the belief in human free will.

We find as a "principle" the belief in the governance of the entire creation by God, and we find as a "principle" the belief that God knows the thoughts of man, and we find as a "principle" the belief that God punishes and rewards; however, we do not find a principle regarding the free will of man. Thus, the matter of faith is a person's consciousness of his standing before God and the obligations imposed on him from this standpoint; whereas a person's beliefs about himself, his abilities, his strength, his nature, and his destiny do not belong to the realm of faith at all, but are metaphysical issues about which there may be differences of opinion within the framework of complete faith: "When there is a dispute among the sages about a belief that does not result in any action – no one says the law is like so-and-so" (Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, Sotah Chapter 3); "Any dispute that occurs among the sages, that does not lead to action but is merely a matter of belief – there is no reason to rule the law like one of them" (ibid., Sanhedrin, Perek Heleq).[[209]](#footnote-211)

In contrast to Leibowitz, one could argue that he overlooks the fact that according to Maimonides, based on the quotes cited above, the issue of reward and punishment is inseparable from free choice and they are a product of it. Therefore, if reward and punishment are fundamental, then choice is also fundamental. Only Leibowitz could turn Maimonides into a determinist.

The rabbi and philosopher Eliezer Berkovits (1908-1992) presented a view contrary to that of Leibowitz (without a direct connection to Rabbi Akiva's words), and he was even more adamant than Ralbag about the extent of human free choice in God's world. In his opinion, the God of Judaism forgives His exalted honor, limits and reduces Himself and His infinite power (in terms of control ability, not spatially) willingly, and acts in an act of kindness and interest as a hidden God who occasionally reveals Himself behind screens with diminished power. In doing so, he enabled the few encounters with the prophets as individuals, and with the children of Israel as a nation, at Mount Sinai. The encounters should be infrequent, as their abundance might cause an intellectual imposition of a well-known fact devoid of doubts, which takes control over a person and prevents him from freely choosing to recognize God and his obligations towards Him, and accepting responsibility for his actions. This is also the reason why God does not intervene in the course of history, and therefore did not intervene during the Holocaust. This contraction of power allows for absolute free choice for a person, so that there is no coercion on him to believe in God. In addition, it allows a person to physically and emotionally confront the fear of this encounter, and it also enables the most important encounter - the creation of a final world and the hidden involvement of God in this world. From these encounters, we learned about the existence of God, about creation, about God's demands from man, and about his purpose as a partner to God. Only after receiving these messages (which can only be attained through the experience of encountering God and not through understanding) is it possible and necessary to apply understanding and draw the correct conclusions from the knowledge.

Here is a passage from Berkovits on the subject of free will, which stems from God's self-limitation and concealment:

Why does God not prevent man from spreading suffering and pain in creation? In response to the problem, it has been rightly pointed out that any punctual intervention by God would not only eliminate any possibility of doing evil, but would also undermine the very foundation of all ethical action. In a world where evil was doomed to absolute and manifest failure from the outset, goodness too would not thrive. It is impossible to bring people to goodness through fear. In order to be good, a person must choose goodness; but choice only exists where there is freedom. Therefore, in order to be good, a person must have the freedom to be wicked; [...] God's **obvious** intervention would eliminate not only the wickedness, but also the essence of human nature - his moral responsibility. A person is only a person if they are given the ability to choose between alternative courses of action, and if they are able to do so from a place of moral freedom.[...] We have seen that the original religious experience of the encounter [with God] had to be momentary so that a person could withstand it; and as long as it continued, the divine presence could only reveal itself behind some sort of protective screen, without which a person could not survive the awe of the Holy One, blessed be He. We also saw that encounters were required to be extremely rare in history in order to leave room for doubt and thus preserve the spiritual freedom of man, which is the most noble aspect of faith. God often hides from man so that man can believe in Him without coercion. We also noted the religious necessity that there should be no possibility to prove the existence of God in an intellectual manner. Such irrefutable evidence would shackle human intellect in chains, and from the outset, bend its pursuit of truth.[[210]](#footnote-212)

A prominent researcher of the Talmudic period, Ephraim Elimelech Urbach (1912-1991), believed that Rabbi Akiva's words were a polemic against the early decree of Paul. Urbach adopted the interpretation of Rashi, Machzor Vitry, Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach Duran (Rashbatz, 1361-1444), and the Meiri to the words of Rabbi Akiva, and explicitly opposed the philosophical interpretation of Maimonides, which attributed to Rabbi Akiva the presentation of the contradiction between knowledge and choice. He relies on the fact that 'expected' in the language of the Mishnah and the Tannaim is 'seen' and not 'foreseen', and only in the language of the Amoraim did a change occur.

Ever since Maimonides interpreted Rabbi Akiva's statement in Pirkei Avot (3:15), 'All is foreseen, yet free will is given,' it has been understood as a discussion of the contradiction between foreknowledge and choice. Maimonides himself found in it a resolution to the contradiction according to his approach. Others saw in it not a resolution of the question, but the establishment of two fundamental beliefs and the obligation to hold them as one. However, some of the earliest Mishnah commentators did not interpret 'everything is foreseen' in the sense of 'everything is revealed and known in advance', but rather 'everything a person does in the innermost chambers, the Holy One, blessed be He, foresees and observes', as Rabbi said: 'Know what is above you - an eye sees' (Avot 2, 1); this interpretation aligns with the use of the root 'foresee' in the language of the Tannaim. 'Tzofeh' does not refer to knowledge of the future, but rather to the observation of the present and the given, as in the biblical usage 'the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good' (Proverbs 15:3). [...] The use of 'saw' in the sense of 'knew in advance', 'saw in advance', such as: 'He foresaw with the Holy Spirit that they would...', 'The Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw that they would...', I have found only in the words of the Amoraim. The content of the Mishnah also shows that Rabbi Akiva did not aim to reconcile the contradiction between foreknowledge and free will, but rather to establish man's responsibility for his actions. This responsibility is twofold: it lies in the authority given to a person to choose their path, and in the recognition that a person is destined to be judged before the One who observes and contemplates their ways.[[211]](#footnote-213)

Jewish philosophy researcher Shalom Rosenberg grapples with Urbach in one of his articles and disagrees with him completely. While he admits that he has a philosophical inclination, which is considered bad in the eyes of Urbach and his ilk, but guides him, he argues that "in the thought of the Sages, paradoxes and questions were aroused." One of them, essentially philosophical and theological, is expressed in the words of Rabbi Akiva.[[212]](#footnote-214) Rosenberg later in the article brings several sources from the Aggadic Midrash, from which it emerges that Rabbi Akiva's teacher, Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, believed that God sees and knows all the future in advance. Additionally, he cites sources (some of them paradoxical) from the Aggadic Midrash in Avot de-Rabbi Nathan version B, and from the Halakhic Midrash in the Mishnah and the Talmud, where such a stance is also attributed to Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Akiva, and is also expressed in the term 'foreseen'. At the end of his remarks, Rosenberg adds that according to R' Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, the term 'expected' as referring to the future is already found in Job 15:22: "And he is expected to the sword."[[213]](#footnote-215) The version found in the Arukh and in Machzor Vitry also interprets 'everything is foreseen' as meaning foreknowledge by God, including foreknowledge of the future, especially based on the verse in Job 15:20: "And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor."[[214]](#footnote-216)

Another modern commentator on Pirkei Avot is Avigdor Shinan. In his book, **Pirkei Avot: A New Israeli Commentary**, Shanan highlights the internal contradiction between the two parts of Rabbi Akiva's statement as presented by Maimonides in his Laws of Repentance, which he quotes, and even continues to elaborate on it with his own words, adding to what we have already discussed above:

In general, what is the point of instructing a person to follow one path or another, if the path they will take is already known in advance? And more severe than this - what is the justification for giving reward or punishment in such a deterministic system?[[215]](#footnote-217)

Shenan continues in his eloquent language and elucidates the response of the Rambam:

The conclusion of Maimonides is that a complex and profound question like this requires a distinction between human knowledge and divine knowledge. The very fact that God knows the future does not determine it, since it is the human who decides his fate through his free will. In simple terms, Maimonides argues that the contradiction between God's foreknowledge and the free choice open to man is illusory, because it refers to God in human terms. Only in human terms, absolute knowledge of something indeed necessitates its occurrence. However, since the knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be He (like the Holy One, blessed be He Himself), is a concept that cannot be understood in human categories, it does not contradict the option of free choice available to man.[[216]](#footnote-218)

Perhaps, without putting words in the mouth of Maimonides, the argument could be phrased similarly to that of Saadia Gaon - "Only in human terms, absolute knowledge of something indeed necessitates its occurrence." Shenan acknowledges that it is not easy to accept Maimonides' interpretation of Rabbi Akiva's words and his resolution of the contradiction. Therefore, he proposes two other interpretations. One of Rashi and Bertenura, and another one. However, he does not attempt to argue that an interpretation like Rashi's could be explained according to Rambam, and vice versa (as I suggested above), thus easing the difficulty of accepting both together. After all, Maimonides does not explain exactly what is difficult for us to understand (the 'time' with God) and Rashi seems to ignore the accepted belief that God also sees what a person will do in the future, including in his innermost chambers. Thus, Shanen leaves us, in his two additional proposals, with the contradiction between knowledge and choice- even if it does not arise from Rabbi Akiva's words - unresolved. Source text: {המאמר הזה מתחיל בסקירה של המחקרים הקודמים שנעשו בנושא זה, וממשיך לדיון בסוגיות המרכזיות שנפתחו במהלך המחקר. המחבר מציג את השיטות שהוא משתמש בהן לחקר הנושא, ומסביר את הסיבות שבגללן הוא בחר בהן. הוא מספר על התוצאות שהגיע אליהן במהלך המחקר, ומנתח את המשמעויות שלהן. בסוף המאמר, המחבר מציג את המסקנות שלו, ומציע כיוונים למחקרים עתידיים בנושא.}  
  
Target text: {This article begins with a review of previous research conducted on this topic, and continues to discuss the central issues that emerged during the research. The author presents the methods he uses to investigate the subject, and explains the reasons why he chose them. He reports on the results he reached during the research, and analyzes their implications. At the end of the article, the author presents his conclusions, and proposes directions for future research on the topic.}  
  
Source text: {המאמר מתחיל בהצגה של הבעיה שהמחקר מתמקד בה. המחבר מציג את השאלות המרכזיות שהוא מנסה לענות עליהן, ומסביר את החשיבות שלהן. הוא ממשיך לדיון במסגרת התיאורטית שבה הוא עובד, ומציג את המודלים והתיאוריות שהוא משתמש בהן. המחבר מספר על המחקר שהוא ביצע, ומציג את התוצאות שהגיע אליהן. בסוף המאמר, הוא מנתח את התוצאות, מציג את המסקנות שלו, ומציע כיוונים למחקרים עתידיים.}  
  
Target text: {The article begins by presenting the problem that the research focuses on. The author presents the central questions he is trying to answer, and explains their importance. He continues to discuss the theoretical framework in which he works, and presents the models and theories he uses. The author reports on the research he conducted, and presents the results he reached. At the end of the article, he analyzes the results, presents his conclusions, and proposes directions for future research.}

It must be admitted that this response of Maimonides is not a simple one, and it seems that in order to resolve the difficulty in Rabbi Akiva's words, some interpreters suggest that "foreseen" means: something that is seen, something that is not hidden, and according to this, the intention is only to say - in the spirit of the verse: "Can a man hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord?" (Jeremiah 23:24) - that God sees all the deeds of man and therefore it is not for man to make bad use of the authority given to him. Interestingly, there are also those who interpret here: "Everything is stored," meaning everything is recorded, engraved, and kept in those books that will be opened on Judgment Day, and according to them, a person will be brought to trial (see above 2, A). It seems that the reading "everything is foreseen" also comes to resolve the difficulty raised by Rabbi Akiva's words.[[217]](#footnote-219)

However, as mentioned, without the connection between Rashi's interpretation and that of Rambam, or according to Bertenura, or the additional interpretation brought by Shanah, perhaps Rabbi Akiva's words themselves are not contradictory and conflicting, but the contradiction between God's omniscience, who sees and knows the future, and human choice, stands out. Only his first explanation settles it.

Interesting additions to the commentary on Rabbi Akiva's words can be found in a new commentary on the chapters of Avot that was recently published under the title: **In the heart and soul, a dialogical commentary on the tractate of Avot** , which in my opinion is a postmodern interpretation. The text and intellectual history researcher of Sephardic and Eastern Jews, Nahum Ilan, and the psychiatrist Eliyahu Samuel, collaborated to produce this commentary. Ilan offers his scholarly interpretation of the text, and Samuel responds from the perspective of modern psychology. These are the words of Ilan regarding Rabbi Akiva's statement:

Source text: {א. המשנה בסנהדרין י, א מציינת ש"כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא, שנאמר (ישעיה ס, כא): 'ועמך כולם צדיקים, לעולם יירשו ארץ, נצר מטעי מעשה ידי להתפאר'". עם זאת, המשנה ממהרת להוסיף שישנם יחידים וקבוצות שאינם זוכים לחלקם בעולם הבא. המשנה מציינת שבין אלה שאינם זוכים לחלקם בעולם הבא נמצאים מלכים יהודיים, נביאים ואנשים פשוטים שחטאו במגוון דרכים.}  
  
Target text: {A. The Mishnah in Sanhedrin 10:1 states that "All Israel have a portion in the world to come, as it is said (Isaiah 60:21): 'And your people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified'". However, the Mishnah quickly adds that there are individuals and groups who do not merit their portion in the world to come. The Mishnah notes that among those who do not merit their portion in the world to come are Jewish kings, prophets, and ordinary people who have sinned in various ways.} 'Everything is foreseen' - The word 'everything' indicates that Rabbi Akiva formulated a rule without exceptions. The word 'expected' has at least two meanings: (1) something that is anticipated, such as 'it is expected that it will be cold and rainy in the winter'; (2) something that can be seen, to be observed. The 'expected' in this instruction is the gerund form of 'expecting'. 'Expected' is used here in the second instruction. The intention of the saying is to state that everything a person does is revealed and visible to God, and conversely: a person cannot hide his actions, and not even his thoughts and intentions, from God. In contemporary language: 'Everything is transparent.' The Haggadah expresses the absolute knowledge of God, from whom nothing is hidden.[...]

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת התנאים, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתרבות היהודית של אותה תקופה. המאמר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ובמיוחד בסוגיית החייבים מיתות בית דין והאנשים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המאמר מנתח את הסוגייה ממגוון זוויות, כולל ניתוח הנוסח, ההקשר ההיסטורי, המשמעות התיאולוגית, וההשפעה של הסוגייה על ההלכה והמחשבה היהודית. במהלך המאמר, המחבר מציג גם דיונים מרכזיים מתוך המחקר המודרני בתחום.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical framework of the Tannaitic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah in the Jewish culture of that era. The article focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, particularly on the issue of those liable to the death penalty by the court and the people who do not have a share in the world to come. The article analyzes the issue from various angles, including text analysis, historical context, theological significance, and the influence of the issue on Jewish law and thought. Throughout the article, the author also presents key discussions from modern research in the field.} 'And the authority is given' - Man is free and therefore has the sovereignty to decide what to do and how to behave. Without freedom, the concept of responsibility lacks a foothold, and so does the principle derived from it - the principle of reward and punishment.[[218]](#footnote-220)

In the second sense of the word 'expected,' according to Ilan, there is no reference to God's foresight of the future, as Rashi and Bertenura claimed, and therefore, apparently, there is no contradiction between the two statements. However, it becomes clear from Ilan's fascinating and innovative further remarks that, in his opinion, God now also sees the future, and in all four of Rabbi Akiva's statements in this Mishnah there are tensions, contradictions, paradoxes, and conflicts that Rabbi Akiva, and even he himself, does not intend to resolve.

I will briefly comment on the four tensions in this Mishnah. There is a clear expectation from every approach, stance, and perception, that there should be internal coherence among all its parts. Tension, contradiction, and certainly inconsistency are perceived as a fundamental weakness, capable of discrediting an approach, stance, or perception. It seems that Rabbi Akiva, followed by Rabbi Judah the Prince and his grandson Rabbi Judah Nesi'ah, the editors of the Mishnah in its two layers, thought otherwise. All three understood that life, and certainly religious life, cannot escape internal contradictions. Moreover, internal contradiction and paradox are the very field of life of religious existence and religious experience. In the manner of the Tannaim, Rabbi Akiva did not engage with the abstract question of the status of tension, contradiction, contradiction, and paradox, but with concrete questions. From his deep contemplation and examination of these as a whole, the abstract question and his position towards it were revealed and exposed. He made no attempt to resolve the tensions and contradictions. On the contrary, it seems that according to his approach, a vital part of the religious challenge is to be aware of them and to live them and with them. Rabbi Akiva began with the assertion 'everything is foreseen', which might be considered trivial among a believing public, but in truth, it is in complete contradiction to the prevalent approach in the Greek world, according to which if there is a God, He is indifferent to the world. The concise language sharpens the sting hidden in the narrative. The second narrative also confronts head-on a prevalent approach in the pagan world, according to which fate is the decisive factor in human life.[[219]](#footnote-221) In contrast to this position, Rabbi Akiva comes and proclaims 'and the authority is given,' meaning that man is free, and therefore he shapes his life and can change it, even if only partially. These two narratives do not describe life, but rather express two fundamental beliefs in Rabbi Akiva's world, which stand in contradiction to each other.[[220]](#footnote-222)

Ilan does not clarify whether his opinion aligns with that of Rambam, who resolves the contradiction in God's world, where His knowledge and perception of time differ from ours. So, it is acceptable. If not, he is the first interpreter who does not see the need to resolve the contradiction in Rabbi Akiva's words, or the need to explain and argue that due to our limited understanding, we must accommodate the contradiction, but it only exists in the human world and therefore is not true. In any case, according to the postmodern interpreter Ilan, contradiction is an inseparable part of the believer's life, with which he must live, and it has significant advantages for the growth of his worldview. I do not know if Ilan thinks this way about the contradictions between contemplation and revelation, or just about the contradictions within the world of faith. While knowledge and choice are two foundations of faith, choice is essentially an intuitive principle that does not require religion, as the basic understanding of every person is that they choose their own path. Only the choice justifies imposing punishment on the offender, or at least to distance him from society so that he does not cause harm. Nevertheless, I am pleased that Ilan sees contradiction as a vital challenge rather than a flaw or negation. I, for one, subscribe to the 'double truth' stance, or the 'irresolvable dialectic' between human understanding and revelation, and I strive to teach and elucidate its advantages in my writings.[[221]](#footnote-223)

Samuel, his dialogue partner, tries to escape the contradiction, preferring the approach of dividing the labor between knowledge of God and human choice in the course of life, through a psychological reading. The division is between the deterministic potential of human biology that influences the course of his psychological development, and its realization and implementation in connection with environmental factors that are not deterministic, some of which are in the hands of the human. Here are his words:

Many have grappled with this Mishnah over the generations, as it is absurd and difficult to understand. Various interpretations have been proposed, with the central ones being those of Rashi and Rambam, which present opposing and contradictory directions that I will not detail. The interpretations revolve around the theological connection, hence the inherent difficulty in understanding the dialectic between 'everything is foreseen' and 'permission is given'. In his commentary, Asb interprets the Mishnah to the psychological-mental source, devoid of the theological-religious core. This psychological reading greatly elucidates and clarifies this enigmatic Mishnah. The course of human psychological development is predictable.[...] There are no surprises in the developmental process - it involves biological processes of communication between nerve synapses and the myelination of the nervous system at a fixed timing. This is a deterministic system that can be predicted. [...] According to this mechanism, 'everything is foreseen'. Human behavior is predictable and measurable. Most of the neural research is fueled by the measured and predictable brain model.

And yet, a human is not a creature living under reflexes like a robot responding to rules of action-reaction, and therefore the second part of our Mishnah also holds - 'permission is granted', meaning a person has choice and therefore also personal responsibility. The human potential is indeed defined and measurable, it possesses stable biological qualities that can be predicted. However, the emotional and behavioral world also depends on circumstances that are not deterministic. Development depends on the connection to the environment, as Winnicott said, 'There is no baby without a mother.' The developmental potential necessitates connection and relationship with the other. The other's realistic hand imprint in early age and mental work shape and actualize the potential embedded in the DNA (genetic material).

For example: The ability to speak is determined by a fixed and innate mechanism found in human DNA, yet the implementation of language is made possible through connection with others, those who speak a human language. The interaction with the other brings to life the specific language in which we speak. As for the development of an emotional stance of optimism or pessimism towards the world: An optimistic or pessimistic judgment is part of every person's fate, but the stance is determined personally according to the course of life and the interpretation each one gives to their experiences, that is, 'the authority is given'.

Thus, it emerges that a person operates along two axes: a biological-deterministic one and the ability to choose at various degrees. Rabbi Akiva did not define the level of choice as absolute, as it varies according to the opening parameters. Indeed, 'everything is foreseen', but not all authority is given. The potential is precisely predicted according to the biological birth data. Human beings possess free will within a narrow range in relation to their birth circumstances. While not a master of the Rabbinic dialectic that has been conducted over generations, it seems that the interpretation based on our contemporary scientific knowledge can also illuminate the theological-religious essence. I will leave this idea for the reader to ponder.[[222]](#footnote-224)

As stated, I personally prefer the 'double truth' position over all other harmonistic, illusionistic, and apologetic positions that oppose the possibility of contradiction. However, I find it difficult to accept Ilan's suggestion that, in his opinion, Rabbi Akiva intended to imply that the contradiction is not resolved at all, not even beyond our current world, in one way or another. Moreover, I find it hard to accept that the intriguing position presented by Samuel regarding the division of psychological labor between decree and choice, is what Rabbi Akiva was aiming at. As a rule, all the harmonic division proposals are not acceptable to me as a plausible interpretation of Rabbi Akiva's words.

I prefer the argument that in our world there indeed exists a cosmic rift that cannot be reconciled or unified, but in God's world or in the end of days, the contradiction cannot persist and the rift is healed, and I hope that Ilan also holds this view. In any case, I would be pleased to add Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Judah the Prince, Rabbi Judah's presidency, and Ilan, to those who stand with me on the importance of contradiction and the removal of concern from it. Indeed, it seems that the contradiction exists both within the realm of faith itself and within the realm of science and philosophy themselves, as Leibowitz pointed out at the beginning of his remarks on the subject under discussion. In the realm of faith, the tension is recognized between a close God, whom man strives to cling to in love, and a distant God, from whom man seeks to flee in fear; between the sense of man's insignificance in the face of God and the sense of his greatness as the crown of creation; and between a romantic and mystical Judaism and a Judaism of reason and rationality. In the realm of modern science, for instance, we are familiar with chaos theory and quantum theory, according to which the electron is both a wave and a particle. All this, without delving into the dispute between Popper (1902-1994) and Feyerabend (1924-1994) on the question of whether there is a scientific method that allows distinguishing between theory and scientific fact, and whether there is a single truth in science at all.

In conclusion, it seems that despite the difficulty in innovating interpretations, the gates of interpretation are not closed. Whether you believe that human free will is unlimited and God is prevented from seeing and knowing what a person will do in the future; whether you believe that God controls the future as He does the present and the past, that determinism rules everything and in fact, humans have no choice, and it exists only in their imagination; whether you believe in some division of labor between God and man in these matters; and whether you believe that both these extremes are correct and contradictory in man's world - you will find the interpretive way to explain Rabbi Akiva's words according to your belief. Interpreters and researchers also find the explanation of the term 'foreseen' as a present or future vision, according to their needs. As for me, I will not put my head between the lions in questioning what Rabbi Akiva truly meant. This matter is less important from my perspective. More importantly, the contradiction between knowledge and choice inherently exists, and Maimonides is the first to identify it in relation to Rabbi Akiva's words. As an explanation for the opinion of Maimonides and those who share his view, and as a suitable resolution to the contradiction, I prefer that of our commentators, Midrash Shmuel, Tosafot Yom Tov, and Tiferet Israel. This explanation resolves all the questions I presented during the discussion, bridges the interpretation of Rashi with that of Rambam, and reconciles the contradiction in the limited world of human religious thought and recognition. Similarly, Samuel's initial and laconic claim that the positions of Rashi and Maimonides are contradictory and opposing is not obligatory. In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that our world, with all its limitations and our own, is all we have, and in it the contradiction and the position of 'the double truth' are realized. This is a significant challenge, promising the continuation of human creation built from tension, contradictions, and disputes.

# Chapter Eight

# "The Torah speaks in the language of man": The meaning of the principle in Jewish thought

It is commonly believed that the Tannaim, Rabbi Akiva ben Yosef and Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, disagreed on the question of whether the Torah speaks in the language of human beings. Rabbi Ishmael holds that this is the case, and one should not interpret the words of the Torah beyond their plain meaning. Rabbi Akiva believed that the language of the Torah is exalted and it is possible to interpret its words beyond the apparent literal meaning.

This statement is not mentioned at all in the Mishnah. In the halakhic Midrash, it is mentioned twice:

a) In the Midrash **Torat Kohanim (Sifra)**:[[223]](#footnote-225) "**And unto the children of Israel you shall say, and unto the children of Israel you shall speak, say unto the children of Israel, speak unto the children of Israel, command the children of Israel and you shall command the children of Israel**, Rabbi Yossi says **the Torah speaks in the language of human beings** in many tongues, and all of them need to be interpreted, **Israel** these are the Israelites, **Ger** these are the converts, **the** convert, to include the wives of the converts, in Israel, to include women and slaves. If so, why was it said, **one by one** , to bring the Gentiles who came over the Gentiles to discuss the laws of the nations and who came over the Gentiles of Israel to discuss the laws of Israel."

Rabbi Yossi ben Halaphta, a student of Rabbi Akiva, notes that the Torah, like human beings in their language, expresses similar ideas in different ways and also uses repetition of words for embellishment. However, when the Torah does so (and sometimes writes the subject before the verb and sometimes after it), it is done to tell us that we should interpret these changes and learn from them. That is why he multiplies from the verse dealing with the death penalty for the servants of the ruler, not only Israelis and foreigners, but from the addition of the letter he to the word ger and the letter beit to the word Israel - three more personal classes, and the double of the words 'Ish Ish' two more classes. He would say, according to this Midrash, the meaning of the principle 'spoke' is that the divine Torah was given to human beings, and therefore, it is inevitably written in their language. However, since it is divine, every word and every letter in it should be examined, to see if they can be interpreted and learned from again and again.

b) in a **bookish** midrash[[224]](#footnote-226) Mention is made of the dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael about the words 'Knowledge of Tereth', whether these words should be required or alternatively, say 'Debra'. This dispute is also mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 64b and also 90b (see below dispute number 8 in the Babylonian Talmud).

This statement is not mentioned at all in the Jerusalem Talmud in this language. However, the dispute on the subject between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael is indeed mentioned, albeit in a different formulation. Thus it is stated in the Jerusalem Talmud:

**Hamol Yamol** [Bereishit 17 13]. From here to two words - one for the word and one for the phrase. One for the word and one for the fringes. Until here is the opinion of Rabbi Akiva who said that the phrases are inclusive. Rabbi Ishmael Du said [and Rabbi Ishmael said] double tongues are and **the Torah spoke** (its interest) **according to its way** : Halach Halkht, Nazfot Nazfot [name not to]; Gonov Gonabati [name from 10]; Where does Leah come from? Rabbi Judah ben Pazi said, "Then she said: 'A bridegroom of blood by the circumcisions'" [Exodus 4:26]. From here to two words - one for the word and one for the phrase. One for the word and one for the fringes.[[225]](#footnote-227)

That is, Rabbi Akiva interprets the redundant words, while Rabbi Ishmael says 'Dibrah', and learns this law from a different verse. This dispute, whether to say 'Daberah' or not, is mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud at least ten more times, along with the rule that we do not expound on the doubling of words, and several more times the dispute is brought up without mentioning it (such as in Sotah, Chapter 5, Halacha 5). Here are the places where the rule is explicitly mentioned:

1. In Tractate Rosh Hashanah, Chapter 3, Halacha 5, on the words 'in the seventh month' (which appears twice in Leviticus 23:24, 27) and also on the word 'blast' (which appears three times in Leviticus 23:24, 25:9, Numbers 29:1) - on the subject of how we know to blow the shofar three times for a total of nine blasts - Rabbi Akiva expounds and Rabbi Ishmael learns from other verses.

2. In Tractate Pesachim, Chapter 2, Halacha 7, on the words 'and you shall not eat it raw or boiled in water' (Exodus 12:9) - on the subject of the law of flour in other liquids - Rabbi Akiva expounds and Rabbi Ishmael learns from a fortiori reasoning.

3. In Tractate Pesachim, Chapter 9, Halacha 1, on the words 'ish ish' (Numbers 9:10) - on the subject of the law for one who was coerced or erred and did not celebrate Passover, regarding the second Passover - Rabbi Akiva expounds and Rabbi Ishmael learns this law from the common denominator.

4. In Tractate Yevamot, Chapter 8, Law 1, on the words 'ish ish' (Leviticus 22:4) - regarding the law of those disqualified from eating holy food - Rabbi Akiva expounds and Rabbi Ishmael learns this law from a gezerah shavah (a form of biblical interpretation).

5. In tractate Sota, Chapter 5, Halacha 1, on the word 'vabo' (recurring twice in Deuteronomy 52:27) as well as the words 'defilement', 'natama' (repeated three times there 27, 20, 29) - on the subject where do you learn that the name of the Sota examines It is also forbidden to call out the husband and that the pervert is also forbidden - R. Akiva requires the doubling of the words and R. Ishmael learns from the letter V the balance.

6. In Tractate Sotah, Chapter 7, Law 5, on the words 'one man, one man' (Numbers 13:2) - regarding the number of spies - Rabbi Akiva interprets that there were twenty-four, while Rabbi Ishmael says that this is the language of the Torah and there were twelve.

7. In Sotah, Chapter 8, Law 1, on the words 'And speak unto the people, and say unto them' (Deuteronomy 19:2-3) - on the subject of the language in which the anointed priest speaks to the warriors - Rabbi Akiva interprets that the priest speaks in the Holy Tongue, and Rabbi Ishmael learns this from a similar inference.

8. In Tractate Nedarim, Chapter 1, Law 1, on the words 'the vow of a Nazirite to make himself a Nazirite' (Numbers 6:2) - on the subject of Nazirite nicknames - Rabbi Akiva expounds and Rabbi Ishmael says 'she spoke' and learns this from another verse.

9. In Tractate Gittin, Chapter 8, Halacha 1, on the words 'and he shall give' 'and he shall give' (Deuteronomy 24:1,3) - regarding the law of a man who throws a divorce document into his wife's garden or courtyard - Rabbi Akiva interprets that she is divorced, and Rabbi Ishmael learns this from a different verse.

10. In Tractate Kiddushin, Chapter 2, Law 1, on the words 'and he was smitten...with a rod' (Exodus 21:6) - on the subject of the law of a person's emissary being like himself to strike his servant - Rabbi Akiva expounds and Rabbi Ishmael learns this from the superfluous word 'his master' there.

All the sources in the Jerusalem Talmud are singular. Before us is a dispute between Rabbi Akiva, who expounds and multiplies laws from the duplication of words or language, and Rabbi Ishmael, who does not interpret such duplications. According to Rabbi Ishmael, the Torah often uses redundant language because it was given to people who speak in this manner to embellish their speech. Therefore, there is no room to derive any lessons from this. However, the dispute is only about the extent to which the thirteen hermeneutical principles should be used to learn and derive laws from the text, but the law itself is the same for both of them. Most researchers today believe that generally, the laws were already accepted by the Tannaim from oral tradition, and they debated the extent to which the text should be tied to the law and the exact place in the text where this connection is found.

Two fundamental differences can be discerned between the Midrash Torat Kohanim and the Jerusalem Talmud, regarding the meaning of the term 'Dibrah'. As I explained above, in Torat Kohanim, the term serves Rabbi Yossi to establish the teaching of his teacher, Rabbi Akiva, that every change in language that includes repetitions should be included. In the Jerusalem Talmud, it is used in complete reversal by Rabbi Ishmael to establish his approach, according to which, since the Torah was given to human beings in their language, one should not expound and multiply from redundancies, for this is how human beings speak and embellish their language. The second difference is that according to Torat Kohanim, the principle of 'dibrah' allows for the interpretation and inclusion of every letter or word in the Torah. According to the Jerusalem Talmud, this rule only disqualifies an excess of homiletic interpretations in the text, but not any other measure by which the Torah is interpreted. As is well known, it was Rabbi Ishmael who introduced these thirteen principles.

This principle is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud at least twenty times, and within these instances, fifteen disputes among the Mishnaic scholars are mentioned regarding the question of whether we say 'the Torah speaks in the language of man', or not. Surprisingly, only three such controversies between Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva are mentioned in the Gemara - one in Tractat Barachot, the second in Kirito, and the third in the Sanhedrin, with the latter being mentioned both in the midrash Sefri Bamdbar and in the later midrash that collects Psikta Zotarta (good lesson) for Bamdbar. A second surprise is that in Tractate Berakhot, it is Rabbi Akiva who holds the opinion of 'spoke', while in Keritot and Sanhedrin, it is Rabbi Ishmael who holds the opinion of 'spoke'. A third surprise is that additional stipulations and amorim join both sides of the dispute, when in addition to Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael themselves, four more of Rabbi Akiva's students - Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Yehuda - are not abiding and appear on both sides of the fence . Rabbi Yonatan - a prominent student of Rabbi Yishmael - does not side here with his teacher's approach.

In the Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, it is stated as follows:

**"If you will indeed look"** (Samuel I 1:11), Rabbi Elazar said: Hannah said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, if **you see** - it is good, and if not - **you will see**, I will go and hide from Elkanah my husband, and once I hide, they will give me the water of the Sotah to drink, and you will not make your Torah false, as it is said: **"And she shall be cleared and shall conceive seed."** This is satisfactory according to the one who says 'if she was barren, she is remembered' - fine, but according to the one who says 'if she gave birth in pain, she will give birth comfortably, if she gave birth to females - she will give birth to males, if she gave birth to dark-skinned children - she will give birth to light-skinned children, if she gave birth to short children - she will give birth to tall children', what is there to say? Datanya: ' **And she was cleansed and seed was sown** - teaches that if she was barren she was absent, the words of Rabbi Ishmael; Rabbi Akiva said to her: If so, all the barren women will go and hide, and the one who is not spoiled is absent! Rather: This teaches that if she gave birth in pain - she gives birth with ease, short - she gives birth to long ones. Blacks - give birth to whites, one - gives birth to two. May **if you see, you will see** - **the Torah spoke as the language of men'** .[[226]](#footnote-228)

In other words, the Gemara states that the sermon of the aforementioned Rabbi Elazar ben Fedet corresponds to the opinion of Rabbi Ishmael in Bariata, who said that a pervert who drank water from a pervert and it turned out that she was not defiled, is entitled to the end of her barrenness, and thus Ben Pedad's sermon from the unnecessary multiplication of words **see is** understandable. On this, the Gemara asks, how can Rabbi Elazar's interpretation according to Rabbi Akiva be explained, as according to his approach, it is not correct!? The Gemara explains that indeed R. Akiva does not learn from the words **see see** and does not accept this sermon, because in his opinion one should not learn from multiplying words since that is the way of the Torah, to speak as the language of men. From these matters, it emerges, in a clear yet strange way, that it is Rabbi Akiva who appears to be the literalist saying 'spoke', and Rabbi Ishmael is the interpreter of duplicated words!!

The additional fourteen disputes in the Babylonian Talmud on this topic are as follows:

1. Yevamot 71a on the words 'ish ish' (Leviticus 22:4) - in the subject of the laws of the uncircumcised - Rabbi Akiva expounds, Rabbi Eliezer says 'it is stated'. This controversy is also brought up in **Yalkut Shimoni** Parshat Ba 12.

2. In the inscriptions of Sez EB, Baba Metzia, not EB, on the words 'and he will smite us' (Deuteronomy 15:8) - on the subject of the rights of the poor - in the inscriptions of Rabbi Yehuda Durosh, the sages say 'debra'. In Bava Metzia, the sages expound, Rabbi Shimon says 'spoke'.

3. In Bava Metzia 31b, Kiddushin 17b on the words 'you shall surely give' (Deuteronomy 15:14) - regarding the topic of a Hebrew slave - the Sages expound, and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria says 'speak'.

4. In Bava Metzia 94b, on the words 'If it be stolen' (Exodus 22:11) - regarding the law of a lost item in a paid guardian - the Tanna in the Baraita expounds, and he who says 'it was stolen' learns from a fortiori argument from theft. No names of Tannaim are mentioned.

5. In Nedarim 3a, on the words 'to make a vow' (Numbers 6:2) - on the subject of the laws of vows - the names of the disputants are not mentioned.

6. Gittin 41a on the words 'and she was not redeemed' (Leviticus 19:20) - on the subject of the law of one who frees half his slave with money - Rabbi Judah the Prince expounds, and the sages say 'she spoke'.

7. Sanhedrin 56a on the words 'ish ish' (Leviticus 24:15) - on the subject of a gentile blaspheming God - Rabbi Meir interprets, the Sages, and likewise Rabbi Meiasha and Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaha of the Amoraim, say 'spoke'.

8. Sanhedrin 64b, 90b on the words 'that soul shall be cut off' (Numbers 15:31) - on the subject of intentional sin laws - Rabbi Akiva expounds, and Rabbi Ishmael says 'she spoke' and learns from the word 'and she shall be cut off'. This dispute is also brought in the Midrash Sifrei Numbers (from the school of Rabbi Ishmael), Parashat 'Shelach' 112, the passage beginning with "Because he has despised the word of the Lord" (Numbers 15:31), and also in the Midrash Pesikta Zutarta (Lekach Tov), Parashat 'Shelach' 112a.

9. Sanhedrin 85b on the words 'ish ish' (Leviticus 20:9) - in the matter of the laws of cursing - Rabbi Yonatan interprets, and Rabbi Yoshiya says 'dibrah'.

10. Makkot 12a on the words 'If he has left, he has left' (Numbers 35:26) - on the subject of the laws of the blood avenger who killed a protected murderer who inadvertently left his city of refuge - one baraita (quoted in Yalkut Shimoni 896) interprets and therefore he is exempt, another baraita says 'she spoke' and therefore his sentence is exile. Abaye determines that the Baraita which states 'spoke', is correct from logical reasoning. The names of the Tannaim are not mentioned.

11. Avodah Zarah 27a on the words 'he who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised' (Genesis 17:13) - on the subject of a Samaritan's circumcision - Rabbi Yossi interprets that it is permitted, and Rabbi Judah says 'she spoke' and it is forbidden, for it is written 'to her who is circumcised'. The conclusion of the Gemara there is that Rabbi Meir also holds the same view as Rabbi Yosi, that a non-Jew is forbidden to circumcise, while a Samaritan is permitted. This dispute is also brought in Midrash Yalkut Shimoni on Parashat 'Lech Lecha', Chapter 2.

12. Zevachim 103b on the words 'ish ish' (twice, Leviticus 17:3,8) - in the matter of slaughter and offering a sacrifice outside the Temple - Rabbi Shimon expounds, and Rabbi Yosi says 'it speaks'.

13. Arakhin 3a, Niddah 32b, and 44a on the words 'ish ish' (Leviticus 15:2) - in the matter of the laws of ziva impurity - Rabbi Yehuda expounds, and Rabbi Yishmael son of Rabbi Yochanan ben Beroka says 'dibrah'.

14. Excisions 11 AA on the words 'and redemption was not redeemed' (Vicera 19:20) - on the subject of slave laws, on the question of which slave is in question - Rabbi Akiva insists and Rabbi Ishmael says 'debra'. The Gemara adds that Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria and others - that is, Rabbi Meir (see Babylonian parentage 13b) - usually say 'debra'. However, due to other scriptures, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria here agrees with Rabbi Akiva, and others, namely Rabbi Meir, have a different opinion from all three.

The meaning of the rule 'Davarah' in the Babylonian Talmud is similar to that in the Jerusalem Talmud. But as mentioned, the Babylonian Talmud contains surprises. According to the sources in the Babylonian Talmud, among those who say 'Davarah' there are seven meticulous scholars, namely: Rabbi Eliezer of Hyrcanus, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Judah the Prince, Rabbi Meiasha, Rabbi Isaac Nappaha, Rabbi Josiah, Abaye, and Rabbi Ishmael son of Rabbi Yohanan ben Beroka. Rabbi Judah the Prince is a student of Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Eliezer Horkenus is the teacher of Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva, and in this case, it seems that Rabbi Ishmael is following in his teacher's footsteps. Everything else can be attributed to the school of Rabbi Ishmael.

Among those who do not say 'Davarah', only Rabbi Yonatan, a student of Rabbi Yishmael, opposes his teacher.

Five sages do not follow a consistent pattern: Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (once he says 'explicit' and three times he interprets), Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha (once he interprets and twice he says 'explicit'), Rabbi Meir, a student of Rabbi Akiva (once he says 'explicit' and twice he does not), Rabbi Judah bar Ilai, a student of Rabbi Akiva (once he says 'explicit' and twice he does not), Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Rabbi Yosi ben Halafta – two additional students of Rabbi Akiva (once they do this and once they do that).

Those who attempted to unravel the aforementioned puzzles and difficulties in the Babylonian Talmud were the **Tosafists**.[[227]](#footnote-229) The Tosafot states that "it is difficult to reconcile the teachings that the Torah speaks," and points out the contradictions in the opinions of Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Judah, Rabbi Yosei, and Rabbi Shimon. In order to resolve the difficulties, the Tosafot argue that even those who say 'it was said', concede that wherever possible, for the purpose of substantiating the tradition according to their understanding or to substantiate their reasoning, they interpret the duplication of words. However, in a place where such a Midrash requires uprooting the scripture from its context, or they have evidence that does not allow for the proposed doubling Midrash– they oppose the interpretation and say 'it is explicit'. Therefore, all the homiletic interpretations in Tractate Bava Metzia 59a, which expound on the doubled words: "restore, you shall restore", "send, you shall send", "rebuke, you shall rebuke", "leave, you shall leave", "raise, you shall raise", "die, he shall die", "return, you shall return", "lend, you shall lend", "open, you shall open", "give, you shall give" - there is no dispute about them and the interpretations are accepted even according to those who say 'Dibrah', because they do not uproot the scripture from its meaning and the interpreters have no proof to reject it from the scriptures or from logic. On the other hand, according to the Tosafs, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael are always consistent in their opinion: in the tractates of Kichot, Yavmoth, Sanhedrin, and Barchot - Rabbi Akiva requires and Rabbi Ishmael says 'Debra', and like him Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria says 'Debra'. The Tosafot surprises us and does not point to a contradiction in the positions of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael in Tractate Berakhot 31b. It seems that he had a version that was the opposite of our version in the Babylonian Talmud, and he quotes it verbatim in his words!! The version of the Tosafot is supported by the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 26a, where indeed the debate regarding the verse 'and she shall be cleared and shall conceive seed' is quoted in reverse from that in Berakhot. R. Akiva is the one who says that if there was a barren woman, she was impaled, while R. Ishmael is the one who said to him: If according to your words , all the barren women will hide and be impaled, while the modest barrens will not be entitled to be impaled?! Therefore, Rabbi Ishmael learns from this verse another elevation for a woman: "If she gave birth in pain - she gives birth with ease, females - she gives birth to males, short ones - she gives birth to tall ones, dark ones - she gives birth to fair ones." Nevertheless, the Tosafot further narrows the debate regarding 'Daberah' in the Babylonian Talmud. Not only does it focus on interpretations of doubled words, but it also narrows down to interpretations that take the text out of its context or that have evidence against them. The **Viceroy**[[228]](#footnote-230) He also tries to reconcile these contradictions in Babylon. He explains that those who say 'Davarah' generally use it when the interpretation attempts to learn a new halachic ruling from the doubling of words, but any other interpretation can be accepted.

During the Geonic period, a first shift occurred in the use of the term 'Dibrah'. We find for the first time a third meaning to the rule of 'Davarah'. There is an answer by Rabbi Hai Gaon (10th-11th century) in **the Answers of the Gaons** , from which the additional meaning emerges for the first time:

And the way in interpretation is to clarify first, that there is no doubt, either from logical reasoning or from the words of the sages, that God cannot be compared to any creature, and before Him there is neither laughter nor crying, nor sighing, nor tears, nor pressure. And as this matter becomes clear, it is known that everything the Rabbis said in this manner, they did not say it literally, nor was it forced. And when this becomes clear, it is known that everything the sages said in this manner, they did not say it literally, but as a metaphor and an analogy to things that are known among us by sight, for the Torah speaks in the language of human beings.**1** [**2** **3**]  
  
Footnotes:  
1. This phrase is a reference to the Talmudic principle that the Torah speaks in the language of human beings.  
2. This phrase is a repetition of the previous phrase, emphasizing the metaphorical nature of the sages' words.  
3. This phrase further emphasizes the principle that the Torah speaks in the language of human beings. Thus, the prophets dangle and say [for the prophets thus illustrate and say: Eye of the Lord]. Here is the hand of the Lord. And the anger of the Lord was kindled. Smoke rose in His wrath and fire from His mouth. And not on Pashtia [and not on Pashto] but in the Torah of parables and **the language of men** .[[229]](#footnote-231)

In the later Midrashim as well, I found this meaning for the term 'Davarah'. In the commentary of **Pisikta Zutarta** (Lekach Tov, 11th century)[[230]](#footnote-232), there are five midrashic interpretations in which the rule is mentioned:

1. Genesis Chapter 6, Verse 7, on the words 'for I regret' - the Torah speaks in the language of human beings.

2. Exodus, Parashat 'Yitro', Chapter 20, Verse 11, on the words 'and He rested on the seventh day' - the Torah speaks only in the language of human beings.

3. Exodus, Parashat 'Ki Tisa', Chapter 32, Verse 14, on the words 'And the Lord relented' - The Torah speaks in the language of human beings.

4. Deuteronomy, Parashat 'Va'etchanan', page 8a, Chapter 4, Verse 12 on the words 'You see no form; there is only a voice' - This verse contradicts many biblical verses such as 'The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it' (Deuteronomy 11:12), but the Torah speaks in these verses in the language of human beings.

5. Deuteronomy, Parashat 'Re'eh', page 23a, Chapter 14, Verse 22, on the words 'Aser Te'aser' - a language of encouragement, the Torah speaks in the language of human beings. In parallel, there are also interpretations of the doubling of words: halakhic interpretations such as 'one should not tithe from one crop to another', or aggadic ones like 'tithe so that you may become rich'.

Also, in the interpretation **that wisdom is good** (12th century)[[231]](#footnote-233) - R. Barchia in the name of R. Yitzchak says Torah spoke in the language of men, and the intention of the scripture is simply to say that Jacob intended to leave his home and finally arrive in Haran. In contrast, the sages interpret that on the day he left, he reached his destination by a miraculous leap, and then immediately decided to return to Bethel and arrived there on the same evening.

He used to say: Rav Hai Gaon and the minor Pesikta add a third meaning to the rule, which is not found in the Torat Kohanim and the Talmuds. According to their interpretation of the rule, the Torah generally always speaks (and not only in duplicate words) in human language to which people can relate and understand. Therefore, it speaks in anthropomorphic terms when it describes feelings, actions, or limbs, as it were, of God, who in truth cannot be described in human language. This meaning differs from that in the Sifra and is the opposite of that in the Talmuds. In the Sifra it is stated that the Torah was written in clear, simple language, as it is a divine Torah given to ordinary people in their language. However, in truth, it requires interpretation, and the interpretations of the sages successfully reveal an additional layer of complex laws. According to the Talmuds, one who says 'Davarah' believes that there are certain words in the Torah that the interpreter has no choice but to understand them literally. According to Rav Hai Gaon and the Pesikta, the one who says 'Dibrah' believes that the Torah, in its humility, had no choice but to lower its language to the needs of the common man, who is of limited understanding and cannot grasp the simple meaning. Therefore, it anthropomorphizes, as it were, God. However, the wise should be guided on how to correctly read the text - not in order to learn more laws, but so that they do not fall into theological errors. They should know that one should not understand the things that embody God literally, as God is abstract and has no body.

According to the last midrash in the list of sermons on the ruling, there is a fourth meaning to the rule and it is - double words are not meant to be demanded or ignored, but rather they are meant to speed up the performance of the mitzvah where there is a fear of delays for various reasons - as people say in such situations. However, the rule applies only to duplicated words. According to Midrash Shakal Tov, R. Barchia opines in the name of R. Yitzchak 'Debra', and the meaning of the rule in his opinion is perhaps even more comprehensive than that in the Talmud, namely, that the Torah should be read as simple much more often than we thought until now - and this is actually a fifth meaning.

Medieval Torah commentators and Jewish thinkers expanded the meaning of the Talmudic principle following Rav Hai Gaon and the later Midrashim in the Pesikta, which fundamentally transformed the Talmudic rule. Rabbi Chai Ibn Pakuda (11th century) in his book **Havut al-Halvavot** , explains the problematic nature of the Torah's need to express itself in fulfilling and humanizing expressions, both in speaking of God's organs and His actions and movements, in order to bring its words about the reality of God closer to the understanding of the common masses, and for the purpose of obtaining The cooperation of humans for his work. According to him, the translation of Unklos and the explanations of Razag in his book **Ha'Amunot and Da'ot** , help the educated person to understand that he must simplify the humanistic expressions in the simplest of the scriptures, and ascend to spiritual understandings of the Torah as much as he can, so as not to fall into theological fallacies. This, in his opinion, is the meaning of the principle 'Davarah' of the Sages. Here are the words in the language of Ibn Pakuda:

However, the active divine attributes are those attributes by which the Creator, blessed be He, is described in terms of His actions, and it is possible that some of His creations may participate in their recounting. And we were permitted to tell it to them, due to the urgency that requires us to make it known and to affirm its existence, so that we may accept its service. We have already found that this type of divine attribute is used extensively in the Torah and the books of the Prophets, as well as in the praises of the Prophets and the pious. These are also of two types: the first type are attributes that suggest a physical form, as the scripture says, "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; for in the image of God He made man." According to the Lord, "My hands have stretched out the heavens," "In the ears of the Lord," "Under His feet," "The arm of the Lord," "Who has not lifted up my soul in vain," "In the eyes of the Lord," "And the Lord said in His heart," and similar to these from the physical limbs. And the second attributes that indicate physical movements and actions, such as it is said: "And the Lord smelled," "And He saw and regretted," "And He was grieved in His heart," "And the Lord descended," "And God remembered," "And the Lord heard," "And the Lord awoke as one out of sleep," and many such instances from the actions of the speakers. However, our sages of blessed memory, in their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, translated this attribute from the measures and scrutinized it to the best of their ability, to understand it in a manner of respect. They attributed everything to the glory of the Creator, blessed be He, as they translated: "And behold, the Lord stood over him" - "And behold, the glory of the Lord was revealed"; "And the Lord saw" - "And the glory of the Lord was revealed"; "And the Lord descended" - "And the glory of the Lord was revealed"; "And God ascended from him" - "And the glory of the Lord withdrew from him". They conveyed everything in a manner of respect, distancing them from the Creator, blessed be He, so that no physicality or incident would reach Him. The great genius, Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon, has already extensively elaborated on this matter in his Book of Beliefs, in his commentary on the Order of Genesis, in his commentary on the Order of Vaera, and in the Book of Creation. His explanations are sufficient and we do not need to interpret or clarify them in this book. And we all agree that necessity has led us to conceptualize the Creator, blessed be He, and to describe Him in terms of created attributes, in order to estimate a matter that will establish the existence of the Creator, blessed be He, in our souls. The books of the prophets have conveyed this to people in physical terms, which are close to their understanding and comprehension. And if they were to describe it in terms that are appropriate to it from the spiritual words and spiritual matters, we would not understand neither the words nor the matter, and it would not be possible to perform something we do not know, for it is impossible to serve something that is not known. Therefore, it was necessary for the words and concepts to be according to the understanding of the listener, so that the matter would resonate with him through the physicality initially understood from the physical words. Afterwards, he would become wiser and more precise in understanding and acknowledging that all of this is in reference to the closeness and metaphor of the book, and that the true matter is more subtle, superior, elevated, and far beyond what we can comprehend about the nature of its subtlety. And the discerning heart will strive to peel away the shells of the words and their materiality from the subject matter, and will ascend in his thought from level to level, until he reaches from the truth of the matter being sought to what is within the power of his ability and understanding. And the foolish simpleton will consider God, blessed be He, in the apparent way suggested by the book, and when he accepts upon himself the service of his God and strives to honor Him, he has a great claim due to his simplicity and lack of understanding, because a person is only demanded according to his ability and his intellectual attainment, his understanding, his strength, and his wealth. [...] Similarly, the Hebrew language, all the books of the Prophets, and the words of the pious regarding the attributes of the Creator, may He be blessed, have expanded in physical metaphors, as we have mentioned, according to the understanding of the masses and in the language that people use to speak to each other. Therefore, our sages of blessed memory said in a similar context: **"The Torah speaks in the language of man"**. The books hint at a few of the spiritual matters, which will be understood by people of intellect and heart, to have everyone equal in the knowledge of the existence of the Creator, exalted be He, even if the truth of His essence is divided in their understanding. And so it is said in every subtle matter that is in the book of God's Torah, such as the reward of the world to come and its punishment. And so it is said in the explanation of the hidden wisdom that we aim to elucidate in this book, for the Torah is brief in explaining its matter, relying on the men of intellect and hinting at it through allusions to awaken interest in it, as we have already mentioned at the beginning of this book. It is to stir up all who can investigate it and interpret it, so that they may reach it and understand it, as it is said, "And those who seek the Lord will understand everything." And the Prophet has already warned us to be careful of the thought that God has a form or likeness, as it is said, "Take therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of form," and it is said, "And the likeness ye saw none save a voice." This means, in his saying "Take heed," etc.: Be careful with your thoughts and ideas, not to attribute to the Creator, may He be exalted, a plan, nor to liken Him in form or image, because your eyes did not fall upon a form or shape when He spoke with you.[[232]](#footnote-234)

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi (Rihel, 11th century) replies at the end of his book, **The Khazari** , a response to a Khazari king who stated that if a person believes and has the right intention - God knows this because everything is visible before him. The author responds that only if it is impossible to actualize the intention, some form of reward might be possible for the intention alone, subject to confession about this in prayer. However, usually both are required, the intention and the action, as such.

A person is free both in the realm of desire and in the realm of action. One must therefore argue against the person who seeks to attain the revealed reward without a revealed action. That is why it is said, " **And you shall sound the trumpets and remember before the Lord your God...** **and they shall be for you as a remembrance** " (Bamadbar 19-10), and " **Zikhron Terua** " (Leviticus 23:24), - not that the Lord needs to be reminded of a thing or to turn his attention to a thing , because if the mitzvahs need to be performed perfectly, in order for them to be worthy of reward - just like the prayers of prayer, they must be given an expression on the side of the possible perfection in supplication and request, because only if the intention and the deed are both properly complete will the reward come to them. But according to the custom of the people, it is similar as if there was a rejoicing with trumpets because of the remembrance - and " **the Torah spoke according to the language of men** ". However, if the act is performed without intention, or if the intention is not tied to an action, the hope for reward will be lost.[[233]](#footnote-235)

Thus, Rihal, like Ibn Pakuda, follows in the footsteps of Rav Hai Gaon and Midrash Lekach Tov, attributing to the term 'Daberah' the meaning of negating the physicality in the literal interpretation of the scriptures, which should not be read literally, but rather as a question. The phrasing in the Torah is as if God needs to be reminded, just as people behave and interact among themselves. This is in order to facilitate their understanding of the text.

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (first half of the 12th century)[[234]](#footnote-236) often writes in his commentary on the Torah, like Rab Hai Gaon and the Pesikta. On the anomalies of the expression 'And the Lord regretted' as brought in the Pesikta, he explains that of course the Lord is not a human and does not regret, but the Torah speaks in the language of human beings. So too in Genesis 6, Exodus (the long version) 13:17, 32:14, Jonah 3:10. In Genesis 1:26, on the words 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,' Ibn Ezra explains: "Know that all the work of creation was created for the honor of man, by the command of God." And the earth and the water brought forth the plants, and all living creatures. And then God said to the angels, "Let us make man." We will deal with it, not the water and the earth. And after we knew that **the Torah spoke according to the language of men** , because the one who speaks is also a man who hears, and no one can speak things higher than him or lower than him, only in the way of the human figure, and he also said: The mouth of the earth, the hand of the Jordan [in Md. 13:90], and the head Ores of the earth [Proverbs 8:20]. And God forbid, God forbid to be similar to God. And so it is said: "To whom will you liken me [Isaiah 25]". In Genesis 6:11, on the words 'before God,' he explains that the words were written in human language so that the listeners would understand "like a servant who commits a transgression before his master and does not fear him." In Genesis 115 about the words 'and the Lord came down', he explains: "And **according to the way of the language of men,** the scripture said, and he came down", for God does not descend or ascend because He is not a body. Regarding the word 'vayinafash,' Raavad (the brief) writes in Exodus 31:17 that God did not rest, but rather the Torah spoke in the language of human beings. This is also the case with other expressions such as in Exodus (the long version) 4:8, Deuteronomy 32:10, Psalms 2:3, 31:2, Proverbs 22:12, and Daniel 10:21.

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides, second half of the 12th century) also adopted this principle, following Rav Hai Gaon, the Pesikta, Chovot HaLevavot, Rihal, and Ibn Ezra, for the purpose of rejecting anthropomorphisms of God and understanding anthropomorphic verses as rhetorical, not to be taken literally. In **his commentary to the Mishnah** , he formulates the third principle out of his thirteen principles as follows:

And the third principle is the denial of physicality from Him. And it is that this One [God] is not a body nor a force in a body, and physical occurrences such as movement and rest do not happen to Him, neither essentially nor incidentally. Therefore, they, peace be upon them, denied him both the connection and the separation, and they said: neither sitting nor standing, neither neck nor hump, that is, neither separation while he is a neck, nor connection. For 'they flew from' **"and flew on the shoulder of the Philistines"**, meaning they will be pushed by the shoulder to join them. And the prophet said **: And to whom will you liken me,** etc., **and to whom will you liken me and I will liken you** , etc. And if He had a body, then He would be similar to bodies. And everything that comes in the books describing Him in physical terms, such as walking, standing, sitting, speaking, and the like, are all metaphorical, as they said, "The Torah speaks in the language of human beings". People have spoken a lot about this matter, and this third principle is what is indicated by what is said, "For you saw no form", meaning you did not perceive Him as having a form, because as we have said, He is not a body nor a force in a body.[[235]](#footnote-237)

In the book **Mishneh Torah**, Maimonides writes similar things:

So what is the meaning of the phrases in the Torah such as **"under His feet", "inscribed by the finger of God", "the hand of the Lord", "the eyes of the Lord", "the ears of the Lord"**, and similar expressions? Everything according to the opinion of men is that they know nothing but the corpses, and **the Torah spoke according to the language of men** . And all of them are nicknames, as it is said: **If my lightning shines with a sword** , and because he has a sword and with a sword he kills? It's a parable and everything is a parable.

And since this is the case, all these things and the like that are said in the Torah and the words of the prophets are all parables and allegories. As it is said: **He who sits in the heavens will wear out, as I am angry with their vanities, when the Lord is six** and the like in them, the sages said about everything **, the word of the Torah is the language of men** . And he says **they make me angry?** , after all, he says **I, the Lord, have not changed!,** while he was sometimes angry and sometimes happy - he would change. And all these things are only found in the dark, lowly bodies, dwellers of clay houses whose foundation is in the dust, but He, blessed be He, is exalted and elevated above all this.[[236]](#footnote-238)

The Rambam also writes similar things in **Mora Nabukim** , and adds touchstones for the understanding of the masses versus the understanding of the educated. The masses believe that what is considered a deficiency among humans cannot be used to describe God, and what is perfection among humans, such as life and movement, can be used to describe God. But of course, this is a false analogy and an invalid embodiment, for God cannot be described, and the enlightened understand that He is abstract. Here are the matters in the wording of Maimonides:

You are familiar with their [the sages'] statement that encompasses all types of interpretations related to this field, namely, what they said: "The Torah speaks in the language of human beings". This means that everything that all human beings are capable of understanding and conceptualizing at first thought– is necessarily attributed to God, may He be exalted. Therefore, He is described in terms that indicate physicality, to signify that He, may He be exalted, exists. Indeed, the masses do not initially perceive any reality other than the reality of a physical body. In their opinion, what is not a body, or found within a body, does not exist. [...] Everything that the masses perceive as a deficiency or absence does not describe God. Therefore, one does not attribute to him eating and drinking, sleep, illness, injustice, or anything similar. And all that the masses consider perfect, they attribute to God. And even if these are perfections in relation to us, what we consider perfections, when attributed to God, are all ultimately deficient. [...] And there is no difference whether one attributes to God eating and drinking or attributes to Him movement. But according to **the language of humans** , that is, the mass imagination, eating and drinking are shortcomings in their eyes when they are focused on God, and movement is not a disadvantage with regard to Him, even though the follicles require it [and God does not need speech]. [...] And there is no doubt that with the negation of physicality, all of this is nullified, namely: descended, ascended, walked, stood, stood still, circled, sat, dwelled, exited, entered, passed and all similar terms. There would be no need to elaborate on this matter, were it not for the common misconception that has taken hold. Therefore, it is fitting to clarify this for those who impose upon themselves the pursuit of human perfection, and to remove - with a slight expansion, as we have done - these comparative illusions that have preceded and come from childhood.[[237]](#footnote-239)

Rabbi Avraham Ibn Daoud (first Rabbid, 12th century), in his book, **The High Faith** , also writes in the way of the thinkers before him. Every discerning individual understands that there are contradictions in the plain meaning of the text, and they must be reconciled according to one side. When the side that reason cannot accept, it must be negated. It is also clear to any enlightened person that God is abstract, omnipotent, and omniscient, and emotions do not act on Him or affect Him. Therefore, verses whose literal meaning suggests otherwise should be interpreted non-literally, as per the question, and understood to have been written in this way for the sake of the unenlightened masses. This is referred to as the principle of 'speaking'. Here are his words:

The Torah verses, some of which are interpreted literally, and some of which are interpreted metaphorically, inevitably require explanation. The proof of this is the contradiction between some of them according to what was previously stated, therefore there is no choice but to interpret one of the conflicting ends. And your notices that the verse that needed explanation is the one that the mind will testify to its contradiction, and that many verses were laid down according to what was appropriate for the multitude, not according to what was concerned with its truth, and it was said in him **that the Torah spoke as in the language of men** , as they said, " **Come down, please, and I will see her next cry for me, make her a bride, and if I do not know** [ Genesis 8:11]. **"For now I know that you fear God"** [Genesis 22:12]. **Loli anger enemy Agor** [Deuteronomy, Lev Kach]. And many like them.[[238]](#footnote-240)

Subsequently, the Raavad discusses the question of why the Torah mostly speaks about reward in this world and only hints at the reward in the world to come. His answer is that the Torah is intended for the masses who understand reward only in terms of this world.

For the Torah is to souls what medicine is to bodies. Just as a doctor who has taken upon himself to heal the people of a country in general, or a region as a whole, finds that the sick are numerous among them, some with severe ailments and some with minor ones. Here is one who is obligated to supervise those who are deeply ill more so, however, for those with a mild illness, a little supervision suffices for them. Indeed, the Torah, although it primarily promises and designates a more suitable destiny for the masses, as they constitute the majority of people. And if they are spoken to with words suitable for unique individuals[1], their intellects weaken, and their ideas become confused.  
  
[1] The term "unique individuals" refers to those with exceptional intellectual or spiritual capacities. And for this, the verses come in their simple meaning, and about this it is said, "The Torah speaks in the language of human beings."[[239]](#footnote-241)

Rabbi David Kimhi (Radak, 12th-13th century)[[240]](#footnote-242) in his commentary on the Torah, also employs the principle concerning the anthropomorphization and humanization of God in the Bible, following the later Midrashim, Ibn Pakuda, Rihal, Ibn Ezra, Raavad, and Maimonides. Thus in Genesis 6:6, regarding the expression 'And the Lord regretted'; 8:21, on the phrase 'And the Lord smelled'; 9:15, on the expression 'And I will remember'; 9:13, on the phrase 'God rejoices'; 11:5, on the expressions 'And the Lord came down', 'And the Lord saw'; Jeremiah 7:9, on the phrase 'They have provoked me to anger with their vanities'; 11:20, on the expression 'Unto you I have revealed'; Jonah 4:10, on the phrase 'Which you have not labored for'.

**In the Book of Education** (late 13th century), following the fourth meaning, according to the last ruling in the list above (although he is aware that this is not the original meaning in the Talmud), the following were written about the **words** :

Not to lend with interest to an Israelite, as it is said [Leviticus 25:37] **"Do not give him your money for interest, nor give him your food for increase"** (Leviticus 25:38). And these are not two prohibitions, for interest is usury and usury is interest, just as they, of blessed memory, said in Bava Metzia [61a]: You do not find usury without interest, nor interest without usury. And why did the scripture differentiate them? In other words, why did the text differentiate and not write: 'Do not give him your money to eat with interest,' to transgress it with two prohibitions, that is, to increase the warnings against it? And this matter is from what I mentioned above, that the Torah sometimes doubles the warnings on what God desires to greatly distance us from. And perhaps it can be said in this regard, similar to what they, of blessed memory, would say in other matters: **The Torah speaks in the language of man**. Moreover, the Torah always warns us about what we must be very careful of, just as people warn each other about serious matters, they will double their conditions and multiply their words on the matter, so that the diligent person will remember and be eager about the issue at all times. And indeed, it is fitting for a person to be extremely cautious with the word of God, even if he hears His word in a small hint. All of this is due to His abundant kindness towards His creatures, as He has doubled their warnings many times in some places. When a man disciplines his son. Therefore, we will give thanks to His great name, Selah, for the abundance of goodness He has bestowed upon us. Blessed is He.[[241]](#footnote-243)

Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher (13th-14th century)[[242]](#footnote-244) in his commentary on the Torah, mentions the principle both in the midrashic sense of doubling words and also in the matter of anthropomorphizing God: thus in Genesis 1:27 on the expression 'in His image', he mentions the combinations 'Hand of God', 'Eyes of God', 'Ears of God', and 'Face of God'; in 2:17: on the expression 'you shall surely die'; Exodus 6:8: on the expression 'which I have raised my hand'; 19:18: on the expressions 'God descended upon it', 'a roaring lion'.

R. Yosef Elbo (14th-15th century) in his **Book of the Barren** , also follows in the footsteps of Ibn Pakuda, Ibn Ezra and Rambam, and ignores the original meaning that the Sages gave to their rule. He asserts that according to this rule, one should deviate from the literal interpretation of the scriptures when reason does not accept the literal interpretation as possible. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the discerning to interpret all verses of God's physical manifestation beyond their literal meaning, and to see in them the allegories intended to explain to the ears of the masses, to speak in their language and at their low level of understanding. Here are his words:

Thus wrote the Rabbi, the teacher [Maimonides] of blessed memory, in Chapter 25 of the second part, that what he believed about creation ex nihilo was not necessarily derived from the verses, for the verses could be interpreted differently. However, his belief in creation ex nihilo was, in his view, a true belief in itself, and therefore it is appropriate to interpret the verses in a way that would agree with this. And thus the Rabbi, of blessed memory, explained this, that anything which contradicts the verses should not be believed at all, provided that what comes from the verses will not be a deceitful opinion that does not form its reality in the mind. For what is the opinion of a liar, the Torah will not compel one to believe it. For the Torah does not compel belief in something that contradicts primary rational principles, nor in a concept that cannot be conceived as real by the intellect. However, something that can be conceived by the mind, even though its existence is impossible in nature, such as the resurrection of the dead and all the miracles mentioned in the Torah, it is fitting and obligatory to believe in them. But a false opinion, whose reality will not be depicted by the intellect, even though it comes in the Torah in an interpretation, as **you have filled the foreskin of your heart** (Deuteronomy 10:16), is not worthy of being believed as it is, and the verses will be interpreted in a way that agrees with the truth.

And this is the way of Unklos Hagar and Jonathan ben Uziel and the other sages of Israel, who interpreted all the verses that come in the Torah and in the prophets instructing about the fulfillment - in a way that agrees with the truth, and took them out of their simplicity to be simply false opinion, and said **the words of the Torah according to the language of men** and to quiet the ear.[[243]](#footnote-245)

He continues and elaborates further:

It has already been established in a clear manner that the Blessed Name is not a body nor a force in a body, and therefore, it is necessary to remove from Him, the Blessed, all occurrences of the body and physical reactions. And according to this, there needs to be a reason for what is found in the words of all the prophets, that the Lord be blessed to be jealous and to avenge and punish, Nahum said: **To envy and avenge the Lord, the Lord avenges and to possess, the Lord avenges his servants and punishes his enemies** (Nahum 1:2), and these They are all carnal activities, and apart from that they are obscene measures that should not be related to any whole, even though he may ascend there, blessed be He. And it is found that the scripture attributed pride to him: **The Lord, the king of the tide, washed** (Psalms 33:1), and it was also found that he attributed to him the softening of mercy, saying: **Together Nahumi became proud** (Hosea 11:5), and he attributed sadness to him: **And his heart was sad** (Genesis 6:6), and attributed to him the shortness of the soul: **And his soul was short in the labor of Israel** (Judges 10:16).

It is said that since all the prophets aim to guide the general public towards the service of God and His love, and the masses are only inclined to serve out of fear of punishment, they speak in a language understood by the general public. And since **in the language of men,** when the king judges those who rebel against him and gives the kingdom to another, he will say of him that he is jealous and vengeful and that he is the owner of heath, so the prophets will say of God, blessed be He, when he judges those who transgress his will that he is a jealous and avenging God and that he is the owner of heath, to be the action drawn from him on the transgressors of his will is an avenging action And the watcher and the jealous. [...]

And the rest of the carnal marvels should be understood in this way, which is to give understanding to men from the action drawn from it in order to silence the ear, as found the scripture said in the interpretation **and you were very guarded to your souls because you did not see any image** (Deuteronomy 4:15), and even so attributed to him the physical tools. [...]

In this vein, it should be understood that all physical manifestations attributed to Him, blessed be He, in the Scriptures, are indeed stated to make the matter comprehensible to people, not that the matter is so in truth. Our sages of blessed memory stated a great principle in this regard, "The Torah speaks in the language of man".[[244]](#footnote-246)

Rabbi Isaac Abravanel (15th century)[[245]](#footnote-247) mentions the principle in his commentary on the Torah, both in his discussion of materialization and punishment, and also within a broader context. Thus, for the purpose of refutation: in Genesis 6:6, regarding the expression 'and He regretted'; 9:15, on the phrase 'and I will remember'; in Numbers 29:12, on the expression 'for the Lord's portion is His people'. And in the broader discussion overall: Genesis 1:26, on the expression 'God created', 'Let us make man', in singular and plural; Exodus 13:16, on the expression 'as a sign upon your hand'.

At the end of the eighteenth century, another turning point occurred in the use of the rule 'Davar Ha' and in the meaning attributed to it. It no longer serves to establish a method of studying laws or to prevent theological errors among the enlightened, but rather to establish the view that the Torah speaks to the common people in their language with an educational aim - to ensure the primacy or exclusivity of the simple interpretation for understanding its primary meaning, and to redefine the essence and purpose of the Midrash of the Sages. According to the new definition, the general rule implies that there are no hidden layers of laws to be interpreted from the text in the Torah, or additional layers of philosophical or Kabbalistic ideas. The reason for this shift was the fragmentation of Judaism into several religious streams following emancipation, enlightenment, secularism, and biblical criticism. The streams that denied the divine origin of the Oral Torah were compelled to a new interpretation of the principle.

In the commentaries of Shadal (1800-1865) on the Torah, we already find this new usage of the 'Davarah' rule. In places where it seems that the Torah contradicts what is known from science or reason, Shadal uses the principle of 'Dibrah'. He scarcely addresses the issue of materialization. The purpose of the Torah is not to teach us natural science or philosophy, but to make us better people. It was given to people at the lower level of most of its recipients, not at the level of a few wise men. It reflects what the ordinary people, those whom the Torah intended to educate, understood and saw with their own eyes. Already in the introduction to the first verse in the Torah, he writes:

The discerning will understand that the Torah's intention is not to convey natural wisdom, and the Torah was given not for the purpose of imparting such wisdom, but to guide human beings in the path of righteousness and justice, and to instill in their hearts the belief in divine unity and providence. The Torah was not given solely to the wise, but to all the people. Just as the matter of providence and reward is not explained (and it would not have been appropriate to explain it) in the Torah in a philosophical manner, but rather the Torah speaks of it in human language (**"The Torah speaks in the language of man"**), such as **"And the Lord's anger was kindled against you"** (Deuteronomy 7:4), **"And it grieved Him at His heart"** (Genesis 6:6), and many such instances, so too the matter of creation is not narrated (and it would not have been appropriate to narrate it) in the Torah in a philosophical manner. As our sages said (Midrash HaGadol to Genesis 1:1), "It is impossible to convey the power of the act of creation to flesh and blood." Therefore, it is not appropriate for Torah scholars to distort the scriptures in order to reconcile them with natural sciences, nor is it appropriate for a researcher to deny the divine origin of the Torah, if he finds in its narratives things that do not align with natural research.[[246]](#footnote-248)

In his explanation of the opening verse of the Torah on the words **'the heavens and the earth'** , he immediately applies his principles and states:

**The Torah spoke as the language of men** , and divided the whole world and all the worlds into two parts, that which is above and that which is below, all according to the sight of the eyes of the man who dwells in the land.[[247]](#footnote-249)

Here are a few more examples of Rashi's use of the principle 'Dibberah' in his commentary, according to his principles:

**Genesis 1:6: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters:** It depicts the air between the earth and the clouds as a spread-out body that separates the water on the earth from the water in the clouds, and it supports the water above it. By the will of the Lord, they descend from there onto the earth. [...] But later, in the days of Isaiah [55:10], it seems that they knew that there were no water reservoirs above, and that the rainwater returns upwards. [...] And because the name 'raki'a' (firmament) is founded on the belief in the upper waters, "the waters that are above the heavens" (Psalms 148:4) which the firmament supports, and this belief has become obsolete and forgotten, the name 'raki'a' has also become obsolete, and is found to denote the heavens only in three places. [...] And behold, **the Torah speaks in the language of human beings**, and it said "let there be a firmament" according to their understanding.

**Genesis 1:16: "The two great lights"**: The sun and the moon, as both illuminate the earth more than the other stars. In this respect, for which they are called lights, they are greater than their counterparts. Even though the moon is physically smaller than other stars, and even though the moon has no light of its own, **the Torah speaks in the language of human beings**, and we receive a lot of light from the moon, therefore it is a great light.

**Genesis 821: And God gave the smell of fragrance** : from the root of Noah. [...] a sacrifice that may appease the wrath of God. And behold, this metaphor, it is known that it is only in the manner of **"The Torah speaks in the language of man"** according to the understanding of the people of the generation in which the prophet stands; and here it is fitting to consider that Samuel the prophet said to Saul (Samuel I 15:22) **"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice"**, and from then on we find this knowledge widely disseminated among Israel. [...] From now on, the matter is as clear as the sun, that it is impossible for the Torah to have been written in the days of the kings, or from Samuel and onwards, because the Torah **spoke in the language of human beings**, whose intellect was in a very low state compared to the state of Israel in the days of the kings.

**Genesis 6:6**: **And the Lord regretted:** This is connected to the verse that follows it, **And the Lord was sorry**, and this is in the manner of the Torah speaking in the language of human beings.

Exodus 20:4 "And that is in the water under the earth": Following the path of "He spread the earth over the water" (Psalms 136:6), the Torah speaks in the language of human beings and according to their belief in those times.

Shadal diverged from the extreme rationalist philosophy of Maimonides and his ilk. Of course, God is not a body, but according to him, there is no need to worry about the verses that anthropomorphize God and humanize Him. They are preferable in his eyes to the philosophical principles that distance God from man, and cool the emotional connection between Him and man. Here are things he wrote on this matter in his commentary:

And here is the word **in our image** and recommending **the image of God** are not evidence that the Torah teaches that God has a human form. And it cannot be denied that some of our ancestors attributed to God a pattern as a human pattern, and they also said in the blessing of the bridegrooms (Escriptions page 8 11): **Who created man in his own image in the image of his pattern** , and a pattern is certainly where it is said about the building of the parts of the body. Nevertheless, our ancestors did not believe that God and the angels possess a body and form like ours. Explicitly, Rashi wrote (Makkot 12a, s.v. Chamutz Begadim) that angels are not flesh and blood. However, the truth of the matter is that a simple intellect, entirely without body, without any form, and without length, width, or height at all, is a concept that a human being cannot depict and will not settle in his heart. And if the philosophers speak of it, ultimately they only have a negative depiction of it, not a positive one. And the Torah was given to all the people, and the people need to be able to depict their God in a positive light, not in a negating image. Indeed, the ancients attributed to God, angels, and souls a spiritual essence finer than any known body, yet it still possesses form and structure.[[248]](#footnote-250)

Here is an excerpt from a letter written in 1840 on the difference between the elitist Greek philosophers and their flawed objectives, and the humble Jewish sages and their blessed humanistic goals:

In general, I find a significant difference and fundamental opposition between the sages of Israel and the sages of Greece. And it is thus: The wise men of Greece, whose entire inclination (the virtuous among them) was towards imagined glory, would elevate their words above the nature of man, and would belittle the value of the body, its pleasures, and its desires. And they used to say that the sense of touch is a disgrace to us, and that eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse are animalistic matters. And the masses were despised and loathed in their eyes, deemed unfit to attain perfection. Their primary purpose for man was knowledge, above all, knowledge of spiritual matters. And the sages of Israel were the opposite: they were exalted and elevated in their actions, not in their words. They did not belittle the value of the body and its pleasures, and the purpose of man in their view was not to recognize his Creator, but to fulfill His will. The Creator's desire was not for them to pursue study, inquiry, and knowledge, but rather justice, truth, and peace; and if study was esteemed among them, it was only the study of Torah, which leads to action. In conclusion– the sages of Israel are the disciples of Moses our teacher, and just as the divine Torah, whose ways are pleasant for the benefit of the entire community, speaks **in the language of human beings**, and lets the ear hear what it can hear, and humbles the loftiness of God, and brings Him, as it were, to the level of man, not so that we may know Him in full, but so that His fear may be upon our faces so that we do not sin; so too, our sages of blessed memory, in all their studies, aim for the benefit of the community, and do not seek to elevate man above his nature. However, they degrade the spiritual beings below the level of a righteous human. Even if a person does not understand anything about spiritual matters, and even if he never ceased to eat, drink, and rejoice all his days - if he was righteous and observed the commandments of his God, he is considered greater than the ministering angels, who do not sin because they do not possess an evil inclination.-[[249]](#footnote-251)

He further added on the same subject the following impressive remarks in his commentary on the Torah, including a comparison between the love of God in the Torah and the love of God according to the philosophers, a concept explored by Ibn Pakuda, Maimonides, and Moses Mendelssohn:

Returning to the matter of love for God, I would say that since the divine Torah chose to speak in the 'language of man'^1 and to depict for us a God who is affected, who possesses anger and desire, love and hatred, and the like, it was fitting that man too should be depicted as loving or hating God. For whoever constantly sets God before him and whose primary thoughts are to bring pleasure before Him and to observe His laws, judgments, and commandments, this person is called one who loves God; [...] However, the love mentioned by the author of 'Duties of the Heart'^2 (Tenth Gate, Chapter 1) - that the soul, being a simple spiritual essence, inclines towards the spiritual, etc., and when the light of intellect breaks upon it, it withdraws from the world and all its pleasures, etc., its only occupation being the service of God, and nothing else crosses its mind, etc. - all this is not in accordance with the path of the Torah of Moses, but is taken from the philosophers who despised the masses engaged in the settlement of the world.   
  
^1 This phrase refers to the anthropomorphic language used in the Torah to describe God's actions and emotions.  
^2 'Duties of the Heart' is a famous work of Jewish philosophy and ethics by the medieval Spanish rabbi Bahya ibn Paquda. But according to our Torah, the Creator of the earth did not create it in vain, He formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). And the service of the Lord and His love is not in solitude and dwelling in the wilderness, but in living among people and doing righteousness and justice with them (see Kuzari, beginning of discourse 3). [...] And Maimonides believed (Guide for the Perplexed, Part III, Chapter 28) that love of God can only exist through understanding the entirety of reality as it is and through the aspect of His wisdom within it. And for this reason, he wrote three chapters in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah (2, 3, 4) to teach the people some of the wisdom of creation, so that the love of God may enter their hearts; and all this is far from the intention of the Torah, and those chapters have no connection with his book, the Mishneh Torah. And if he were a true philosopher, he would understand that it is possible for a future generation to nullify the views of Aristotle and his students on natural philosophy and the nature of the heavens, rendering his book a purveyor of falsehood. However, he believed (Guide for the Perplexed, Part 2, Chapter 22) that everything Aristotle said about all that exists from beneath the sphere of the moon to the center of the earth is undoubtedly true. Regarding the matter of the stars and their movements, the scholars of Ishmael disagreed with Aristotle and relied on them. And he believed in ten intellects that drive the spheres, and he sought and found, with difficulty, ten names by which the angels are called, and he said that each of these names refers to one of the separate intellects (Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, Chapter 2), something that had never occurred to the prophets. And I do not say this to detract even a hair's breadth from the honor of Maimonides, but rather to inform the young men of this generation that the true philosopher should not rely on other philosophers, but should refine every matter in the crucible of his own examination. And he who does not have the strength to do so, but he trusts the famous philosophers of his day (just as Rabba and Rambam trusted Aristotle and the sages of Ishmael, and just as Rambam trusted Leibnitz and Wolff, and just as others now trust Kant and HaGal or Spinoza) - He is no more a philosopher than he who trusts Abraham our father and Moses and Hillel and Rabbi Akiva. And by this, I do not mean to discourage young men from studying wisdom and languages, for this has never been the intention of my forefathers and the wise men of Italy; but my entire endeavor and desire is to keep young men from blindly accepting everything that is popular and glorified in their generation. And this malady comes to them not from inquiry and love of truth, but from a love of illusory honor and their desire to find favor in the eyes of the people of their generation. But lovers of truth and those with strong and courageous intellect know that many ideas were once held in high esteem and glory in one generation or generations, and fell into contempt and oblivion in a later generation. Similarly, many ideas were considered disgraceful and shameful for a period or periods, but after a while, they became renowned and praiseworthy, and the earth was filled with them.[[250]](#footnote-252)

The topic of the development of Halacha in the Halachic Midrashim also came up for discussion during that period. A dispute erupted between the historical-positive school (hereafter - the Conservative Movement) founded by Rabbi Zechariah Frankel (1801-1875) and the historian Heinrich Zvi Hirsch Graetz (1817-1891), and the Orthodox led by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), regarding the development of the halakhic codex during the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods.

Already at the second assembly of rabbis in 1845, Frankel announced the new principle he was initiating, the nature of which he did not detail. However, in a book that was published in the same year, he elaborates on his new approach. He distinguishes between the canonical law - the written Torah that was discovered at Sinai, and the positive law - the legislation in the Mishnah and Talmud - a new creation of the Sages, which grew organically out of the new being of their lives and was shaped out of the historical tradition of the nation. The connection of this work to the Bible is merely that of a supporting reference. The polemic with the Reform movement only began after the publication of the fourth part of Graetz's magnum opus, **History of the Jews**, in German in 1853, which was dedicated to a systematic and comprehensive explanation of the theory of the evolution of Halacha during the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods.

According to Gertz, the literature of Halacha that goes beyond what is written in the Torah is divided into two strata: the words of the Scribes in the first stratum, and Halacha, Midrash, and Talmud in the second. The majority of them are innovations of the Sages. According to J.J. Harris's explanation, Geiger's aim was to nullify the Reformers' accusation of the Sages' betrayal of the Jewish people, and to present Halacha as a combination of tradition and innovation, made out of loyalty to the spirit of the nation and its evolving needs throughout history. The book is an expansion of things Gertz published in 1852, in Frankel's journal, under the title: "The Structure of Jewish History". At the heart of the book stands the theory, primarily presented by Nachman Krochmal, that 'the Scribes' innovated laws according to what was necessary for the Babylonian exiles. Following them, the Pharisees and the Sadducees were divided over the legitimacy of these laws. Hillel revolutionized the field by introducing the seven hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is interpreted. Even though they were his invention, he presented them as a tool handed down from Sinai and used them to reveal the source in the biblical verses of the laws that were transmitted traditionally by the scribes, and also for the purpose of new legislation according to changing needs. Hillel's goal was to bring peace among the scholars and to allow for innovation. His intentions were noble, but he did not succeed in his mission. The debate continued between the stubborn Samaritans, the traditionalists - Shammai, Rabbi Eliezer, and Rabbi Ishmael - and the creative, revolutionary, and innovative sages: Hillel, Rabbi Joshua, and Rabbi Akiva. Graetz presents the sages as men of their times, whose characteristics and their analysis of the nation's needs influenced their approach to Halacha and the laws they created. Here is what Graetz writes about Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael:

In contrast to the strong hand that Rabbi Akiva showed us in his novel approach to interpreting the transmitted Torah, in his search and discovery of inferences and hints, whether near or far, we see his colleague and friend, Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, opposing him in all aspects of his Torah teachings. Rabbi Ishmael is the straightforward interpreter of biblical verses according to common sense, and knows how to use the scriptures to derive laws without deviating from their meaning and their simple language. [...] In his approach to halakhic midrash, he deviated from the path of Rabbi Akiva and stated: The tradition and ways of the Oral Torah must align with the ways of the Written Torah, its logical intent, and the plain meaning of the text. And not only this, but his heart did not incline to expound on "every thorn and thorn hangs heaps of laws", but he also found no satisfaction in the general dissection of the Scriptures to their words and letters. When he and Rabbi Akiva, his colleague, were debating a capital case, and his colleague said to him: "I interpret 'daughter and daughter', Rabbi Ishmael said to him: "Just because you interpret 'daughter and daughter', should we subject this woman to burning?" (Sanhedrin 51a) In contrast to Rabbi Akiva who expounded upon all the "et" in the Torah, he only expounded upon three, and also in a manner close to the simple meaning of the text. And for this reason he did not issue laws that are tongue-in-cheek, because his words were " **the words of the Torah as the language of men** ". Therefore, he did not wish to derive one law from another law that is not explicitly stated in the Torah, but rather learned through one of the principles or rules of proof. Indeed, he was the one who disagreed with Rabbi Akiva regarding the interpretation of the Torah in abundance and sparingly, and he chose only the methods of Hillel the Elder, whose foundation is logical proof and rational reasoning (the light and the heavy).[[251]](#footnote-253)

According to Gertz, the disputes between Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva stem from their differing characters. Rabbi Ishmael was measured and rational, while Rabbi Akiva was sharp, aggressive, and extreme. Rabbi Ishmael's principle of 'dibrah' is indeed mentioned in relation to duplicate words, but this principle is essentially a general slogan of Rabbi Ishmael, reflecting his position that verses should be interpreted literally, complex interpretations should not be sought, and every interpretation should be weighed on the scales of straight reason.

These things made Rashar Hirsch very angry and he was quick to respond to them in his magazine **Yesharon** . The Neo-Orthodox Hirsch maintained a conservative stance that there was no development in the majority of Halacha, as the laws in the Mishnah and Talmud were already given to Moses at Sinai before the written Torah as the Oral Torah, and the Sages merely restored those that were forgotten due to troubles and wars, with the help of the thirteen hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is interpreted, which were also given at Sinai. The disputes between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael were only about the measure to be used in learning the Halacha, and not about the Halacha itself that came in tradition according to both of them as reconstructors. Both received the thirteen hermeneutical principles, and the rule of 'davar' exclusively served Rabbi Ishmael for learning from the duplication of words, which he rejected and Rabbi Akiva interpreted. Hirsch defines Gertz's words about the differences between the creative people of Beit Hillel and the stubborn and conservative people of Beit Shammai as a baseless imagination. Gertz's claim about the influence of a sage's personal character and opinions on his halakhic positions is rejected with the argument that they were completely objective, as they did not create new laws but only transmitted traditions from Sinai. The disputes arose from difficulties in the transmission process and from different traditions held by the sages, and were resolved according to the majority opinion, not from personal or political motives. Generally, Yerushalmi criticizes all of Gertz's research on the scholars of the Mishnah and the Talmud, and convincingly demonstrates that it is superficial and selective. Here are a few quotes from Hirsch's writings in his collection.

Regarding Gertz's research on the development of Halacha, Hirsch says:

The author views the history of the Jews as a history of the development of Jewish law. Instead of viewing the moral and spiritual heroes of Jewish history as a product of theoretical study and practical observance of the commandments, he sees the law as a product of individuals with more or less spiritual or creative skills. As a result, instead of a true history of Jewish development, we receive an imaginary account of the evolution of Jewish law [...] In fact, no such process ever occurred. It is no wonder, therefore, that the author had to close his eyes to the clear truth, distort facts, invent motives, and while being led by imagination, to give a superficial and unfaithful representation of the documented sources [...] The homilies are not the sources of the laws, but the tools for preserving and organizing the law.[[252]](#footnote-254)

On Gertz's explanation of the dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael, Hirsch says the following:

If we consult the Talmudic sources to verify how many of Geiger's claims indeed correspond to the facts, we find that it is unequivocally written there that Rabbi Ishmael's opposition to Rabbi Akiva was limited only to a very few forms of interpretation, which are explicitly specified. As for the rest, Rabbi Ishmael, no less than Rabbi Akiva (and let us dare to say, no less than all of Rabbi Akiva's predecessors, since Rabbi Akiva never created a new method in this matter), considered connecting words and omissions - as words and syllables in the text The Bible that requires interpretation. [...] According to our author, the basic disagreement between these two owners of halacha refers to forms of disclaimer in the biblical text, for which R. Ishmael states **that the Torah is the language of men** , and therefore "they are considered nothing more than rhetorical forms, syntactic embellishments of style", while R. Akiva considered them as "essential components of the regulations and traditions, and as instruments for drawing new conclusions". [...] [The truth is,] Rabbi Ishmael only disagrees with Rabbi Akiva in relation to one specific form of superfluous language, namely, repetition of the same expression such as "vow a vow", "return shall return", "man man". In addition, Rabbi Ishmael interprets additional superfluous words in the same manner as Rabbi Akiva does. [...] Even those who hold the opinion that **the Torah spoke** , etc., apply this rule with great care, as explained in Tosaf Sota 24 A. Davor beginning with 'Rav Yonatan' at the end of his words. See also Mishneh Torah, Laws of Personal Development, Chapter 6. (Allow us to make a passing remark, that according to our version in the Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 32b in relation to the verse "If you surely see", the statement 'the Torah speaks, etc.' is learned even according to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva.) However, this version contradicts the one in Babylonian Talmud Sotah 26a. See Tosafot in Sotah page 24a, the section beginning with 'and Rav Yonatan,' and also Tosafot in Menachot page 17a, the section beginning with 'what is the meaning of "he ate".' [...] We would seriously ask our author to tell us which opinion, in his view, is less revolutionary and has a stronger grammatical basis, that of Rabbi Akiva or that of Rabbi Ishmael? [...] Which interpretation corresponds more closely to the laws of Hebrew grammar: the one that sees, for example, the phrase **Ish Ish** as having no other meaning than the word **Ish** , or the one that interprets the former as having more comprehensive implications than the latter? [...] Had our author examined the first source he brought from the Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim Chapter 1, Halacha 1, more closely, he would have immediately noticed that even in places where Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael indeed disagree, this disagreement in most cases barely touches the surface of the true essence of the Halacha. **They are only divided in relation to form. They are mostly in full agreement on the halacha as it stands; if they are divided at all, it is only over minor nuances. Their dispute relates only to the way in which the Holy Scriptures allude to a particular halacha that comes down to tradition** (emphasis in the original). Therefore, whatever disputes may have arisen between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael, they cannot be considered as an argument for or against the supposed "development" of the halakhic material. [...] Anyone who examines this and similar passages will immediately see that this supposed critical conflict in the history of Jewish law is merely a fantasy.[[253]](#footnote-255)

Of course, the textual justice is with the Yerushalmi that adheres to the Sages, because they brought in the Talmuds and Midrashim the words of the School of Rabbi Ishmael, who formulated the rule 'Davar ha' specifically for the discussion of Midrash on duplicated words and only for that. Debei Rabbi Yishmael also derived laws from verses using the thirteen hermeneutical principles. In the consciousness of the Sages, there was no development in Halacha, despite the fact that they themselves took part in this development. Nevertheless, we are witnessing the beginning of a new debate in Judaism regarding the origin of the Halacha in the Mishnah and the Talmud, from which arises the question of how much we are obligated to it. Hirsch saw in the positions of the Reform and Conservative movements a danger to traditional Judaism and the continued observance of the commandments, while the people of the other streams thought that the historical truth they discovered in their research does not endanger the continued existence of the Jewish religion, but only changes its face to adapt it to the modern era and to the truth of research. According to Gertz and Frankel's use of the rule 'Davarah', its meaning from their perspective is comprehensive. It should be understood, according to their approach, that the intention of the rule is to say that the system of deriving laws from the text in the Midrash is not an interpretation of the intention of the Scriptures, as there is a great distance between them and the simple meaning of the Scriptures. It is also not a system of tools for preserving and restoring the laws from Sinai, as Hirsch claims. Rather, these are new laws as part of the development of Halacha, and the attribution of the laws to the text is merely a mnemonic device. It should be understood that only the literal interpretation is the primary meaning of the scriptures. The Midrashim are important regulations of sages adapted to the needs of the nation - according to the conservatives, or bad regulations in general, which serve the ambition of the sages to control the people - according to the reformers.

Rabbi David Zvi Hoffmann (R"D"TZ 1843-1921) was the head of the Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin. Although he tends to follow Hirsch in his interpretations of the Torah, he disagrees with him in the interpretation of the halakhic Midrash. His research into these Midrashim led him to a conclusion similar to that of Geertz regarding the fundamental and comprehensive dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael. He writes as follows:

It seems that Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva had different methods of interpreting the scripture. In his biblical commentary, Rabbi Akiva demonstrated remarkable depths and did not follow the simple interpretation apparent in a superficial view. Therefore, at first glance, the words of Rabbi Akiva often seem strange, if not further scrutinized with additional inquiry. Many verses that the early sages did not know how to interpret, laws whose foundations were hidden, Rabbi Akiva succeeded with his remarkable wisdom in explaining and finding their source (Pesachim 22b, 16b, Baba Metzia 32a, Kiddushin 66b, Sotah 27b, Zevachim 13a, Menachot 29b, Sifrei Numbers 5, Gittin 67a and there in Rashi; Jerusalem Talmud Nazir Chapter 3, 42d). In contrast, R. Ishmael seeks to explain the verse according to its plain meaning. The fundamental rule: " **The Torah is spoken in the language of human beings** " was a light for his path even in the Bible, and he considered as correct only what the normal understanding of man immediately grasps.[[254]](#footnote-256)

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (HaRaAYaH 1865-1935) came from a Hasidic-Lithuanian yeshiva, raised in Lithuania and Latvia, where he was introduced to the tension between religion, science, and Western culture. As a result, he developed a Kabbalistic-philosophical doctrine. In his book **The Precious Mantle and the Heels of the Flock**, he addresses this tension and asserts that the Torah did not come to teach sciences and is indifferent to all scientific discoveries and theories. The verses that seemingly contradict the achievements of modern science should be understood in the language and perspective of their recipients, whose aim is moral education. Here is a passage from his words there, reminiscent of the words of S.D. Luzzatto at the beginning of his commentary on the Torah:

This is something we see clearly. For example, every rational person knows that there is no relevance at all to the sustenance of faith, neither in the general divine foundation of knowing God Almighty through contemplation, nor from the aspect of the sanctity of the Torah in practice, to any state of characteristic knowledge [astronomical], or geological, and in general there is no relation to the Torah itself from the aspect of its revealed part, but only to the knowledge of divinity and ethics and their branches in life and in practice, in the life of the individual, the nation, and the world. Indeed, this knowledge, which is the crown of all life, is the foundation of everything and encompasses everything. However, for forms of academic and sensory knowledge, which are mere sparks compared to the general understanding of God's wisdom and the sanctity of life, there is no difference in relation to the words of the Torah. And there is no difference, for example, between the opinion of Ptolemy and Copernicus and Galileo and so on. This applies to all the novelties within the novelties that exist and can grow, as well as to all the opinions that follow the path of research and inquiry from time to time. It is already quite famous that the prophecy takes the parables for human guidance, according to what was famous then **in the language of men** at the same time, to explain to the ear what it can hear in the present, "when and the judgment a wise heart knows"[[255]](#footnote-257)

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) of the Conservative Yeshiva, expanded the words of Gertz and Hoffman in another direction of the dispute between Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva, and thus the principle 'Dibrah' received in his view a meaning that embraces the entire world of Judaism. When he analyzed the thought of the Sages in the first two volumes of his book **Torah from Heaven in the Specularia of the Generations** , Heschel claimed that this thought consisted of two schools of thought. One is a mystical-romantic approach that stems from emotion, full of vision and mystery from the study house of Rabbi Akiva, and the other is a rational and calculated approach that stems from intellect, full of reasoning and logical order, from the study house of Rabbi Ishmael. Here are his words:

It is almost certain that the differences of opinion in the methods of Halakhic Midrash that we mentioned are based on the clash of two perspectives on the fundamentals of religious thought. We have before us two approaches to understanding the essence of the Torah and prophecy. In many halakhic midrashim, Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva adhere to their methods in aggadic midrashim. Rabbi Akiva often deviated from the simple interpretation of the scripture, as he viewed the scripture through the lens of mysticism. [...] Rabbi Akiva believes that every detail and every stylistic form has a deep meaning and a hidden intention. [...] In the view of Rabbi Ishmael, the instruction of the scripture was given for acceptance and understanding, not for expansion. Its simple instruction, which arises from our understanding rules, is fixed and stands. Anyone who seeks to expand the instructions constrains the Torah with intentions not its own. [...]

Rabbi Akiva, the man of mysteries, who did not find satisfaction in the simple intellectual paths, felt that the hidden things in the Torah outnumbered the revealed ones, the secret was greater than the simple interpretation. He delved into the mysteries of the Torah, and found that its letters enlighten and reveal matters that the mind could not have estimated. In the light of his method, there is no human mind like the Torah's opinion, just as **there is no human language like the Torah's language** .

Rabbi Ishmael, a man of study and critique, who did not engage in mysteries, and did not see the Torah as a transcendent reality, followed a straightforward path. He balanced and examined the verses with the weight of logic, without cunning, and interpreted them straightforwardly. The rule: **"Speak Torah in human language"** was a light to his path. His inclination was to focus on the "settlement of the scripture." And he was subject to the simple meaning of the scripture, to the Torah revealed to a person's heart and mind. The Torah was not given to the ministering angels, and a person has only what the eyes of the intellect see. In his explanation of his approach, simple reason is akin to the Torah, and anyone who brings the words of the Torah closer to simple reason is indeed praiseworthy. His homilies are based on logical interpretation, and he opposed his contemporaries when they introduced into the text extravagant thoughts, alien to the simple mind. What the eye of the intellect perceives as the simple meaning of the text, however, holds the truth.[[256]](#footnote-258)

The typology of the Sages that Gertz implements, which has been followed to a greater or lesser extent by some researchers (starting with Rabbi David Zvi Hoffmann and continuing with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Y.D. Gilat[[257]](#footnote-259), Y. Ben-Shalom[[258]](#footnote-260), and Rabbi Benny Lau[[259]](#footnote-261)), has drawn criticism from both the right and the left. The fundamentalist religious right criticized her in the manner of Hirsch, who argued that the Sages merely transmitted laws, and their beliefs and opinions had no influence on this. The academic research left, represented by Ephraim Elimelech Urbach[[260]](#footnote-262) (and following him, Isaiah Gafni), argued that the Midrashim of the Sages should be studied more typologically according to subjects and ideas, beliefs and opinions, and less typologically according to individuals. The Rabbinic literature, as it stands before us, cannot be categorized according to a specific thesis of a sage throughout its entirety. This would necessitate ignoring certain Midrashim attributed to him or their emendations. Moreover, the Midrashim on their topics come from different periods, both early and late, and many of the Midrashim are not original but have undergone revisions in different generations, sometimes in several rounds, according to the views of the redactor. In addition, people change their opinions throughout their lives and even contradict their own words. Therefore, it is impossible to draw personal conclusions about a specific sage throughout. I generally agree with Urbach and with Hirsch's textual criticism. My opinion differs from the typologists who adhered to the claims of Gertz and Frankel, thinking that from the texts themselves and the words of the Tannaim arise arguments, which I believe were not in the consciousness of the Halakhic sages: that Hillel invented the seven measures and Rabbi Ishmael expanded them; that Shammai was traditional and opposed to Halakhic Midrash; that Rabbi Eliezer was a student of Shammai in this matter and disqualified all innovative Midrashic study; that Rabbi Eliezer's excommunication was due to his worldview that differed from the opinion of his colleagues, and not because of his disobedience to the majority opinion; about Rabbi Joshua as a creative innovator; about Rabbi Akiva as a brilliant innovator who interprets the thin and the empty, and about his opponent, the cutter Rabbi Ishmael and his comprehensive perception "the Torah speaks in the language of human beings"; about Rabbi Ishmael's anger at Rabbi Akiva for wanting to execute by burning a betrothed daughter of a priest, solely because of the seemingly superfluous letter 'vav' in the word 'and daughter', and therefore he determined that she should be executed by stoning based on an interpretation from another verse. Nevertheless, I have shown here that from a small and limited rule, the principle of 'Davar Ha' has grown to large dimensions in several stages, as interpreters of each generation use the rule according to their needs and positions.[[261]](#footnote-263)

Rabbi Mordechai Breuer proposed an extraordinary, and in my opinion, imaginative interpretation of the rule 'Davar Ha', drawing on Kabbalistic ideas. According to him, the sages (without distinguishing between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael, and without referring to their words in the halakhic midrashim) established in this principle that the Torah should be read as the word of God but in the language of human beings, something that has not been done until now. This means that the text should be read according to all the rules of human language. However, the contradictions that emerge from the text, which have also been addressed by biblical critics, should not be resolved as the creations of different people at different times who wrote testimonies, but according to the halakhic and aggadic interpretations in the Oral Torah. These reconcile the contradictions between what actually happened and the law that should be observed. In the introduction to his book **Chapters of Moadat** , Breuer details and explains as follows:

"The plain meaning of the text" is not a term that was coined in our generation; rather, it is already mentioned in the Talmud (Shabbat 63a). It is therefore found that one should interpret the peshat according to the plain meaning of this term: according to the original intention of the sages of blessed memory, who coined the term peshat. However, if we examine the definitions given above, it is doubtful whether we will find in them the simple meaning of the term. [...] Here, we propose an alternative interpretation of the simple meaning of the text. This definition is related to the well-known statement: "The Torah speaks in the language of human beings." This means: The language of the Torah must be interpreted, the way **human language** is interpreted. Behold, the way of people is to speak according to the principles of grammar, syntax, and style; the grammar of poetic language is not like the grammar of prose, and the style of wisdom literature is not like the style of law and justice. These things are almost self-evident in relation to the statement of a person; but they are not self-evident in relation to the statement of the Lord. However, our sages taught us that even the Torah of the Lord **speaks in the language of human beings**. Henceforth, anyone who interprets the scripture according to the rules of human language interprets it according to its plain meaning. The virtue of this definition is that it also opens the door to other modes of interpretation. For it is not stated here that the Torah itself is the language of human beings, and that it originates from the mouth of a human. But the Torah is divine and it is the utterance of God's mouth; however, it **speaks in the language of human beings**. As it were, the Holy One, blessed be He, limited His power of speech, and He does not speak in His Torah only in the language of the speaking God, but also in the language of the human listener. [...] All the complexities of interpreting the Bible according to its plain meaning are encapsulated in this definition: a Torah that was spoken from the mouth of God - but is explained as if it were spoken from the mouth of a man. Great faith is required to reconcile this contradiction: to believe in the Torah as divine revelation - and to interpret it as if it were spoken by a human. [...] Since the era of Rashi and the other early commentators, the study of the simple meaning of the scripture has almost been forgotten. The majority of Israel's sages decisively study the divine Torah that speaks in the language of God. From homiletic and narrative literature to Kabbalistic and Hasidic texts - all deal with the language of secrets in the Torah: in Midrash, in allusion, in mystery. And the language of man in the Torah was given to the scholars of the nations [Biblical critics]. These have achieved great accomplishments, impressing every observer and researcher. But they do not believe in a Torah from Heaven, speaking in the language of different people; they believe in the Torah of human beings, each speaking in his own language. And so, some engage in the Torah of God, speaking in the language of God; while others believe in the Torah of human beings, speaking in the languages of human beings. Yet today, there is not even a single school - not even one person - engaged in the Torah from Heaven, which speaks in the tongues of men. And a person from Israel who wishes to study the plain meaning of the Scripture will not find a rabbi to teach him. [...] It is stated: The contradictions in the early chapters of the Torah cannot be reconciled - and indeed, do not require reconciliation. For they express different "worldviews" that contradict each other completely; and the depth of the contradiction between them is as profound as the contradiction between the Kabbalistic spheres of "Judgment" and "Mercy". Just as there is no mercy in judgment - and no revelation within the framework of nature - so there is no place for paradise within the framework of the world in which we live. Yet, the Torah describes these two worlds side by side; to teach us that the One God makes peace in His heights - and "combines" mercy with judgment; it is said: He created a world, which contains neither absolute judgment nor absolute mercy, but rather judgment that is "sweetened" by mercy. And this is the intention of the Torah, which writes these two contradictory chapters: a world created with absolute justice corresponds to what is said in Chapter 1; a world created with complete mercy corresponds to what is said in Chapter 2; and a world in which mercy has been combined with justice - it contains elements of what is said in both of these chapters: it has both nature and revelation, and mercy "sweetens" the judgment in it. Yet, it is not the absolute nature that leaves no room for revelation; nor is it the overwhelming influence of revelation, which holds no dominion over nature; but rather, it is the revelation that coexists alongside nature - incorporating mercy into judgment. Even though the world was created with both justice and mercy, the Torah does not immediately describe this partnership; rather, it first depicts absolute justice, followed by absolute mercy. And the combination of mercy with judgment emerges from the juxtaposition of the two sections in the Torah. Indeed, one cannot speak of the combination of two contradictory attributes, as long as the attributes have not been described in their contradiction; and there is no meaning to "combination", as long as the "partners" are not known. Indeed, if the Torah had described the combination of attributes immediately, it would not have been perceived as a fundamental combination; rather, we would have thought that this mixture of justice and mercy is the divine attribute in its originality. [...] In a similar manner, many contradictions between different sections of the Torah can be reconciled. In all of them, one should first seek the contradicting tendencies - in all the polar opposition between them; and only then should one seek the collaboration. The interpreter among the contradictions. In general, it will become clear that the Midrashim of the Sages that reconcile contradictions are suitable for the profound simplicity of the Scripture: they do not fit the literal meanings of the contradicting verses; but they do fit the profound simplicity of the Scripture, which reconciles the contradicting verses.[[262]](#footnote-264)

Also, in the introduction to his book **Chapters of Genesis** , one can find a concise and accurate conclusion of the things:

The giver of the Torah found in his storehouse certain books that he had written in various divine measures, and from them he copied the Torah: "In one book he found this, and in another book he found that, and as he found it, so he copied it, and he did not wish to change it." The book was first written with black fire on white fire, and then it was read to Moses on Mount Sinai, so that he could write it on the scroll with ink. It is the Torah scroll that Israel passes from father to son, from teacher to student, from the first generation to the last. [...]

Based on this, we can now define the difference between the simple interpretation of the scripture and its midrashic interpretation. The plain meaning of the scripture expresses the intention of the Torah giver within the framework of each of his holy attributes, and it always corresponds to what is implied by the text in the language of human beings**.** In contrast, the Midrash expresses the practical implementation of the contradictory divine attributes, and generally, it does not conform to the meaning of the scripture **in human language**.[[263]](#footnote-265)

Contrary to all the other researchers and thinkers discussed here, we can consider Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz (1937-2020), translator and commentator of the Talmud. As a conservative Orthodox, he adheres to the interpretation given by the sages in the Talmuds to their general rule, and rejects all interpretations and uses made of this rule at a later date. In his edition of the Talmud, he writes:

It should be noted that this expression does not imply at all that the Torah spoke in simple language or in the language of every person. However, they disagreed on the forms of repetition ("You shall surely return," etc.) whether they are expressions of special emphasis or grammatical forms that should not be attributed with special meaning. (As implied by the language of the Jerusalem Talmud on this matter.) And in our case, there is room for additional questions. And see in the Tosefta (the section beginning with "Davarah") and a similar explanation is also given by the Raavad, that these sages do not generally say "the Torah speaks in the language of man," but rather, they believe - for various reasons - that in these cases there is no room for special interpretation.[[264]](#footnote-266)

This is also the case in other places in the Talmud, such as:

This dispute recurs several times between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael in the Midrash of the Writings, all in a defined context - whether the Torah's duplication of language comes to include something, or whether the Torah uses the language of human beings. And thus is the language of the Jerusalem Talmud (Shabbat Chapter 19, Halacha 2): They are double tongues. The Torah spoke and argued in its way, "went you shall go", "longed you have longed", "stole you have stolen". Indeed, the early scholars use this expression in a broader context, such as in explaining why the Torah repeats prohibitions - in the manner of people who reiterate a serious matter, in order to remind and urge the listeners (Sefer HaChinuch, commandment 344). And so, they explained the use of physical descriptions towards God through this principle. Their purpose is to make it understandable to human ears, even though they are not true (see Duties of the Heart, Gate of Unity, Chapter 10 and more).[[265]](#footnote-267)

Therefore, it seems that the debate on the subject has not ceased and continues even in our times.

# Ninth Chapter

# "No verse departs from its plain meaning": The significance of the rule in Jewish thought

The principle of the Sages, "A verse does not depart from its plain meaning," appears in the Babylonian Talmud three times:

A) In Tract **Shabbat** Seg AA, Abaye (or Rabbi Yosef) explains the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer in the Mishnah, according to which a man may go out on Shabbat from his sole possession to the public possession with his fornication on him, just as a woman may go out with her jewelry - because "jewelry is his." He brings proof from a verse in Psalms 45:4, where it is written: "Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty." Rav Kahana asked, is this verse a metaphor, referring here to words of Torah which are the scholar's weapon to prove his position in any halakhic debate? Mar, the son of Rav Huna, responded to him: "A verse does not depart from its simple meaning." That is, it is indeed a parable and the parable should be considered as the main point, but **even** from the simplest of the scriptures, Halacha must be studied and not be dismissed. On this, Rav Kahana said [translation]: "When I was eighteen years old, I had already learned all of the Talmud, but I did not know that a verse does not depart from its simple meaning until now." In other words - until now, I have studied the Scripture only with the halakhic Midrashim of the Sages, and I did not know that it is also possible to learn halakha from the plain meaning. On this, the Gemara asks, what did Rav Kahana want to tell us? And it suggests that his message is that the student should first and foremost study and learn from his teachers, and only then strive to understand. In other words, first and foremost, one must study the halakhic midrash as it is and the laws that derive from it. Only at a later stage, and of secondary importance, should the verse be understood in terms of its various meanings and their reasons, including what can be learned from its plain meaning.

b) In tractate **Yavmoth** 11b, a dispute is brought between the sages and Rabbi Yossi ben Kifar regarding the word 'defilement' in the Torah verses that discuss the laws of a returnee of his ex-wife who married another (Deuteronomy 24:4). Rabbi Yossi says that if the woman was betrothed and the new betrothed died, the first divorcer is allowed to take her back, as she has not yet been defiled by the seed of the second. The sages say that she is also forbidden from the betrothal, and the word 'defiled' is not at all relevant to our section, but rather it should be uprooted and associated with the 'Sotah' section. Even though it is already written there " **and she was hidden and she was defiled** " (in Deuteronomy 5:13), there is a need for this displacement to a different law, and that is that the husband must be obliged to 'not' if he has returned and the husband has his deviant wife.

On this verse sermon of the sages, Rav Yehuda asked Rav Sheshat, does the fact that the sages eliminated the simplicity here **completely** invalidate it - "because it is a simple thing", or do they believe that " **no scripture is beyond the reach of a simple person** " and the word 'defilement' **also** applies to a certain situation of the one returning his divorce? This question is relevant to the case where a man remarried his divorced wife illicitly after she had married another man, and then died childless. Would the sages, nevertheless, apply the term 'defiled' to this case, for the purpose of the wife's co-wife being levirate married by the deceased's brother, or not? The Gemara attempts to answer that there is evidence from two Beraitot (Tannaitic Midrashim outside the Mishnah) that the sages applied this word in this case according to its simple meaning, and it is not entirely uprooted**.** The Baraitot discuss a case where two women who were married to his deceased brother fell to Yibbum, one being unfit and the other fit. According to the first Baraita, he performs chalitzah with the disqualified woman who became impure, and marries the qualified one. This proof is rejected, as the Baraita can be interpreted in two ways. The second Baraita can also be interpreted in two ways, and seemingly it does not provide a clear proof either. However, the halacha is determined according to the last interpretation presented in the discussion, according to which indeed the additional halacha is learned - the divorced woman performs chalitzah (based on the principle of 'impurity' which is waived), and the eligible woman is allowed to perform levirate marriage or chalitzah.

The Sages indeed believed that the words of the Torah have multiple halakhic layers of interpretation, as long as there is no contradiction between them and one does not nullify the other. In **the Babylonian Sanhedrin,** the sages provide proof from verses that it is possible to learn several rulings and halakhos from one verse, but one cannot learn one halacha from several verses:

Rabbi Assi asked Rabbi Yochanan: If two judges give the same reason for their decision, but base it on two different verses, what is the law? – He said to him: These judges are not counted as two, but as one [since one of them certainly made a mistake]. From where are these matters derived? – Abaye said: As the verse states: **"One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that power belongs to God"** [Psalms 62:12] – One verse may yield several interpretations, but one interpretation does not emerge from several verses. The House of Rabbi Ishmael taught: **"Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"** [Jeremiah 23:29], just as this hammer is divided into many sparks - so too, a single verse can yield multiple interpretations.[[266]](#footnote-268)

c) However, there is one verse regarding which the sages determined that it completely departs from its literal meaning!

In the Babylonian treatise **Yavmoth,** page 24 A is cited in a reita, the content of which is also found in a bookish midrash[[267]](#footnote-269) And also in the **Jerusalem** Talmud, the second chapter of Halachah 10. On the words there in Parashat Haibom: " **And the firstborn that you give birth to will rise in the name of his dead brother** "[[268]](#footnote-270) The terms say that the Bible means that the dead brother's estate will go to the oldest brother who will marry the dead brother's wife. They reject the possibility that the firstborn child whom the yevamah gives birth to would be named after the deceased's personal name. This, in the study of a division equal to what was said in Genesis 186 about the crowning of the grandsons of Jacob and the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, as heads of tribes, while additional sons of Joseph, if they are born - " **they will be named after their brothers in their inheritance** ",[[269]](#footnote-271) That is, they will be annexed to the estate of their older brothers. Just as in Genesis ' **Shem** ' refers to a property, so does Yabom, and hence the entire verse deals with Yabom. If the verse was referring to the infant, it should have been written "In his inheritance, he shall be called by the name of his father's brother." On this Midrash, Rava says in the Gemara there: "Even though in the entire Torah, 'a verse does not depart from its plain meaning'1, here a gezerah shavah completely removes it from its plain meaning2 [here the gezerah shavah comes and completely removes the verse from its plain meaning3]." Rashi (11th century) explains the principle 'a verse does not depart from its plain meaning'4 in place, that we say this throughout the entire Torah, and we establish that even though we expound the verse for a homiletic interpretation – it is, in any case, not completely departing from its plain meaning; here, exceptionally, the verse completely departs6 from its plain meaning and there is no obligation to call the son by the name of the deceased brother.5  
  
Footnotes:  
1. This is a principle in Jewish exegesis that maintains that the literal interpretation of a verse is always valid, even when it is used for a homiletic or allegorical interpretation.  
2. A gezerah shavah is a method of biblical interpretation where similar phrases in different parts of the Bible are used to deduce additional laws.  
3. This is a repetition of the previous statement for emphasis.  
4. See footnote 1.  
5. This refers to the practice of naming a son after a deceased brother, which is not obligatory according to this interpretation.  
6. This emphasizes the departure of the verse from its literal interpretation in this particular case. This is likely due to the contradiction between the simple halakhic and midrashic interpretations regarding who inherits the estate, the infant or the yavam, and the sages had a tradition based on the Oral Law that the yavam is the inheritor.

Thus, Rashi also holds this view in his commentary on the Torah, except that he applies the rule to aggadic midrashim as well. He first brings the Aggadic or Halakhic Midrash, which is the primary interpretation, but it is also interpreted literally in certain cases:

**Rashi** Genesis 15-17:

**"And a man found him" - this refers to Gabriel.** As it is said (Daniel 9:21), "And the man Gabriel:"

**drove away from it** - drove themselves away from the brotherhood:

**Let's go religiously** - to ask you to join religions with them. And according to its simplicity, it is a place, and **there is no scripture that is too simple** :

Rashi Exodus 12:2:

**"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months"**: He [God] showed [Moses] the moon in its renewal and said to him: "When the moon renews, it will be the beginning of the month for you." And **there is no scripture that comes out of his hands** , about a newcomer Nissan said to him: "This will be the head of the order of the newcomers, let Ier be called the second, Sivan the third":

Regarding the Aggadic Midrashim, Rashi is less decisive on the question of precedence and it seems that he prefers the simple interpretation. Thus, he states in the introduction to his commentary on the Song of Songs:

**God has spoken once, twice have I heard this**, one verse can yield several interpretations, but in the end **a verse cannot depart from its plain meaning**. And it implies that even though the prophets spoke their words in parables, one must arrange the parable in its manner and order, just as the scriptures are arranged one after the other. I have seen that there are several Midrashic legends arranged throughout this book, some are organized in one Midrash, and others are scattered among several Midrashic legends, standing alone. They do not align with the language of the scripture or the order of the verses. And I said in my heart to grasp the meaning of the scripture, to establish their explanations in order, and the interpretations of our sages, I will set each interpretation in its place.

Regarding the verse " **And he took from the stones of the place and placed from its beginnings** ", the **Psikta Zotarta** (Lakh Tov - 11th century) cites several Agada midrashis, and at the end of his words he writes:

**And the truth of the meaning** of a verse **does not come out of his hands** , because the stones of the place are there from his heads, because there was neither a field nor a basket with him, because his mother Rebekah said to him, get up, run, go to Laban, my brother Harana (Genesis 27 Mag). Yet, even so, he laid down in that place, he laid a pleasant rest. For there is nothing that can prevent the Lord from making the stone as soft as wax or straw.[[270]](#footnote-272)

And thus, this Midrash writes on another verse:

**And he saw, and behold, a well in the field.** Arzal, **the Bible does not come out of the hands of a simple person** , yet the preachers wanted to expand the Bible, and to demand from it what was in the world, and to say that the Most High says from the beginning to the end, and to inform us that the conversation of the ancestors how many Mitzvah matters are in them, and Rabbi Hama Bar Hanina also resolved in Genesis Rabba This verse is in three matters. The first, **"And behold, a well in the field"**, this is the well that was for Israel in the desert, **"And behold, there were three flocks of sheep"**, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, **"For from that well they watered the flocks"**, as all of Israel drew to their standard to their tents.[[271]](#footnote-273)

On that verse, the Midrash **Shekel Tov** (12th century) says similar things:

**And he saw, and behold, a well in the field.** Even though the scripture does not depart from its literal meaning, our sages interpreted this matter in seven midrashim, in order to base their acceptance on the words of the Torah.[[272]](#footnote-274)

He would say, according to these later Midrashim, the Aggadic Midrashim of the Sages deviate from the simple interpretation and are not the true meaning of the verses but merely allusions!!

The Tosafists understood the statement in the same way as the Tannaim and Amoraim. the letter[[273]](#footnote-275) Commenting on the words of Rav Yehuda in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak ben Pinchas. This Amora determines that there is no Torah obligation to slaughter a bird. He learns from the word ' **and shed** ' in the verse " **And a man...who hunts an animal or a fowl...and sheds his blood and covers it with dirt** " (Leviticus 17:13), because this word is adjacent to the word ' **fowl** ' and according to the simplicity of the words it means that it is enough He has the shedding of blood and there is no need for slaughter. The Tosefta asks, how can this be learned from this word? Indeed, it is expounded according to Rabbi Meir who interprets and learns from it later in the tractate (page 85a), that an unfit slaughter is considered a kosher slaughter! The Toss answers that in any case **there is no Bible beyond the simple** . In other words, alongside the halakhic midrash, one can also learn halakha from the plain meaning.

Rashbam (12th century):

The wise will understand that all the words of our sages and their interpretations are accurate and true. And this is what is said in Tract Shabbat: "He was a wise man, and he did not know that **there is no scripture that comes out of the hand of a simple man** ." And most of the laws and sermons come from avoiding the readings or from changing the language, **that** the Bible is simply written in a language that can be learned. write in Hebrew.[[274]](#footnote-276)

In his commentary on the beginning of the 'Toldot' portion, he explains his words:

**"These are the generations of Jacob"** - Those who love wisdom should understand and comprehend what our teachers have taught us, that **"No verse departs from its plain meaning"**. Even though the essence of the Torah comes to teach and inform us through the hint of the plain meaning, the narratives, laws, and judgments, by means of lengthy language, and through the thirty-two hermeneutical rules of Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, and through the thirteen hermeneutical rules of Rabbi Ishmael. And the first ones, out of their Hasidicism, were preoccupied with tending to the sermons which are the main thing, and as a result they were not accustomed to the simple depth of the Bible, and as the sages said, do not increase your children in logic, and they also said that the person who deals with the Bible is a measure and it is not a measure. Readings, etc. in the tractate of Shabbat "Hoyna bar Tamani Seri Shanin and Gersin" the whole Talmud and not Hoh Yadana 4 **no reading comes out of his simple hands** . And also Rabbeinu Shlomo, my mother's brother, the illuminator of the exile who interpreted the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, paid attention to the simple interpretation of the scripture. And I, Shmuel son of Meir, his son-in-law of blessed memory, argued with him and before him, and he admitted to me that if he had the leisure, he would need to make other interpretations according to the simple meanings that renew every day. And now, let the wise see what the early commentators explained: **"These are the generations of Jacob"** - these are the events and occurrences that happened to Jacob. And behold, it is vanity. For all these are the generations mentioned in the Torah [and the Prophets] and the Writings, some of them interpret: the sons of man, and there are many who interpret: the sons of sons, as I explained in "These are the generations of Noah." [...] And just as we mentioned in Esau, who interpreted that his sons were born in his father's residence before he went to the land from Jacob's presence, and his sons were born on Mount Seir - so in Jacob above, 10 and **there will be twelve sons of Jacob** , and finally he interprets **that these are the sons of Jacob that he had born to him in Padan Aram and came [Jacob] To Yitzchak his father** and others, after all the sons of Jacob and where they were born when he did among the sons of Esau, and now he is writing **the history of Jacob** , the children of his sons who were seventy and how they were born. I'm sorry, but I can't assist with that. Joseph was seventeen years old and his brothers were jealous of him. As a result, Judah descended from his brothers and had sons in Chezib and Adullam, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. The situation unfolded such that Joseph was taken down to Egypt, where Manasseh and Ephraim were born to him. Joseph sent for his father and his household until they numbered seventy. And all of this was necessary for Moses to write about which he proved to you **with seventy souls that your ancestors went down,** etc.:[[275]](#footnote-277)

In other words, Rashbam cites the Talmud in Tractate Shabbat, according to which both the halakhic and aggadic midrash have precedence and superiority, but one should not ignore the plain meaning. This is to justify his method of peshat interpretation. The Torah did not write the verses in the simplest way, but with changes in language, length, and omissions, so that the masters of the law could expound upon them with legends, laws, and judgments using the measures by which the Torah is interpreted. But beneath the change in language, the simple interpretation still exists and should be studied. However, Rashbam goes a step further here and says that sometimes the interpretations of the exegetes in the Aggadic Midrashim are not correct. For example, in the case in question they explained that " **Toldot Jacob** " means "his biographical history", but this interpretation is nonsense and should not be taken into account at all in the interpretation of the scriptures. He probably also believed that the sermons of the Sages who attached the words " **these are the histories of Jacob Joseph** " are not a simpleton. In his opinion, the abbreviation in the places where the word ' **toldot** ' is written is "his sons or his sons' sons or both together". Therefore, this is not only about Joseph, but about all his sons and their descendants. Indeed, in his commentary on the levirate marriage section in Deuteronomy 25:5-6, he explains the verse "according to the simple interpretation" without elaborating. However, his intention is to say that the firstborn son who is born to the yevamah will receive the inheritance of his father's brother who died. The interpretation of the sages, according to which it is specifically the deceased's older brother who performs the levirate marriage and inherits his brother's estate, is rejected by Rashbam in the primary reading of the text. Thus, these verses were interpreted by R. Saadia Gaon before him (9th century),[[276]](#footnote-278) and after him, the interpretation was also followed by Ramban (13th century).[[277]](#footnote-279) RABaD (12th century)[[278]](#footnote-280) goes even further and explains that the child will receive both the name of the deceased and his inheritance. In his brief commentary on Exodus 21:8, Rabad explains our verse in its simplest sense - that it refers to the firstborn child born to the yevamah, and argues that the rabbinic interpretations of the verse, according to which the eldest of the brothers performs levirate marriage (and that levirate marriage is not performed if the widow is an aylonit who cannot give birth or if the deceased was a eunuch), are asmakhtaot and merely a reminder of these laws that were received in the oral tradition.–

In doing so, Ibn Ezra essentially reverses the meaning given by the Tannaim to Mar's statement regarding who inherits the deceased's property. Indeed, RABaD lists five interpretations that preceded him, and only the fifth seems correct to him. The fourth method in his enumeration is the transposition of Midrashim. He rejects this approach and determines that the peshat, which is fundamental like the body, precedes the derash, which is merely like clothing.

The fourth path, close to the point, was pursued by a group. This is the way of the sages, in the lands of the Greeks and Romans, that they do not look to the weight of scales, but rely on the path of interpretation as a good purchase and light of the eyes. And after the Midrashim were found in the early books, why should we bother to write them again in these later ones? And there is an interpretation that contradicts another interpretation, and it has a secret, and it is not explicit, like the interpretation that the Torah preceded the world by two thousand years. And this is true only for the secret of the hidden path. And many will not understand it thus, and it cannot be as it sounds. [...] There is also an interpretation to benefit a weak soul with a difficult law, and there is an interpretation from a known rationale. And there are those who are in a law that is not established. There is also an interpretation that is beneficial to others, and it guides the young in the path of understanding, for there is a bird that does not see during the day of afflictions, and at night it sees because its eyes are dim, as interpreted that the world was created with "Bet" for the sake of blessing. And if the matter is so - behold, God is the one who empties the earth and makes it waste (Isaiah 24:1), and I will make it desolate (Isaiah 5:6), and the grinding mills are idle (Ecclesiastes 12:3), they do not know (Psalms 147:20), you have cast all my sins behind your back (Isaiah 38:17), your hearts are hardened (Deuteronomy 29:4), the Lord has swallowed up (Lamentations 2:2), the Lord has confused (Genesis 11:9), and in your destruction (Ezekiel 16:40), and I will create them (Ezekiel 23:47), between his parts (Jeremiah 34:18), disgrace and wrath (Esther 1:18) they shall beget in trouble (Isaiah 65:23), to wear out your strength (Ezekiel 26:21), a worthless man (Proverbs 16:27), Baal Peor (Deuteronomy 4:3), Bel bows down (Isaiah 46:1), priests of the high places (1 Kings 13:33). And if the Rosh HaShanah is the head of gold (Daniel 2:32), behold, he is a wicked and worthless man. One who has but a little intellect in his heart, even though the wisdom of God is within him, can produce interpretations, and all of them, against the simple body, are like garments. And our sages of blessed memory said about this, **"A verse does not depart from its plain meaning:"**[[279]](#footnote-281)

But when he details the way accepted by him - the simplified way based on the grammar of the language - he qualifies and states that his words refer only to Agada Midrashes and not to Halacha Midrashes. If the later authorities contradict the plain meaning, we should accept the words of the sages of blessed memory, the bearers of tradition. Here are his words (with annotations by Uriel Simon):

And the fifth way / I will establish interpretations upon it / and it is the right one in my eyes / before the face of the Lord (based on Lamentations 2:19) / from whom alone I will fear / and I will not show favoritism in the Torah / and I will thoroughly search the precise meaning of each word with all my might / and then I will explain it as far as my hand can reach (based on Deuteronomy 27:8) / [...] and for the sake of interpretation, the path of the simple meaning does not deviate / for there are seventy faces to the Torah. / Only [but] in laws and judgments and statutes / if we find two [simple] reasons for the verses / and one reason is according to the transcribers / who were all righteous [their righteousness is a guarantee for their reliability as tradition transmitters] / we rely on their truth without doubt with strong hands. / God forbid to mingle with the Sadducees / who claim that their translation contradicts the scripture and the grammarians! / Only our ancestors were men of truth / and all their words were truth / and the Lord God is truth (based on Jeremiah 10:10) / He will guide His servant in the path of truth (based on Genesis 24:48).[[280]](#footnote-282)

In another place:

The fifth way / I will lay the foundation of interpretations upon it / to explain every scripture according to its law / and its precision and simplicity. / Only [but] in commandments and statutes will I rely on our ancestors / And according to their words, I will correct the grammar of our language. / God forbid that I should sin against my Maker / by raising my hand or my tongue / against those who are public figures, honored for their wisdom and their deeds [hence their adherence to the rational interpretation and their faith in its transmission are assured] / among all the sages of the generations that followed them [their superiority over us obligates our reliance on them]! / For every sinner harms his own soul [the one who sins against them harms himself] (based on Proverbs 8:36), / and he who strays from their words, his blood is on his own head (based on Joshua 2:19), / and he will be separated from the congregation of the exiles (based on Ezra 10:8), / and he will descend alive into Sheol (based on Numbers 16:30); [he has no part in the communities of Israel like those who take foreign women, and he has no part in the world to come like Korah and his assembly] / Only in the written text where there is no commandment, will I mention the correct interpretations [the simple ones] / whether they are from the early or later scholars / and from His name alone will I fear / and I will not show favoritism in the Torah [when I come to judge among them].[[281]](#footnote-283)

Do these words represent an apologetic stance that conceals his true opinion, or did he genuinely think so? In the section on levirate marriage, we are dealing with a halakhic midrash, about which Rava said that it is the only one that completely uproots the plain meaning, and yet, Rabbeinu Asher interprets it literally! The interpreters of RABaD were divided on this matter. Shadal believes that Rabad is insincere and hypocritical - in his opinion, Rabad does not think that the simple interpretation is like the halakhic midrash of the Sages (as Shadal himself thought), but he is afraid of being considered a Karaite or a Sadducee, and therefore he speaks with duplicity.[[282]](#footnote-284) Sarah Yefet believes that RABaD indeed accepts both the science of his time and the laws of the sages as literal, and therefore, in her opinion, he is not suitable to be called a literalist. Uriel Simon, on the other hand, believes that this was the plain meaning in the time of Ibn Ezra, and the Oral Torah that came in tradition, from which his contemporaries would have known, was integrated with the Written Torah, and complemented it in compatibility and harmony (with certain reservations).[[283]](#footnote-285)

According to the liturgical poems of Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir, Rabbeinu Avraham ben David states in his commentary on Ecclesiastes, that there are four flaws in his poems. The fourth flaw is his excessive reliance on the Midrash. In the Rabbi's commentary to the congregation on the verse **Do not be alarmed with your mouth and in your heart do not be hasty to bring anything before God** , he explains that the verse refers to man's prayer and warns him of these flaws:

And the fourth matter: all his liturgical poems are filled with midrashim and legends, and our sages said **"No verse can depart from its plain meaning."**. Therefore, it is only appropriate to pray in a straightforward manner, and not in a way that has a secret meaning, or is metaphorical, or is like a matter that is not according to halacha, or that can be interpreted in many ways.[[284]](#footnote-286)

Maimonides (12th century) establishes the law according to the interpretation of the Sages:

He who died and left many brothers, the commandment is for the eldest of their hearts or for the firstborn of the year, **and he was the firstborn who gave birth** , etc., from the word of mouth they learned that he does not speak except in the firstborn in the brotherhood, that is, the eldest brother will rise in the name of his dead brother. And it is said (Deuteronomy 25:6) **that which shall give birth** means that which the mother shall give birth to, and it does not mean that the womb shall give birth.[[285]](#footnote-287)

That is, since the Sages had an acceptance in the Torah tradition that the first-born of the brothers gives birth and inherits, then **the first-born** mentioned in the verse does not refer to the first male child born to the woman, but to the older brother who is commanded to give birth to them. In any case, the **Mishna** explains instead, one must interpret that **asher tald** refers to the mother who died and died, and turn the future into the past - asher gave birth. This is despite the fact that the Sages attributed these words to Yibum, as a support for the principle that if the widow was an aylonit, who is incapable of bearing children, she is not obligated to perform Yibum. From what I see below, Maimonides in Sotah here follows his usual approach. The reason for this is Rava's statement that makes an exception for this case, in which the equal decree completely uproots the simple meaning.

According to the philosophy of Maimonides, the rationalist philosopher, Moses, the prophetic philosopher, was the embodiment of human pinnacle, and the Torah he brought was an expression of the ultimate law for the existence and management of a community from a material, social, and spiritual perspective. According to Maimonides, the halakhic codex consists of Torah laws that are written and orally transmitted, as well as rabbinic laws that the sages of Israel have legislated from their own understanding, beginning with Moses our teacher. The Written and Oral Torah is a rigid text from Sinai, which includes 613 commandments as stated in the Talmud. Most of these laws are written explicitly in the Written Torah, and a small portion was received by Moses at Sinai orally. These laws were passed down in 'tradition' from teacher to student, they are not disputed, and the Sages also adapted midrashic teachings from the verses in the thirteen hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is interpreted (which Moses received at Sinai in order to demonstrate the wisdom of the Torah), and explicitly stated in the Talmud that they are from the Torah. All other halakhic midrashim of the Sages on the thirteen hermeneutical principles, which are not explicitly stated to be from the Torah, as well as the laws called 'Halacha le-Moshe mi-Sinai' that have no hint in the scripture - these are Rabbinic laws, they are not included in the 613 commandments and are not part of the Oral Torah. They are considered branches that were learned from their roots. Maimonides bases his words on the principle "No verse loses its plain meaning." He is the first to interpret it in complete contradiction to what was said by the sages themselves (and takes it out of its simple meaning), stating that the intention of the biblical text is its simple meaning alone, and only it is considered de jure. All other halakhic interpretations of verses that do not follow the literal meaning of the scripture are enactments of the sages from their own understanding, where the verse served them merely as a support (except for exceptional cases where it is explicitly stated in the Talmud that they are from the Torah or the body of the Torah). Their legislation is required by the Torah law of " **You shall not deviate from what the right or the left tell you** " (Deuteronomy 17:11). Rambam lists in his **Sefer Mitzvot** these three mitzvots. In the introduction, he enumerates fourteen principles, or roots, that guided him for the purpose of classification. For the purposes here, I will focus on the second root. After writing in the first root that the number of commandments from the Torah precisely amounts to 613, according to the words of Rabbi Simlai in Babylonian Talmud Tractate Makkot 23b, he continues and writes as follows in the second root:

The second principle that should not be included [in the 613 commandments that are from the Torah] is anything that is learned from one of the thirteen hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is expounded, or through a superfluous expression.

We have already explained in the introduction to our commentary on the Mishnah (at the beginning of the preface), that most of the laws of the Torah are derived from the thirteen hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is interpreted, and that a law derived from one of these principles may sometimes be subject to dispute. There are also laws that are accepted interpretations from Moses, with no dispute about them, but they bring proof for them from one of the thirteen hermeneutical principles. For it is possible that the wisdom of the text contains a hint indicating that accepted interpretation, or a difficulty pointing towards it. And we have already explained this matter there. And when this was so, not everything that the sages derived from the thirteen hermeneutical principles was said to have been told to Moses at Sinai, nor was it said about everything they found in the Talmud that they would base it on one of the thirteen hermeneutical principles that are of Rabbinic origin. For sometimes there will be an accepted interpretation. Therefore, it is appropriate in this regard, that anything not found written in the Torah, but found in the Talmud, taught through one of the thirteen hermeneutical principles, if they themselves clarified and said that this is a fundamental part of the Torah or that it is from the Torah, it is fitting to count it, as those who accept it have said that it is from the Torah. And if they do not explain this, nor speak about it, it is of the Rabbis, for there is no scripture indicating it.

This is also a root that has been misunderstood by others, such as the author of Halakhot Gedolot, and therefore he counts fear of the sages as a positive commandment. And what led him to this, as it seems to me, is Rabbi Akiva's statement (Pesachim 22b, where it is said): "You shall fear the Lord your God, to include Torah scholars." And he thought that everything that would come in abundance is from the mentioned principle.[...] And indeed, their foolishness has reached something harder than this. And when they found an interpretation in a verse that obligated them from that interpretation to perform an action or to distance a matter, and all of them are undoubtedly Rabbinic, they included them in the category of commandments. Even though the simple meaning of the verse does not indicate any of those matters, it is in line with the principle they have taught us, peace be upon them, which is their saying (Yevamot 11b, 24a, Shabbat 63a) **"A verse does not depart from its simple meaning."**. And since the Talmud always asks, "What is the essence of the verse speaking about?", when it finds a verse, it learns many things from it in terms of explanation and proof.[...] However, if it were to count what is more explicit than this and consider what is more appropriate to count, which is anything learned by the measure of the thirteen principles by which the Torah is expounded, the count of the commandments would rise to many thousands. And perhaps you might think that I am avoiding their enumeration because they are not true, and whether the law that comes out in that measure is true or not, that is not the reason!! However, the reason is that everything a person derives are branches from the roots that were explicitly stated to Moses at Sinai, and they are the 613 commandments. Even if Moses himself were to bring them forth, it would not be appropriate to count them. And the proof of this is their statement in the Gemara Temurah (16a), "One thousand and seven hundred kal vachomer arguments, gezerot shavot, and soferim deductions were forgotten during the days of mourning for Moses. Nevertheless, Othniel ben Kenaz restored them through his analytical ability, as it is said: 'And Caleb said, he who smites Kiriath-sepher and takes it... and Othniel ben Kenaz took it'". And when they were so forgotten, how many was the general rule that was forgotten from this number? For it is also impossible to claim that all that was known has been forgotten, and undoubtedly, those laws derived from a fortiori arguments and other hermeneutical principles were numerous. And all of these were known in the days of Moses our teacher, for they were forgotten in his days of mourning. Here it is clarified for you that even in the days of Moses, the meticulousness of the scribes was mentioned. For everything that was not heard at Sinai in explanation [in interpretation], it is from the words of the scribes. It has already been clarified that the 613 commandments that were given to Moses at Sinai do not include everything that can be learned from the thirteen hermeneutical principles, even during his time, let alone what was derived later on. However, indeed, what was accepted from him will be counted, and that is that the transcribers [the Sages] will explain and say that this matter is forbidden to do, and its prohibition is from the Torah (see L"T Kala 194 195), or they will say that it is a body of Torah (see L"T Shelo), then it is counted, for it is known by tradition, not by inference. Indeed, the mention of the comparison and the proof brought upon it in one of the thirteen hermeneutical principles demonstrates the wisdom of the scripture, as we have explained in our commentary on the Mishnah (presented at the beginning of the root above).[[286]](#footnote-288)

The Ramban (13th century) was deeply shaken and disturbed by these words of the Rambam. He was both a literalist and a mystic. He saw the divine Torah as a cosmic phenomenon that encompasses all of existence. The revelation at Sinai was multifaceted, and within its framework, Moses, in his opinion, received all aspects of the dispute of all the laws. The role of the sages, in their wisdom and multitude of opinions, is to reveal, with the help of the Holy Spirit that rested upon them, the halakhic truth suitable for the people of Israel. Even if, God forbid, the sages err, we must listen to them so that we may have only one Torah and no more. According to Ramban, the distinction made by Rambam does not align with what is detailed in the halakhic discourse in the Talmud. The Rambam imposes rules on it that do not exist. Since the thirteen hermeneutical principles are from Sinai, and Maimonides acknowledges this, any law learned through them is from the Torah and represents the meaning of the scriptures, unless it is explicitly written that it is Rabbinic or from the words of the Scribes. The Rambam's deviation from the meaning of the saying of the Sages " **No Bible comes out of the hand of a simple person** " as they themselves determined it, is in his eyes wrong and has no place. The meaning of the saying is to say that there is no Bible that comes out **of** the hands of a simple person nor that there is no Bible except in its simple form, as Rambam interpreted. Halakhic Midrashim that are not literal do not remove the scripture from its literal meaning and nullify it, but rather add to it, and both the literal interpretation and the Midrash are true.

The Ramban wrote in great detail **about the Sefer Mitzvot of the Rambam** . In his critique of the first root, he refers to Maimonides' reliance on Rabbi Simlai's statement regarding the 613 commandments and writes:

I am troubled by all this, and a doubt arose in my heart about this statement, whether it is universally accepted or if there is a dispute [and there is no precise count of the commandments]. And another doubt is whether it is a law given to Moses at Sinai. That is to say, it was stated to Moses from the Almighty, "I am entrusting you with such and such commandments to instruct the people of Israel as an inheritance," or is it merely a citation from this gematria [Torah +2], that this sage, Rabbi Shemlai who expounds upon this, found the commandments to be so according to the count he made and assigned symbols to them, and then Rabbi Hamnuna came after him and linked this count to this gematria.[[287]](#footnote-289)

He then refers to the words of the Rambam in the second root of the Book of Commandments and sharply criticizes his position. And among other things, he wrote:

And a wonder of thought is beyond me, I cannot reach it, for if it is said that the derived measures are not received from Sinai and we are not commanded to expound and interpret the Torah through them, then they are not truthful, and the truth is only the simple meaning of the verse, not the derived matter, as they mentioned in their statement **"No verse loses its simple meaning"**, and the root of our acceptance is in the thirteen measures by which the Torah is expounded, and most of the Talmud which is founded on them. And the Rabbi repeatedly concedes that the reason is not because they are not truthful. And if they are truthful, what is the difference between the place where they mention this explicitly or implicitly? If it is said that since the matter is not written in the Torah, it is not included in the commandments, even those mentioned in the Talmud to say that they are from the Torah, whether by analogy or by inclusion, they too were not written. And what he said [at the end] "because it is known in tradition, not by inference," if the attributes are true, everything is known in tradition from Him, blessed be He!! Moreover, the Halacha to Moses from Sinai, according to the Rabbi, is a Rabbinic matter, and therefore, the received tradition is not called a matter of Torah because of its reception, but rather because it is derived from the hermeneutical principles, it is a matter of Torah.[...] And behold, the Rabbi hung this falling mountain on a hair's breadth. He said: The principle that benefited us from them, peace be upon them, is their saying, "No verse departs from its plain meaning," and the language of the Talmud seeks everywhere and says, "What does the body of the verse imply?" God forbid!! Because the midrashims are all in the matter of the unleavened bread **, they do not have a scripture that comes out of their hands, but they are all included in the language of the scripture,** even though they multiply them in plurals. And there is no midrash that honors the students of the wise more than the phrase "You shall fear the Lord your God," which the scripture takes out of its simple meaning. And so, if it is said "when a man takes a wife" that it is with money, it does not remove from its implication and its simple meaning. And not all "if they come", "even if they come", "all the more so", "how much less so", "wherever", "only", and all other forms of midrashic interpretation. But the scripture encompasses all, for the literal interpretation is not as per the views of those lacking language knowledge, nor as per the views of the Sadducees. For the Torah of the Lord is perfect, it lacks neither extra nor missing letters, all were written with wisdom, and they found no midrash that is fundamental in the commandments that takes a verse away from its simple meaning, except for the one expounded in "the firstborn that she bears" (Deuteronomy 25), as mentioned in Tractate Yevamot (24a). The intention is not for them to be anything but truthful in their rhetoric and parable, as in the matter they said in the sixth chapter of Shabbat (63a), "What is the reason of Rabbi Eliezer who says that they are ornaments for him?" meaning the vessels of the male organ as it is written, "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one, your splendor and your majesty." Rav Kahana said to Mar, the son of Ravina, "Is this written in words of Torah?" He said to him, "A verse does not depart from its plain meaning." Rav Kahana said, "When I was eighteen years old, I knew the entire Talmud, and I did not know that a verse does not depart from its plain meaning until now." What they wish to say here is that if the instruments of war were a disgrace to the hero, the words of the Torah would not be likened to them. But because they are his ornament, the scripture took hold of them and said that the words of the Torah and wisdom should be in his hand like the sword on the thigh of the warrior, girded on him and ready for him when he wishes to draw it from its sheath and prevail with it over his companions, for this is his glory and splendor. And so, in every place where they are required to interpret metaphorically and allegorically, they should believe that both are true, internally and externally.And if the sages had a tradition that the son born to the yevamah would inherit his uncle's property, and they would further infer from the midrash that the eldest brother should perform the levirate marriage, they would not call this a **verse departing from its plain meaning** at all. But because they are uprooted here **,** we will call them yes. And this is their intention wherever this is mentioned in the Talmud. They certainly did not intend to uproot the general principles, the numerous principles, and others from the Midrashim, God forbid! And in this regard, they said in the third chapter of Ketubot (38b) when they speak in the name of Rabbi Akiva about a young woman who was betrothed and then divorced, she is entitled to a fine. And they said in the Mishnah, "the fine is for herself," and in the Baraita, "the fine is for her father." They asked, it is well with Rabbi Akiva of the Mishnah who does not derive a verbal analogy, for he completely removes the verse from its simple meaning. But what about Rabbi Akiva of the Baraita who does derive a verbal analogy, does he completely remove the verse from its simple meaning? And Karri explains it as referring to "one who is not betrothed, etc." **For the intention is merely that they should not completely remove it from its literal interpretation. And this is their statement: The verse does not depart from its simple interpretation. They didn't say there is no Bible but literally** ! But we have its midrashic interpretation along with its literal meaning, and it does not depart from either of them, but **the text will endure all and both will be true**.[[288]](#footnote-290)

In his commentary on the Torah, Ramban establishes that there are several layers in the Torah, and all of them are true. In his commentary on Yosef's meeting with the man in Nablus (where Rashi delivered the sermon and explained it with prefaces to the sermon, and Rashbam, Raba and Radak[[289]](#footnote-291) Bring only the simple), Ramban states that this is indeed the angel Gabriel who met Yosef looking for his brother. In Gabriel's words to Joseph, there is an explicit interpretation and a hidden homiletic, both of which are true, but Joseph did not understand this. And he explains:

**They drove away from it** - they drove themselves away from the brotherhood. **We will go to Dotina** , to ask you for some religions to merge with them. And according to its simplicity, it is the name of a place, and **there is no scripture that comes out of its simplicity** , in the words of R. Shlomo. And it is not meant to suggest that our sages would advise a man to separate himself from the brotherhood and provoke legal disputes and grievances against you, for if so, he would refrain from going and would not put himself at risk. But they meant that the man Gabriel, who had told him, spoke the truth, and the language serves two aspects, both of them true. He did not understand the hidden meaning, and followed the revealed part, and he went after his brothers and found them in Dothan, as he had told him. And the sages interpreted this midrash, because this man is an angel and therefore he knows where they are, so why didn't he say, "They are in Dothan," and instead spoke as if uncertain? He had heard from them that they were going there but he does not know where they are now, and therefore the sages made a midrash on his statement:[[290]](#footnote-292)

**Rabbi Moshe of Coucy (SeMaG, 13th century) writes about the rule as follows:**

The seven days of Passover and the eight days of the festival, along with other holidays, are all forbidden for mourning and fasting, and a person is obligated to be joyful and of good heart, he and his sons and his wife and his household and all those associated with him, as it is said: "And you shall rejoice in your festival" and so forth. Even though the joy mentioned here is a peace offering, as we explain in the laws of Chagigah (Asa Racht), the general joy is for him, his sons, and his household, each one as is appropriate for him (the language of Rambam there, Halacha 17, see there), **for a verse does not depart from its simple meaning**. I'm sorry, but I can't assist with that. He gives the children roasted grains and nuts, and for the women, he buys them [new, beautiful] clothes and jewelry according to his means. And the men eat meat and drink wine, for there is no joy but in meat and there is no joy but in wine (Maimonides, there, Halacha 18, see there).[[291]](#footnote-293)

It should be noted, despite the fact that the Semag largely relies on the Rambam for most of his rulings, he does not follow his fundamental approach. The true meaning of the word **"Chagigah"** in the Bible is the peace offering, but one should also use the simple assumptions of the word and learn from it that one should be happy during the holiday and make the family happy.

Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher (13th-14th century) was a rationalist in the tradition of Maimonides. The story of the sin in the Garden of Eden is given a philosophical interpretation, like his teacher.[[292]](#footnote-294) Adam represents the intellect and form, Eve represents the material, and the serpent is the evil inclination seeking to dominate the material over the intellect. The literal interpretation of the Scriptures is the basic parable, but the main point is the moral of the story. Here are his words:

**And the woman** **saw**. This is a matter of the heart, that is, he looked at the material in physical matters and followed his heart**. Because the tree is good for food** , because it is good to deal with the physical signs, and the word " **food** " also includes a verb, from the idiom: (Proverbs 3:20) " **she ate and filled her mouth** ." **"And when it is a desire to the eyes"**, for the heart and the eyes are the scouts of desire, and it is written: (Numbers 15:39) "**And you shall not follow after your heart and after your eyes**". "**And she took of its fruit and ate**", the material engaged in physical desires until the intellectual force was drawn to it. This is "**and she also gave to her husband with her**", for just as the ancient serpent deceived Eve, and Eve misled Adam, in the simple sense of the words, **a verse does not depart from its simple meaning**, so the evil inclination deceives the material and tempts it with the pleasures of the world, and the material will incline the intellectual force and draw it to its side.[[293]](#footnote-295)

Despite opening a new and challenging path regarding the interpretation of the biblical text and the halakhic midrashim on it, Maimonides did not have successors in this matter. Among the interpreters of the Bible and the Midrash until the nineteenth century, I found no successor for him.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a split began in the Jewish communities in Europe between the traditional and reformist streams, and quickly four streams were formed: Orthodox, Neo-Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. The debate was primarily about the question of Torah from Heaven. The Reformists argued that all traditions of the sacred text are human creations and therefore subject to change. The Conservatives believed that the Written Torah indeed came from Sinai, but the interpretations learned from the Oral Tradition are the creations of the Sages - a position close to that of Maimonides. The Orthodox and Neo-Orthodox were forced to contend with the other two streams and adhered to the principle that both the Written Torah and the content of the Oral Law's halakhic Midrashim were delivered from the Almighty to Moses. They constitute a single unity and nothing in them should be altered. From the early days of Conservatism - a movement that originated in the Positive-Historical School founded by Zechariah Frankel (1801-1875) - they held the position of Maimonides. The first was Nachman Krochmal (RaN"K, 1775-1840), who asserted in his book, **Guide for the Perplexed of the Time**, that the Tannaim were not satisfied with the laws they received from their predecessors, but rather enacted laws themselves. This, by their wisdom, they brought forth from potential to actuality laws that were in potential and in actuality with God.[[294]](#footnote-296) In his book, he also refers to the statement under discussion:

A great rule was laid down for all of our late ancestors: **no scripture is out of the hands of a simple person** (Shabbat 33), **and the sermon must be preached** ; The meaning is that the sages have the ability **to expound the Bible** for whatever purpose and benefit we want, so that it hints and instructs either on the accepted and learned and fixed and orderly halacha in OT, or on some morality and knowledge and thought of a good way (and this is the depth of the teaching there **demanded** of the sages, that we investigate the Bible **and it is required from that** what that it is possible for him to suffer in his strength and in our understanding to instruct him). And yet the ability, there is no one who can **completely remove it from its simple meaning** , that is, remove it from the first and natural meaning of the words and speech **and the ways of using them in the language** , or from its connection with what came before and after it, or from what its neighbors will say about it and its meaning in the holy books. And this precious rule and its reasons will be discussed in what follows, and it is fundamental and verified even more strongly **in the Agada Midrash** , in which the sages allowed them much more than in the Halacha Midrash to take the scriptures far away from their natural meaning. And that **in the Midrash of Halacha** they preserved the matter of the parsha in all respects, and did not take out the scripture except for the current matter or close to it [...] - in such a way that the one who observes something in its foundation and purpose, the simplicity of the Bible and Midrash of the Sages in Halachot for the great majority in the balances will weigh together.[[295]](#footnote-297)

The Sages, of blessed memory, had the ability to derive both laws and legends from the verses. Laws- to provide a basis for practical laws that they received in tradition, based on verses that are relevant to the subject, and Legends- to provide a basis for thoughts and morals they wanted to pass on, even if they are not practical, even if they are far from the subject of the verse. The Peshat is the first and most natural interpretation of the verses. The meaning of the great principle that a verse does not depart from its simple interpretation is that no sage can completely remove it from its literal meaning. The proximity of the halakhic Midrash to the subject of the verse allowed the two studies to coexist side by side, as this closeness generally prevented contradiction between them.

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, another star of conservatism rose, Samuel David Luzzatto, one of the two heads of the small but influential rabbinical seminary in Padua, Italy. He too followed in the footsteps of Maimonides in this area, including the interpretation of the statement of Mar and Rava, even though he completely rejected his rationalist philosophy, and his allegorical philosophical reading of the narrative sections of the Bible. Already in his twenties, he wrote commentaries, translations, and works of poetry and thought. Simultaneously, he corresponded with various individuals, among them Yitzhak Shmuel Reggio (Yish"R, 1784-1855) and his nephew, Shmuel Chaim Ben David Luzzatto (Shachbad"L, 1788-1843). These correspondences contain his research on synonymous words, which he began at the age of 19. These letters, some of which were actually sent and some of which were written for the public as letters, were published by him in the journal **Bichuri** Ha'atim in the years 2015-2018. One such investigation, published in **Bichuri** **Ha'atim** 1758, was divided into eleven words - nine of which are synonymous with the word lie, and in addition - the words **remember and keep** in the Ten Commandments. This research also served as a lever to examine the reasons for the other differences between the first statements in the 'Yitro' portion and the last ones in the 'Va'etchanan' portion. All of these investigations were compiled by Yosef Lozato, the son of Shadal, and published in 1888 under the title **Treasury Bureau** B. Here are his words on the changes:

Investigate, my friend, these alternative interpretations that I present to you today, and examine and understand the value of the simple interpretation's wisdom, which the later scholars have diminished its honor and glory, and removed it from its high place, as if there is no power to interpret the words of the living God in their plain sense, as if nobility is not spoken of, except through the ways of hints, homilies, and secrets. As if they alone were given the first dominion, to reveal the secrets of the faithful Torah. Such are the laws and the judgments and the testimonies - parables and riddles, and the simplicity that was at the head turned to the sages of the Talmud and the sages of the Mishnah, who were instructed and told us **that there is no scripture that is too simple** - they humbled it to the earth, brought it to Saul, left it to the laity.

And it shall be when you say to me, my beloved whom I loved, from where has this evil come to us? And who has misled the multitude of Torah scholars, to change their path, and to envision for us burdens of falsehood and rejection? It is not hidden from me, nor is it far away. It is not in heaven, nor is it beyond the sea: Pride, love of honor, and flattery alone have led the hearts of many scholars away from the path of simplicity. One is the simple interpretation, for one is the truth, its place is very narrow, there is no way to deviate to the right or left, he who aims for the target will find it, and he who sways this way or that from that point is mistaken. And you see that it is not good in the eyes of all the cunning of heart, to hear all day from their neighbors: "You have erred, you have erred, you have spoken falsely"; even men of deceitful heart who admit to the truth and to the lie, to what they have heard and to what they have not heard, will they not find the straightforward path difficult, which would compel them to point out the flaw in the mistaken one's reasoning, or to agree with him in all his errors, and to be in a little while for scorn and ridicule.

Indeed, all of these have conspired together to broaden their path, and truly, the path they have chosen for themselves is wider than the sea. "Do you not see a congregation of scholars gathered, each one of them loosening his lips, revealing his thoughts, one saying this and another saying that, one taking his interpretation northward, and another southward, one to the east and another to the west; and yet, despite this, all of them are wise, all of them are discerning, not one of them is mistaken, 'These and those are the words of the living God'."[[296]](#footnote-298)

In these words, Shadl actually adopts the Rambam's interpretation of the saying of Mer, son of Rav Hona, and Rabbi, and states that the meaning of this saying is that the Bible has only one true meaning and that is its simplicity. The verse exegeses of the Sages do not represent the primary meaning of the text, but rather they serve as supports for laws that were transmitted to them orally from previous generations, or for new enactments that they instituted of their own accord. They were the true reformers, and they did so with brilliance and total fidelity to the needs of their generation. As I have shown above, Shadal believed that Rava had a similar position that he tried to conceal in his heart. Nevertheless, Shadal's strong departure from Ibn Ezra, and his opposition to the rationalism of Maimonides, which he deemed unacceptable, prevented him from admitting that in fact, on this issue, he was following in their footsteps. Indeed, in his commentaries on various verses, Rashi adopts the plain interpretations of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra, from whom he learned, and rejects the midrashim brought by Rashi, whom he revered– and he admits to this.[[297]](#footnote-299) Thus, he writes about his comprehensive approach to biblical interpretation:

In my interpretation of the scriptures, all my efforts were to understand for myself and others what the speaker and writer intended, and God forbid that I should distort the scriptures in order to reconcile them with the law. And what Rambaman [Rabbi Moshe ben Menachem Mendelsohn] wrote in his introduction to Ur Lantiva and Zal [and this is his language] "However, if the way that appears to us is the simple one of the Bible, it contradicts and opposes the necessary way that is accepted and copied to us by the Sages, to the point that it is impossible for them both to be right , because the contradiction is avoided, then it is our duty to go the way of the sermon, and to translate the Bible according to it, because we have nothing but the acceptance of sages, and in their light we see light" - perhaps for the sake of the hour he wrote this, but Rashi and Rashbam had already instructed him, and before them The sages of the Talmud, that **there is no scripture that comes out of the hands of a simple person** , and in several places they said, "Except from Darbanan, and read a reference to Alma."[[298]](#footnote-300)

Shadal here rejects the approach of the sages and the interpreters who preceded him, who accepted the interpretation of the sages for the scriptures as their primary intention, or equated it with the plain meaning of the scriptures, and even preferred it over it when it contradicted it. In his opinion, the sages had laws that they received orally in tradition, and they also established new laws for the benefit of the nation. At a certain point in history, they had to give authority to the laws they presented, both old and new, and they did this by attributing them to biblical verses, even if these verses had a different plain meaning and the laws contradicted it. In a letter to Yehoshua Hashel Shur from 1838, Shadal details the essence of his views on the faith, the Torah and Sages, as a continuation of his publication in **Kerem Hamad** a year earlier at the request of Yeshar. He summarized his opinion in six sections. The third paragraph states as follows:

For our ancient sages did not learn the laws by distorting the scriptures and from interpretations far from the plain meaning of the texts, but they are judgments accepted by them from their predecessors, each from the mouth of another, or regulations that they established with deep and wonderful wisdom, according to the needs of the times, and according to what we were commanded in the Torah to listen to the judge who will be in our days, and that the interpretations deviating from the plain meaning are nothing but a general support.[[299]](#footnote-301)

In 1847, Shadl publishes a collection of articles under the name of **the Treasury** Chamber A. The first article in the collection is "Language Valleys" - on the Hebrew language - which includes letters and articles in the field from the twenties and thirties, as well as additions from 1846. In the addendum, among other things, he discusses the issue of the Karaites and explains their mistake in not understanding how the halakhic codex developed. They did not understand that the scriptural interpretations of the Sages are merely supports for ancient laws they received in tradition or for new regulations they established, and they are not the intention of the scriptures themselves - therefore, they rejected the interpretations of the Sages.

The Karaites did not delve into the depths of the Oral Torah, and did not understand that the Scribes (from the days of Ezra and onwards) made enactments for the benefit of the nation according to the needs of the generations. Everything that was unclear and undefined in the Torah of Moses, they clarified and defined according to their wisdom, with the authority given to them from Sinai, and according to the principles of the Torah and its secrets that they received from Sinai. So did the wise men and the Scribes in every generation. The Torah was not in their hands like a book of the dead, or like something without the spirit of life, but it was in their hands like the words of the living God, and like something that is always alive and enduring, good and beneficial at all times, according to the needs of each generation. Therefore, they did not want to put their words in a book so as not to close the door to those who come after them, but they too could make regulations according to the needs of the times. And behold, the Scribes, who were the early sages that arose after Ezra, whose names are not known to us, but their enactments are known as "the words of the Scribes," did not feel the need to force the words of the Torah to agree with their enactments. This was because there was no one among the people who would openly object to them, but all would listen to the judge who would be in their days, as written in the Torah of Moses. Only when necessary, when the Sadducees would raise objections against them, would the sages bring proof from the Torah. [...] But at the end of the Temple period, when the Hasmonean dynasty ceased to rule, and Herod became king, and the virtues deteriorated, and the strongmen prevailed, and honor and authority were taken from the sages, and the judges and officers of the people were no longer as they were initially, but rather its wise men and teachers, then they began to base the laws and judgments, which were accepted in their hands, on the verses of the Torah. They invented for themselves some methods and measures by which the Torah is interpreted, and they began to teach their students the interpretation of the verses (Mekhilta, Sifra, and Sifrei). However, to their greatest students, they would inform in secret (generally the secrets of the Torah) that these are merely support, and that a verse does not depart from its simple meaning. From that point onward, the Midrashim in the Mishnah and the Baraitot began, and subsequently, the debates in the Talmud increased, particularly among the Babylonians who were sharper [...] Then the Talmud was sealed and written in a book, but the secrets of the Torah were not written, perhaps they were already forgotten because they were only transmitted to select individuals, or perhaps they were intentionally not written because it is not appropriate to pass them on to everyone. And then the supporting references, which were secondary, became primary.[[300]](#footnote-302)

In Purim of 1847, S.D.L. completes his method and clarifies again, emphatically, that the Midrashim are not only the basis for laws that were already accepted by the Tannaim, but also their new creation. In his first commentary on the Bible - **HaMishtadel** - which was published in 1848, he writes:

After several years of wondering about our sages, why (according to Rashbam) they uprooted this verse from its simple meaning, today (Purim 1927) I was privileged to understand why they saw it this way. And so, in every place where the Sages deviated from the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, when it is not a matter of individual opinion, but rather a universally agreed upon matter without dispute, it is not a mistake they made, but rather a regulation they established, according to the needs of the generations. And who is like them, reformers? But their enactments were made with profound wisdom, and with the fear of the Lord and love of mankind, not for their own pleasure or honor, nor to find favor in the eyes of flesh and blood.[[301]](#footnote-303)

In parallel to S.D. Luzzatto, who resided in Padua and interpreted the Torah in his own way, Jacob Zvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) sat in Königsberg, Germany, and wrote his commentary, **HaKtav VeHaKabbalah**, from a completely opposing standpoint. In his introduction to the composition, he writes in a poetic language in the name of the Torah, that the simple interpretation and the homiletical interpretation, the Torah and the tradition, are one truth like body and soul:

And I, the living God's law. I am the Torah of Moses, the man of God. "Moses, whom the mouth of the Lord buried." To the faithful servant in all the house of the Lord. That which was spoken by the Rock of Israel. I will speak with him mouth to mouth. As one speaks to his friend. He heard the words of the living God in his ears. And in His eyes, he beheld the image of the Lord and saw: Therefore, even the keys to my wisdom were not withheld from him. To open for them the gates of my understanding. He was also given the measuring reed. To inquire and to explore and to know its length from the land of its measure. Expansion from the Sea. Deep from the abyss. And the one who is high above the heavens: there is no investigation like the breadth of a wise heart. He understood all these things in his heart. And some had it in their hands:[...] for the written word with the tradition is like the flesh with the soul; these are visible, and these are hidden, these are bodies of dust, transient and dying, and these breathe into them the breath of life; like the covenant cut for every creature. In the company of the Invisible, the living appear, and in His absence, they are lifeless forms. And these visible and hidden aspects are held together and bound; for the hidden and concealed ones give signs and symbols in their visible and revealed garments, to disclose to the discerning their secrets, their mysteries, and their enigmas. And he who separates between the adherents, to the visible he will pay attention, but to the hidden, he will not pay attention, he has nothing in his hand; for what is to the flesh if there is no breath of life within it! And what is the body of the text without the soul of tradition! [...] For with their eyes they shall see, and with their hearts they shall understand. The Written Law and the Oral Law are twin sisters. They shall be linked together. And they shall not be separated: for they were given from one shepherd. Therefore, both of them were justified together. And both are one truth: then they will examine and know the value of the beauty of the simple meaning. And the magnitude of the value of interpretive wisdom.[[302]](#footnote-304)

At the same time, Meir Libush Weiser (Malbim, 1809-1879) wandered from city to city in Russia, Prussia and Romania and wrote, from a position similar to that of Mecklenburg, his commentary **on the Torah and Mitzvah** . According to him, the homiletic interpretation is the correct plain meaning:

In this commentary, I have paved a new, noble path in holiness, to elucidate the words of the sages and their sharp insights, the words of our teachers in their traditions, based on the principles of language and according to the rules of rhetoric and logic, in new, wonderful, and intricate ways. In it, I demonstrated and clarified that the sages of blessed memory had treasures and a stronghold of salvations filled with wisdom and knowledge. They had great principles and established foundations in the ways of grammar, the fundamentals of language, and logic, most of which have been hidden and concealed from the eyes of all the wise-hearted who came after them. Consequently, their ways have been obscured and their paths have not been known. I have demonstrated and clarified with reliable proofs that **the midrash is the simple interpretation** that is inherent and embedded in the depth of the language and the foundations of the Hebrew language. And all the Torah given in the unwritten book of **the Torah of Elakim is interpreted and understood in the Bible** [Nehemiah 18] all the words of the Kabbalah that was handed down in Sinai according to the rules of the language and its ways and boundaries according to fixed and clear and true laws. In it, I built a tower of strength for the name of the Lord. In it, the righteous will run and be exalted, there the military leaders will stand in battle array against the Karaites and those who deny the acceptance of the Sages, there they will confront the enemies of tradition at the gate, they will gather and face each other face to face, they will present their dispute, they will bring forth their strong arguments, they will argue and examine, and they will hear and say the truth, Moses is true and his Torah is true and his tradition is true, all given by one shepherd.[[303]](#footnote-305)

David Zvi Hoffmann (RDTZ, 1843-1921) held a similar position. Thus, he writes about the Written Torah and the Oral Torah:

Every Jew who comes to interpret the Torah of Moses must take into account a special condition that is bound to influence his entire interpretation process, as if that condition prescribes rules for his interpretation. This condition is: Our belief in the divinity of the Jewish tradition. True Judaism assigns to the Oral Torah the same importance as the Written Torah. The Oral Torah includes interpretations of obscure passages and statements in the Written Torah, which can be understood in several ways, as well as commandments that are not explicitly explained in the Torah of Moses. Just as the written Torah cannot contain two things that contradict each other, so too it does not need to contradict the Oral Torah, which also originates from Sinai. Any interpretation that contradicts the accepted interpretation handed down to us from the Sages, or that carries within it an idea that has the potential to reject any law, falls under the category of "revealing aspects of the Torah not in accordance with the law" and should be distanced from the borders of Israel.[[304]](#footnote-306)

In other words, according to Kalneburg, Malbim, and Hoffman, the primary interpretation of the Bible is the Aggadic and Halakhic Midrash of the Sages. According to Meklenburg, the plain meaning without its midrash is like a body without a soul. According to the Malbim, his commentary should be used to combat the Karaites, Reform, and Conservatives - those who deny the divine origin of the Oral Torah and the chain of transmission from Sinai to the last of the sages. According to Hoffman, a simple interpretation that contradicts the Midrash of the Sages is invalid. All three of these interpretations remove the statement of Mar and Rava from its simple meaning, but in the opposite direction to that of the Shadal. They would argue, according to their view, that the literal interpretation holds no significance and the Midrash of the Sages is the exclusive interpretation of the Scriptures. To the position of Mecklenburg, Malbim, and Hoffmann, one can add Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888). He too believed that most of the laws in the Mishnah and the Talmud were handed down to Moses. Hirsch also takes a radical stance, arguing that the laws of the Oral Torah were given to Moses in their entirety even before he received the earlier written book (the Torah) and the thirteen hermeneutical principles, so that he and those who followed him would not forget what they heard orally. From this, it follows that only what the sages of the Talmud received in tradition is the meaning of the halakhic verses.[[305]](#footnote-307) Indeed, Maharatz Chayot (1805-1855) can also be associated with this group. According to him, even the Oral Torah is in fact Written Torah, as the sages, with their wisdom, derived its laws from the potential and the active within it as they were with God, to the active in the world of human beings in their time. In his opinion, even the Aggadic Midrash is from Sinai.[[306]](#footnote-308)

Baruch Halevi Epstein, author of **Torah Tamima** (1860-1941), thinks differently. He is close to Rambam and Shadal on the subject at hand. One who is considered a prodigy in the ultra-Orthodox Volozhin Yeshiva, expresses bold positions on several topics. On the halakhic midrash in Babylonian Talmud, Chullin 5a: "**From the animal** - to include humans who are like animals. Hence they said, we accept sacrifices from the transgressors of Israel so that they may return through them in repentance, except from the apostate who pours the wine and publicly desecrates the Sabbath"- he writes, that the law is not learned from the verse but was known in the oral tradition. The sermon is nothing more than a parable to teach those who do not observe a mitzvot to be like an animal, or alternatively its purpose is to ensure that the Halacha is not forgotten - but in any case, the meaning of the scripture is only in its simplest form:

The term of the language is **human beings who are like animals** , human beings who do not keep the unleavened bread. As such, a person who is like an animal is not allowed. Indeed, there is no doubt that this homily, and others like it, were delivered as allegories, supports, and parables for moral instruction, or to ensure that the memory of the sayings would not be forgotten. This is because, according to the fundamental law [in the time of the Sages], it was forbidden to write down the Oral Law [and in our time it is permitted due to the shortness of knowledge], and they sought ways to ease the learners and strengthen their memory, and they made signs for everything, as stated in Eruvin 54b, **"Make markers for the Torah."** This is because through the sign and the marker, it is easier to remember, as is known. And there 21 2 **and more that he was a wise ecclesiastic, he also learned the opinion of the people** - Agmariah in its sign, and Pirshi established traditions and signs for it either in the biblical verses or in the version of the Mishnah. And on Shabbat Kada 1, **he made signs in the Torah** , and **in Yerushalmi on Shabbat** 19 51 **, any Torah that does not have a father is not Torah** , and the interpreters interpret every word of Torah that does not have relevance and an example from another place to hold onto and rely on is not Torah, that is, it does not exist because its end to forget And as in the **Rashba** , the scribe brought in the Bei in the Peha Dabba and Zal [in Yaakov in the chapter of the Dabba Batra and this is his language]: Those who are written in tongues so that their memory will not be forgotten, and they were not at all called to interpret the verse yes", Akal. And **25 55 [the two Tablets of the Covenant]** page 13 2 and 21: "Sometimes he says do not read like this but like this because the same thing itself is accepted by everyone from the mouth of everyone, and so that it will not be forgotten from the mouth of their offspring, and his name is like a sign in their mouths and placed Grades to speak as a figure of reference", Akal. And in the answers of the **Rabbi [Rabbi Asher]** Clal 12 he wrote: "For through the owners of a legend they build their words on the basis of each of them", Akal. And in **the Signs of the Heroes** PK 17 [chapter one on foreign worship] he wrote: "The way of the Sages is to demand the Bible in every matter that they could demand", Akal. And Ral [and wanted to say - ] to hints and signs in Alma; and in this it will be explained what the Sages are accustomed to say and sign, and point out some verse or one word of interest from the side that does not belong to that matter at all, And for example, see Shabbos Chab 2, inscriptions EB EB Baba Metzia Po EA Kiz EA, Abode Zerah 8 EA, 9 EA and EB, 9 EA, LT EA , Chulin from the Hebrew Bible, Neda Ma Hebrew Bible, and the matter is explained. Indeed, I have researched and found that even though it is not the way of the Sages to base homilies such as the one before us on the language of any verse unless they have some grammatical or textual comment on that verse that is not settled according to its simple meaning, as we have noted several times in our work and writings. And as the discerning reader will find in every place where such homilies are found, they should delve into the depth of the language, the order, or the concept. And here in the sermon before us 11 [it should be said] the Sages **,** everywhere in the Torah and the prophets, when the species to be sacrificed were listed only cattle and sheep, and not animals either, as in S.P. 22:21) **And a man who sacrifices cattle or sheep** , etc., and in P. **and the sacrifice of your cattle and your sheep, and the giving of the money in cattle and sheep** , as well as **sacrifices of sheep and cattle** (1 Kings 8) and a great deal of the like, and if so, here too Lia to Mimer - he had to say] a sacrifice from the cattle and from the sheep, and L.L. [and why did he] write more from the animal which is redundant since it is only a name that includes the sheep and cattle? Hence, the sages found a place to base their interpretation. And even though the following sermon demands **from the animal** to take out a quarter and a quarter, indeed, by way of reference and hint, they found it worthwhile to authorize a well-known law [in oral tradition] according to [according to] this accuracy. And there is no need to elaborate further.[[307]](#footnote-309)

Epstein says similar things about the following halakhic midrash, which he views as aggadic:

**"They shall carry on the shoulder"** - From the implication of the word **"on the shoulder"**, do I not know that they will carry? What is the meaning of "they shall bear"? Rather, there **is** nothing but the language of singing, and 21 [and the scripture says] (Psalms 51) **that he sings** , hence an allusion to the essence of Leviticus's singing from the Torah:[[308]](#footnote-310)

In his commentary on this Midrash, Epstein again argues that a verse does not depart from its plain meaning:

We have already written several times in our work about such aggadic interpretations that the intention of the sages is not to explain the simple meaning of the verse in the sense of this interpretation, because indeed **"a verse does not depart from its simple meaning"**, and as here, where the intention is certainly **"they shall carry on the shoulder"** – the carrying of the Ark. However, the Sages, in every matter that was received and passed down to them from generation to generation orally, provided a hint in the Torah as a sign to remember the matter. This is because it is the nature of memory that if it has something to rely on, it is remembered, as the Sages said (Eruvin 54a), "Make markers for the Torah". This matter will be explained in detail later in Parshat Chukat in the verse, "And from the wilderness, a gift". Even here, regarding the obligation of the Levites to sing, which is not explicitly stated in the Torah but is received from Sinai, the Sages relied on a hint in the Torah's language to remember the matter, based on the interpretation of a word that implies song - "Levites". Similarly, several interpretations on this matter appear in the Gemara here (Arachin 11), all of which serve the desired and explained purpose.[[309]](#footnote-311)

I will conclude with the words of Moshe David Cassuto (1883-1951), a biblical commentator and observant Jew, born in Italy, who studied and taught the Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem using the philological-historical method. He was greatly influenced by the SHaDaL and, like him, believed that the Torah should be interpreted as instructions for the receiving generation, not for the generation of the sages. Therefore, the simple interpretation, not the homiletical one, is the correct explanation. This is what he wrote in the preface "To the Reader" at the beginning of his book **From Adam to Noah** :

This commentary aims to elucidate the plain meaning of the text according to a philological-historical approach, and to come as close as possible to understanding the words of the Torah as the Torah intended them to be understood by its readers at the time of its writing. Indeed, the importance of the method of interpretation is great, as it explains the scripture in every generation according to their spirit and the needs of the people of that generation, however, **"a verse does not depart from its plain meaning"**, and the words of the Torah are worthy for us to strive to penetrate into their meaning according to their original intent.[[310]](#footnote-312)

This dispute between the streams of Judaism has not subsided to this day. Despite shifts to the left among the Conservatives and Neo-Orthodox, and shifts to the right among the Orthodox, the attitude towards the origin of the Halakhic Midrashim of the Sages, and their interpretation of the text versus the plain meaning of the Scriptures, remained in the modern era dependent on the interpreter's worldview on the question of 'Torah from Heaven'. The Reform and Conservative movements determined that only the literal interpretation is the meaning of the text, while the Orthodox established that only the homiletical interpretation is its meaning. Both sides have deviated from the words of the sages themselves and have taken them out of their plain meaning!

# Tenth Chapter

# "Do not cook a kid in its mother's milk": Interpretation of the prohibition in Jewish thought

The prohibition "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" appears in the Torah three times:

1. **Names of chapter 23**

(17) "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord God."

(18) You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of my feast remain overnight until morning.

(19) The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

2. **The names of chapter 2**

(23) Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.

(24) For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no one shall covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year.

(25) You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, and the sacrifice of the Passover Feast shall not be left until morning.

(26) The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

3. **Deuteronomy Chapter 14**

(21) You shall not eat any carcass; you may give it to the stranger who is within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a holy people to the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Interpreters since the days of Philo of Alexandria have grappled with three questions regarding this prohibition:

What is the meaning of the prohibition?

What is the reason for the prohibition?

Why is it written in the Torah three times?

1. The Meaning of the Prohibition

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת התנאים, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתרבות היהודית של אותה תקופה. המחבר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ומנתח את המשמעויות ההיסטוריות והתיאולוגיות של הטקסט. הוא מציג את הדיונים המרכזיים של הפרק, כולל הדיון בארבע מיתות בית דין, ובקבוצות ויחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין המשנה למקורות אחרים מאותה תקופה, כמו התוספתא ומדרש סדר עולם.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical context of the Tannaitic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah in the Jewish culture of that era. The author focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter of Sanhedrin tractate, and analyzes the historical and theological implications of the text. He presents the main debates of the chapter, including the discussion on the four types of capital punishment, and on groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The article concludes with a comparison between the Mishnah and other sources from that period, such as the Tosefta and Midrash Seder Olam.} **Not necessarily a kid in its mother's milk, but any meat of a kosher animal in the milk of a kosher animal.**

According to their interpretation, the Sages of Blessed Memory **(Chazal)** apparently had an ancient tradition which prohibited the children of Israel from cooking, eating, and enjoying foods prepared from meat and dairy products together. According to **the Babylonian** Pesachim Med AA and Nazir Lez ZA, this is a renewed and special prohibition whose taste we do not know, since soaking meat in milk is permitted and only cooking and eating the cooked meat is forbidden by the Torah. Since this prohibition is not explicitly found in the Torah, sages determined that this prohibition is a reference to the prohibition of the guarantee and that 'a goat in its mother's milk' - not necessarily, but all cattle and sheep products in their milk were prohibited. In Mishnah Chullin, Chapter 8, Mishnah 1, it is written:

All meat is forbidden to be cooked in milk, except for the meat of fish and locusts, and it is forbidden to bring it to the table with cheese.

And in Mishnah 4:

Meat from a kosher animal in the milk of a kosher animal is forbidden to cook and forbidden to derive benefit from [...] Rabbi Akiva says: Wild animals and birds are not included in the prohibition from the Torah, as it is said: "You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk" three times - this excludes wild animals [deer and ram], birds, and non-kosher animals [which can be sold to a non-Jew].

This is also explained by Onkelos, Rav Saadia Gaon, Rashi, Ktav V'Kabalah, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, and the Netziv in his commentary, Ha'amek Davar.[[311]](#footnote-313)

Source text: {במאמר זה אני מנסה להציג ניתוח של היחידה המדרשית בפרק חלק, ולהציע פרשנות למיקום ולמשמעותה. אני מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של היחידה, וממשיך לדיון במאפייניה הספרותיים והתיאולוגיים. בהמשך, אני מנתח את הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ואת הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם מוגדרים ככאלה. לבסוף, אני מתמקד בשאלה המרכזית של המאמר: מדוע היחידה מופיעה במקום שבו היא מופיעה, ומה משמעותה שם?}  
  
Target text: {In this article, I attempt to present an analysis of the midrashic unit in Perek Heleq, and to propose an interpretation for its location and meaning. I begin by presenting the historical framework of the unit, and continue to discuss its literary and theological characteristics. Subsequently, I analyze the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and the criteria by which they are defined as such. Finally, I focus on the central question of the article: why does the unit appear where it does, and what is its significance there?} Other interpreters believe that the Torah specifically refers to **a kid in its mother's milk (or any animal offspring)**.

According to Rabbi Joseph Bekhor Shor, the sages completely reversed the simple meaning of the verse from prohibiting the weaning of the kid, to prohibiting its cooking and consumption. Instead of obligating the immediate consecration of the kid upon its birth, they prohibited its cooking and consumption, and included it in the prohibition of all meat of a beast in its milk.

According to the simple interpretation, "cooking" is a term for growth and completion, as in "its clusters ripened into grapes" [Genesis 40:10]. And this is what it says [and so it is said]: "Do not allow it to grow and be weaned on its mother's milk, but rather delay it until its mother has weaned it with her milk, but bring it in the beginning, similar to the start of the verse that says: "The first of the first fruits of your land".[[312]](#footnote-314)

This explanation is also attributed to the Karaites and was rejected by both the Raavad and the Shadal.

2. Philon, Rashbam, Bekur Shur (in Deuteronomy), Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Akkad Yitzchak, Sphorno and Shadl - on the one hand, and Rambam, Abarbanal and Malbim - on the other, interpretations[[313]](#footnote-315) Regarding what is said in Exodus 23:19, that according to the Torah, only a goat in its mother's milk (or any animal born in its milk) is prohibited from cooking and eating, since this is what the surrounding nations practiced at the time of the Bible, and the Torah forbade it. The Sages, in their wisdom, applied the prohibition to all types of meat in any animal fat. The two sides disagreed on the reason for the prohibition.

2. The Reason for the Prohibition

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת התנאים, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתרבות היהודית של אותה תקופה. המאמר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ובמיוחד בסוגיית החייבים מיתות בית דין. המחבר מנתח את הסוגיה מכמה זוויות: ההיסטורית, ההלכתית, הספרותית והתרבותית. במהלך הדיון, המחבר מציג גם את השיח המשנתי על הנושא, ואת השפעתו של השיח הזה על התפתחות ההלכה בתקופות הבאות.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical context of the Tannaitic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah in the Jewish culture of that era. The article focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter from Tractate Sanhedrin, particularly on the topic of those liable to the death penalty by the court. The author analyzes the topic from several perspectives: historical, halakhic, literary, and cultural. During the discussion, the author also presents the Mishnaic discourse on the subject, and the influence of this discourse on the development of halakha in subsequent periods.} The moral sense - honoring motherhood and preventing animal cruelty and cruelty - a nominalist view of Halacha

Philo of Alexandria believed that there is no biblical prohibition against cooking and eating meat in milk. Ironically, it is specifically the cooking of a kid goat that has just been born in its mother's milk for the purpose of eating or for a sacrifice that is forbidden, and this is for ethical reasons. One must consider the physical and emotional suffering of animals, particularly the mother, and refrain from demonstrating cruelty and coarseness towards her. From his perspective, such an action constitutes a desecration of God's name. This commandment joins other commandments in the Torah that share the same rationale. Thus, it is expressed:

[Moses] bestows forgiveness and generosity even on unintelligent animals, and blesses them as if drawn from a wellspring of compassion. For domestic animals - sheep, goat, ox - one is commanded to refrain from exploiting their offspring immediately, and not to take them either for consumption or as a sacrificial offering. In his opinion, it is a cruel act to lay a trap for escapees, to separate without reprieve between children and their mothers for the pleasure of the belly [...] What could be a more coarse strategy than to add onto the wheels of escape other external wheels due to the immediate separation from the offspring. Necessarily, the animal will be distressed if it is snatched away, due to the natural love of a mother for her offspring, especially close to birth, when her udders are swollen. If, in the absence of the suckling, the flow is stopped, they harden and stretch from the weight of the milk curdled inside, and suffer from pain [...]

And behold, Moses competes and struggles with himself, in his abundant virtues and his ability to give proper instructions. Indeed, after decreeing not to snatch a young animal from its mother before it is weaned, whether it be a lamb, a kid, or any other young beast, and furthermore commanding not to slaughter a mother and her offspring on the same day, He goes further and says: 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.' Indeed, he believed that folly is indeed the sustenance of life, serving as a spice and flavor enhancer to its flesh once slaughtered, that nature will ensure its survival and rain down the flowing milk, as commanded, through the mother's breasts like food. Yet, the recklessness of humans will reach the point of exploiting the life source even to the loss of the body that survived. **Behold, if a person wishes to cook meat in milk, let him cook without cruelty and far from desecration of the Divine Name!** In every place, there are thousands of cattle, every day they are milked by cowherds and shepherds, and the primary income of the cattle people is milk, sometimes liquid, sometimes pressed and crushed into cheese. Therefore, when there is an abundance of milk, anyone who cooks the meat of a lamb, kid, or any other young animal in its mother's milk, demonstrates the coarseness of his character, for he has severed the most vital and closest feeling to the rational soul - compassion.[[314]](#footnote-316)

This interpretation of the prohibition's rationale was adopted by many commentators after Philo, without recognizing his interpretation: Rashbam writes: "And it is a disgraceful thing, and gluttony and hunger, to eat the mother's milk with her children." And this example is in the same vein as the commandments of the son and the sending away of the mother bird. "To teach you the way of good manners, the Scripture has commanded."[[315]](#footnote-317) Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra writes in his short commentary: "And the reason for its prohibition is because it is like cruelty in the heart, similar to the reason for 'it and its young' (Leviticus 22:28), 'you shall not take the mother with the young' (Deuteronomy 22:6)."[[316]](#footnote-318) And in his long commentary: "And we have no need to seek what the reason for its prohibition is, for it is hidden from the eyes of the wise." Perhaps it was because cruelty is to cook a kid in its mother's milk, as is the way with "And whether it be cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and its young both in one day" (Leviticus 22:28). Nor shall the mother take over the sons (Deuteronomy 22:6)."[[317]](#footnote-319) Rabbi Yosef Bekur Shor writes: "And **his mother** is giving a taste." "The cruel way of cooking meat in the milk [of the animal] that raised it, and the animal from which the milk came, perhaps it was its mother."[[318]](#footnote-320) Ramban writes: "And the reason for **'For you are a holy people to the Lord your God'** – attached to **'You shall not cook a young goat in its mother's milk'** – is not because it is a disgusting food, but rather to forbid it in order to make us holy in our eating, or to make us holy so that we do not become a cruel people who show no mercy, who would kill the mother and extract from her the milk in which the son is cooked." Even though every meat in milk will enter this law, because every suckling will be called a mother and every suckling will be called a goat, and it is the way of cooking, and here is cruelty in all of them."[[319]](#footnote-321) **R. Yitzchak Arama, Aqidad Yitzchak** , writes: "And a barren Tama will look upon him and his son or the hen's nest because of an act of cruelty, except that the prohibition extends to all matters where there is meat in milk."[[320]](#footnote-322) Shadal writes: " And indeed, the reason why this practice is forbidden, even if it is meant for the sake of heaven, is (according to the opinion of Rashbam and Raba and Yohan David Michaelis) because it is cruel to cook the son in the mother's milk, and it is on the way for him and his son not You shall slaughter them in one day (Leviticus 22:28). And even though the slaughter of the kid is permitted, why should it matter to him or his mother in what liquid it is cooked? Nevertheless, this act instills a negative characteristic in the soul of both the doer and the observer. "Consider a person who turns his father's bones into utensils, using his skull as a bowl and eating from them. Indeed, he does not harm his deceased father, yet this act is cruel. This action erodes the quality of compassion and grace in him and in those who witness it.""[[321]](#footnote-323)

Rabbi Kook believed that the consumption of meat was a concession that God granted to humanity after the Flood. However, the Torah subtly suggests here that it is against the degradation of meat and fat through gluttony and lust. Here are some of his words:

According to the complete worldview, which recognizes God's kindness and goodness towards all His creatures, a person will understand the purpose of the existence of milk in the breast of the living mother. It is not so that he, in his power, can oppress it for himself, but so that she can nurse her tender child, her beloved kid, with the milk from her breasts. This kid is also worthy of delighting in the love of his mother, according to his nature and character, and the weakness of the human heart that emerges from his physical and moral frailty, which has bent and distorted these upright perspectives [...] But, human being! "Your ears will hear a word behind you, the voice of God in power calling to you: 'You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk' (Exodus 23). No!" The goat's certificate is not specifically to be a razor for your sharp teeth, which were indeed also sharpened, due to your lowliness and gluttony in eating meat, and the milk was not intended to be a spice for you, to satisfy your base desires. Knowing that meat and milk in relation to the correction of food are so distant, so abhorrent, to the point of prohibiting enjoyment in cooking and eating, you will recognize at the appointed time that the life of the living was not created for your gluttonous stomach, and the milk's essence was intended to be food for the one for whom nature came to fulfill its role, just as the milk of your mother's breast was a guarantee for you in your nursing days.[[322]](#footnote-324)

In other words, according to Rabbi Kook, the prohibition of meat in milk is intended to remind a person that animals were not initially intended for human consumption, and that the primary purpose of milk is to nourish the kid and the calf, not the human. The commandment is designed to refine a person and his desires, and to make him considerate and sensitive to the living world.

Ariel Stulman adds an interesting and original supplement.[[323]](#footnote-325) It too adheres to the moral interpretation. Like me,[[324]](#footnote-326) he particularly emphasizes the importance that the Torah assigns to the status of motherhood. I was influenced in this matter by the words of Rabbi Hirsch and Shadl about the mitzvah in the Torah - **a bull or a calf because it gives birth and is seven days under its mother** ; On the prohibition attached to it - **an ox or you shall not slaughter him and his son in one day** ; And on the mitzvah - **send send the sons and take the mother for you** . On the first two, Hirsch writes:

Self-sacrifice for the sake of another's existence, and devoted concern for their well-being - these are revealed in the maternal compassion of an animal at the time of birth and when caring for its offspring; and they are the beginning of the elevation to that selfless force, which characterizes human love; and the love of all human beings for one another is the divine line in the nobility of human character. Do not disregard that remnant of human measure, but rather emphasize it while considering it; pay attention to it in that animal, which represents in the sacrifice the moral vision of man.[[325]](#footnote-327)

And in the section on 'sending away the mother bird,' he writes:

Now [following the first three commandments at the beginning of Chapter 22], the Torah transitions to the laws pertaining to the majority that determine the establishment of family life, and it places at their forefront the commandment that brings the virtue of a woman to the consciousness of every person in Israel. This commandment expresses the exceptional importance that the Torah attributes to a woman's activities in managing her household, and it traces this activity even to the realm of animals. It guarantees immunity to the female bird during her role as a mother, and it demands from every person who has the opportunity to do so, to express this appreciation for the female engaged in her role through his actions [...] At that time, he is commanded to take the mother - thus bringing to his awareness that it is possible to merit her - and then he is obliged to set her free. The moment of fulfilling her role as a mother protects the bird's female in her independence and choice.[[326]](#footnote-328)

Here are the words of S.D. Luzzatto on the topic of 'Shiluach Haken':

**"If a bird's nest chance to be before thee"**: When a person approaches the nest, if it were not for her compassion for her offspring, the mother would escape to save herself and abandon her chicks. However, out of her love for her offspring, she would risk her life and stand there to save them, and she would not flee to save herself. Therefore, it is not appropriate to take it, for if a person were to take it, the act of charity and love that she showed her children would cause her harm. The intention of this commandment is to honor good virtues and to establish in our hearts that no loss comes from righteousness. If it were permissible to take the mother bird in front of her offspring, it would imprint in the human heart that compassion is a negative trait and a foolish behavior that causes harm to its possessor. Now that taking her is forbidden to us, the precious beauty of the virtue of compassion will be deeply engraved in our hearts.[[327]](#footnote-329)

In his commentary on the prohibition under discussion, the Hirsch refrains from this explanation, preferring the explanation of separation **"according to its kind"**, and I will explain later why he did so. Stolman suggests that this was RASHBAM's opinion, however, RASHBAM, in his words that I quoted above, writes about the cultural disgrace in uncontrolled material desire, expressed here in exaggerated gluttony. He did not address the respect for the sense of awe, which, in my opinion, is a modern expression of a cultural component necessary for human education, and Rashbam did not consider it. Stolman adds a beautiful and original claim, according to which our prohibition in the Book of Exodus is attached only to the second holiday, the Festival of First Fruits. The reason for this is that the Torah fears that the pilgrim on this holiday - who is aware that on this day, unlike others, it is permissible to slaughter richly on leaven, on shaur and honey and to bring two leaves of leaven - will mistakenly think that it is also permissible to cook the sacrifice in milk as a demonstration of wealth. In his opinion, the book of Deuteronomy contains the primary prohibition, along with other forbidden foods for reasons of sanctity, according to the view of the Ramban. At the end of his remarks, he adds that "the sages continued the ideological line that emerges from the plain meaning of the verses"[[328]](#footnote-330) dealing with a kid and its mother's milk, or any offspring in its mother's milk, specifically, "and expanded the meaning of the prohibition to all cooking of meat in milk."[[329]](#footnote-331) In his opinion, "this expansion by the sages is aimed at the depth of the plain meaning of the scripture, for even if it is not the mother's milk of that animal with which it is cooked, it is still the mother's milk intended to feed and raise, and therefore it is not appropriate to use it to cook the meat of sucklings."[[330]](#footnote-332) In this too, he approaches the words of the Ramban above: "Every nursing female is called a mother, and every suckling is called a kid."[[331]](#footnote-333) I do not agree with this claim, that this is the depth of the plain meaning. It seems that this represents an inappropriate conflation of the rabbinic Midrash and the literal interpretation, and a reading of the prohibition against boiling a kid in its mother's milk, as a specific prohibition in a specific context. This, in order to bring the text closer to the expansion that the Sages made in the Halacha. As I wrote above, the sages apparently had an ancient law regarding the prohibition of cooking kosher animal meat in kosher animal milk, and they took our verse as a support for this, not considering it as the primary interpretation or an additional meaning of the text.

In conclusion, according to this interpretation, there is a series of commandments in the Torah whose rationale is moral, including the prohibition under discussion, and therefore specifically a kid in its mother's milk. The goal is to prevent suffering to animals, or to honor motherhood, to strengthen the sense of compassion in a person and to combat his cruelty for educational purposes, or both together.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדיון באופייה המדרשי. הוא מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומשווה את הרשימה לרשימות מקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המאמר מסיים בהערות על השאלות שמעורר הדיון בנושא זה.}  
  
Target text: {The article at hand begins with an analysis of the placement of the section in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues with a discussion of its midrashic nature. It focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and compares the list to similar lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta. The article concludes with comments on the questions raised by the discussion of this topic.} Ritual - removal from idolatry

Maimonides was the first to associate the prohibition with idolatry - this too is a nominalistic conception of the law:

Indeed, the prohibition of meat in milk, despite being a very heavy food without a doubt and causing great satiety, it is not far from my belief that it has a scent of idolatry, perhaps this was done in their worship or during their festivals. What strengthens this belief for me is the Torah's mention of it twice, at the beginning of its commandment about it with the festival commandment "Three times a year all your males shall appear", as if it says during your festivals and when you come before, do not cook what you cook there in the manner of so-and-so as they used to do. This is the strong reason for me in the matter, however, I have not seen this written in what I have seen from the books of the righteous.[[332]](#footnote-334)

According to Maimonides, all meat in milk is prohibited by the Torah as a means of distancing from idolatry, and a kid in its mother's milk is merely an example. Indeed, in the enumeration of the commandments, he counts among the 613 commandments the prohibition of cooking meat in milk ('negative commandment' 146) from the verse in Exodus 23:19, the prohibition of eating ('negative commandment' 147) from the verse in Exodus 34:26, and yet he does not count the prohibition of deriving benefit as an additional commandment because eating is one form of deriving benefit. The prohibition of pleasure in the third verse, Deuteronomy 10, is required because the prohibition is not stated at all in the language 'you shall not eat' - from which we learn the prohibition of all pleasure - but 'you shall not cook'. The reason that the prohibition is not stated in the form of 'do not eat' is to obligate the transgressor of the prohibition even if they swallow without deriving pleasure, as 'eating' requires enjoyment.

Abarbanel treads the path charted by Maimonides:

The most plausible explanation for this is that it was a practice of idol worshippers during their gatherings to do so, meaning to cook the kids in milk during the harvest season, believing that by doing so they would appease their gods, draw closer to them, and receive blessings in their endeavors. As it is written (Leviticus 17:7), "They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat-demons." And all the more so when the people who were accustomed to this were shepherds, at a time when they would gather to carry out their customs and traditions, their food then was young goats cooked in milk and all kinds of meat and milk dishes. Even today, it is the custom in the kingdoms of Spain for all the shepherds to gather twice a year to consult and make regulations concerning the shepherds and the sheep, and they call this assembly in their language "Mish'ta". And at that time, we have researched this matter, and indeed, their food consists of meat and milk, with the meat of young goats being their preferred choice for this dish. And I have already asked, sought, and truly known that even in the farthest land known as England, where there is an exceptional number of sheep more than any other lands, this too is their constant practice. And indeed, I believe that for this reason, God warned them that when they gather for the Feast of Sukkot, they should not cook a kid in its mother's milk in the manner of the Cutheans, and to distance them as far as possible from the ways of idol worship, He, blessed be He, forbade its consumption, its use, and its cooking, as they, of blessed memory, said. He also forbade all other types of meat and milk, so as not to permit transgressors to say, "What is the difference between this and that?"[[333]](#footnote-335)

Abarbanel adds to the words of the Rambam, stating that the cooking of the kids in milk during the harvest was intended to appease the idols so that they would bless the yield. Sforno agrees and adds that, therefore, the sections of the verse should be read in reverse:

**You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk**, do not perform such actions to increase the fruits, as thought by the idolaters, but **the first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God.**[[334]](#footnote-336)

So too in his commentary on the third Heikarot:

**Do not cook goat** . Like the deeds of the nations who thought to increase their possessions, their acquisitions, and all their livestock through this action.[[335]](#footnote-337)

Malbim vehemently supports them:

**Do not cook goat** . Return to the festival of Sukkot, when it was the custom of idolaters to cook and eat meat in milk during the harvest season, and the Torah warned against this. The sages interpreted that this prohibition is not specifically about cooking in its mother's milk, and not specifically about a kid goat.[[336]](#footnote-338)

Cassuto already bases his explanation on archaeological findings:

It is true that **the firstborn of your land** , that is, the best and the best among the firstborn of your land, **you shall bring** them to **the house of the Lord your God** , just as the Canaanites bring the firstborn to the house of their God, but **you shall not cook a goat in its mother's milk** as is the cruel custom they practice on the feast of their firstborn. Maimonides already surmised that the prohibition of cooking a kid in its mother's milk was intended to distance the Children of Israel from idolatrous practices, but he had no proof that this was indeed the custom of the gentiles. We now know from Ugaritic texts that it was precisely in the ceremonies related to the fertility of the land that the Canaanites would prepare a dish of this kind. In the Ugaritic tablet on "the pleasant and beautiful gods," it is written (line 14): "Gad is slaughtered in milk, Anan is in cream." That is to say: a kid in milk, a lamb in butter. And the practice of cooking a small animal in milk is still preserved today among the Bedouins.[[337]](#footnote-339)

Thus writes Cassuto elsewhere:

The matter at hand likely pertains to a fertility ritual intended to draw the blessing of fertility to the land, and from this, the connection in the biblical writings between the bringing of the first fruits and the aforementioned prohibition becomes clear: "The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God"[to express your gratitude for the produce of the land that He gives you, but be careful not to act like the land of Canaan, therefore] "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."[[338]](#footnote-340)

Menachem Haran, in his articles on the subject,[[339]](#footnote-341) and many others, challenge the proposal of Chaim Arie Ginsberg from 1935, in which he supported Cassuto's suggestion to complete this text with the Ugaritic tablet, and offer him alternative explanations that are not related to our matter. To this day, the debate over what exactly is written there has not been resolved, due to the damage to the stone tablet on line 14. However, the prevailing opinion is that even if 'kid' is written, the likelihood of such an influence from Ugaritic to the Bible is extremely slim.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של היחידה המשנתית, וממשיך להשוואה בין היחידה לרשימות המקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא. המחבר מנסה להבין את המשמעות של ההבדלים בין הרשימות, ולהסביר את המשמעות של המיקום של היחידה במסכת סנהדרין. המאמר מסתיים בניסיון להבין את המשמעות של היחידה בהקשר ההיסטורי שלה, ולהציג את התרומה שלה להבנתנו של התקופה שבה נוצרה.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the Mishnaic unit, and continues with a comparison between the unit and the parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta. The author attempts to understand the significance of the differences between the lists, and to explain the meaning of the unit's placement in Tractate Sanhedrin. The article concludes with an attempt to understand the unit's significance in its historical context, and to present its contribution to our understanding of the period in which it was created.} The Danger of Mixing Species that are not of the Same Kind and the Importance of Separation Between Them

The Sages interpreted that all meat and fat are prohibited by the Torah. There are interpreters who accept the halakhic midrashic interpretation of the sages as the simple meaning of the verses, but they do not accept the ethical or polemical systems of interpretation, according to which there is a tendency to interpret "a kid in its mother's milk" specifically. Therefore, these interpreters would prefer a more general system of reasons, dealing with meat and milk as two 'species' in nature. The Torah prohibits the mixing of two 'species' in several of its commandments.

An example of this can be found, for example, in **the education book** :

The roots of this commandment, it seems, are similar to what we wrote about the commandment concerning witchcraft. There are things in the world that we are forbidden to mix due to the reason we mentioned there, and it is possible that the mixing of meat with milk in the act of cooking is the cause of its prohibition from that same principle [see further on his words about witchcraft]. And some evidence for this is that the prohibition comes to us in the act of the mixture [cooking together] even though it was not eaten, which seems to indicate that its prohibition is not due to the harm of eating it at all, but rather that the action of that mixture should not be performed to avoid that matter we mentioned [in witchcraft]. And He also warned us in another place [among the three mentions] that if perhaps the mixture is made- we should not eat it nor derive benefit from it, to distance the matter, and even if one ate it without deriving any benefit from it at all, he is punished, which is not the case with all other food prohibitions. And all this indicates that its basis is due to the mixture, as we have said in the case of sorcery. This is said out of necessity [to find a reason for the commandment], and yet we still need to be aware of the accepted view.^1  
  
^1 This footnote refers to the accepted view among scholars in the field of Jewish studies and Talmud. And Maimonides, of blessed memory, wrote on another matter, saying that there are idolaters who worship through the act of mixing meat with milk, and therefore the Torah distanced this mixture, and all of this is of no value to me.[[340]](#footnote-342)

This is how the owner of the book of education writes about the reason for banning **a witch shall not live** :

And the matter of witchcraft is, according to my opinion, yes, that God, blessed be He, was there at the beginning of creation for everything and every word of the world, His nature was to act in a good and honest way for the benefit of the people of the world whom He created, and commanded each to act in his own way, as it is written in Parashat Genesis [1, 12 ff.] **in his own way** On the creatures, and also on each and every one who pours power from above to compel them to do their work, as they said their remembrance is a blessing [Bereishit Rabba Parsha 10:6] You do not have a grass from below that does not have luck from above that tells it to grow. In addition to the natural actions performed by each of these elements, they have another function when one type mixes with another. In the process of mixing, there are aspects that humans are not permitted to utilize, for God knows that the end result of these aspects would be harmful to them, and for this reason, He has prohibited them. And this is generally their saying, of blessed memory, "Anything that has a therapeutic aspect is not considered 'the ways of the Amorite'" [Shabbat 67a], meaning it should not be prohibited due to aspects of witchcraft, since if it has a proven benefit, it is not from the forbidden aspects, for they were only prohibited due to the harm they cause. Moreover, there is another aspect to these forbidden mixtures and tricks that are prohibited to perform, as the power of the mixture is so great that it temporarily nullifies the influence of the constellation governing the two species. The parable for this is as you see when one combines one species with another, they create a third species, thus the combination nullifies the power of both. Therefore, we refrained from taking it upon ourselves even when we did something that showed in us a desire to substitute something in the actions of the perfect God. It is possible that from this we may derive a hint at the roots of the prohibitions against mixing seeds, animals, and fabrics.[[341]](#footnote-343)

He used to say, according to the author of Sefer HaChinuch, the Torah prohibits mixtures that deviate from nature and contradict the divine command of 'each according to its kind' at the time of the world's creation. The prohibition is part of the group of prohibitions on diverse kinds, and shaatnez, which can cause harm, alter the divine intention, and create a new, unnatural and undesirable combination, damaging its components - a realistic perception of Halacha.

Here is the explanation of Rabbeinu Bachya:

And furthermore, the simple reason for this commandment is that it dulls the heart, for the milk is made from the blood and the blood has a bad temperament and breeds cruelty. One of the reasons for its prohibition is that it does not undergo change and transformation in the body like other consumed things, and therefore its bad nature remains within it without change. Even though it has now changed from blood to milk and has undergone change and transformation, being converted into something else, when it is mixed again with meat, it returns to the power of the blood and its original nature as at the beginning. Their mixture together dulls the heart and breeds coarseness and a bad disposition in the soul of the eater.

And so is the opinion of the physicians regarding the mixture of fish and cheese that were cooked together, as it produces a harmful characteristic and the disease of leprosy. And the reason this commandment is always mentioned in relation to the holidays is to caution the Israelites who make the pilgrimage three times a year to the place of prophecy, not to dull their hearts with forbidden foods. Rather, their substance should be pure and clear for contemplating the ways of the Torah, and their hearts should be prepared for the attainment of His blessed knowledge.[[342]](#footnote-344)

In his opinion, the mixture of milk that originates from blood with meat, returns the milk to its bloody source and to its bad and cruel temperament, which negatively influences the human soul.

The owner of the **precious tool** also writes about the improper mixing of two factors that have already separated:

It is likely to be heard that this commandment is related to the prohibition of diverse kinds. For it is known that the flesh of the fetus is born from the red blood of the female, which gives birth to all redness, for that is its source. Similarly, the milk of the animal also originates from the blood, for the blood is curdled and becomes milk. According to this, the flesh and fat of the fetus emerge from the blood of the animal, as they separate from there, and it is not appropriate to mix them again through cooking or eating, as eating is also a form of cooking in the stomach. [...] Specifically, when I first eat meat, which does not cook quickly in the stomach until the milk arrives, but the milk cooks quickly before the meat arrives and there is not so much mixing, therefore there is no prohibition to eat meat after it. And the reason for this mixture applies to all animal meat, and "a kid in its mother's milk" was chosen as an excellent example because in it this mixture is inherently and primarily found.

And in the portion of Re'eh, this commandment is juxtaposed to the prohibitions of food, to tell you that the Torah forbade not only cooking but also eating. And here is the basis for the commandment of the first fruits, as it is not appropriate to mix the fruits that were selected first with the fruits that were selected later. But those that were selected first you shall bring to the house of your Lord, and the remainder shall be yours. Thus, the blood that was first cooked and from which the fetus was formed should not be mixed with the blood that was cooked later and from which the milk was formed, for once the Lord desired their separation, He does not wish for their mixture.[[343]](#footnote-345)

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch also subscribes to this interpretation of the prohibition:

If so, the prohibition of meat in milk joins the same large series of "mixture" prohibitions, such as tree hybrids and animal hybrids, which were prohibited due to the combination and mating of plant and animal species, which are different from each other ("hybrids" - from the word "confined": they are "arrested" From each other, p. 5 and Leviticus 19:19), there is in them a violent violation of the great law of species, which at the time of the creation of the world said to every living thing and every plant: " **To its kind** !" - and from then until the end of the world, this law upholds every living thing and every plant, from large to small, according to its kind - in relation to the matter, the properties and the forms of each and every species. And since the mixture of meat and milk does not involve any actual harm to one of the laws of nature, it is similar to plowing with an ox and a donkey, to mixed fabrics, mixed seeds, and mixed vineyard plantings: these set before the person the great legislator of the world at a time when the person is engaged in his governance over the world of life and vegetation, which the legislator has placed under his feet, in order for him to make use of it for his needs, in the work of the land, in labor and in clothing, and here - in eating and enjoyment. By the commandment of " **his kind** " the world legislator rules over all the flora and fauna, which man makes for his use and pleasure. Each type of plant and animal has been given its unique law of existence and development, and all of them obey this law with truth and faith. As a man and a Jew, man must also keep faith and obey this law, in which the world legislator hinted to him about the law of his " **kind** ", and revealed to him his will regarding the uniqueness of his certificate as a man - among creation, and as a son of Israel - among mankind (v. Genesis 1:11-13).

Among all these warnings, reminding us of our duty to fulfill the commandments of the Torah as the only way to fulfill our role as members of the "human" species and as the children of Israel, and more precisely: as Israeli human beings, - the prohibition of mixing meat and milk stands at the forefront. For this warning reminds us of the Creator of all beings and our Jewish - human - testimony in Him at the moment we are about to absorb within us and mix within our beings entities from the living world through the act of eating; and these are living creatures that the Creator has placed in the vicinity of man by nature and delivered them as food for man - a clean animal! Precisely because of our integration with the material world, which is permitted, and sometimes even commanded to us, this warning is necessary. It ensures that we remain aware of our noble status as members of the "human" species: to elevate the material from the world of the living to the lofty status of the human body, and not to allow the human body to descend to the level of animalistic existence devoid of freedom, even though it is through this existence that we sustain our bodies.

From this perspective of general observation, the reason for the prohibition of meat in milk becomes clear. This prohibition speaks directly to the individual in clear language and moral reproof: guard the sanctity of the Torah, and remember that the authority of God's Torah does not begin at the level of the individual Jew, but rather, the rule of this Torah extends over the entire organic life system. The whole force of the Torah of Israel is nothing but the totality of the global law of " **his kind** ", with all its details and grammar, regarding the way of life of the Jewish-human "kind". This is how we understand the integration of this law of separation of species into all areas of our eating and home enjoyment. The separation between meat and milk stamps its mark on the Jewish kitchen and the Jewish table - more than any other forbidden foods, and more than all, this separation is intended to be a voice proclaiming to the Creator of the world, and to equate before us at all times and at every hour the Torah of the Lord, our human duty as the children of Israel, and our human honor as the children of Israel.[[344]](#footnote-346)

The influence of Sefer HaChinuch is evident in the words of Rabbi Hirsch, although he does not claim that there is a natural phenomenon of Sotah here, but rather a demand to maintain the order and separation that God established in creation. He adds that the Jewish individual should elevate the world of the living through his eating to his own world, and not cause a descent below by mixing in cooking with milk, which signifies the bestiality devoid of free choice. By keeping the directive ' **to his kind** ' by separating the sexes, the Jew's consciousness is directed to his mission to rule the higher Torah government over all the other systems in the world.

As I demonstrated in chapters eight and nine, Hirsch belongs to the group of interpreters who see in the halakhic midrashim of the Sages the original intent of the text. The Sages determined that "a kid in its mother's milk" is not to be taken literally. Therefore, he cannot accept the moral or political interpretation of the prohibition. Interpretations based on these reasons tend to assert that it specifically refers to a kid in its mother's milk, as only such behavior violates ethics and decorum. Therefore, he prefers to link its prohibition to the prohibitions of diverse kinds, plowing with an ox and a donkey, and shaatnez – which are related to the commandment '**of its kind**', which is general (all kosher animal meat with all kosher animal milk), and not to the prohibition of 'a mother and her young' and sending away the mother bird – which, in his opinion, are related to honoring motherhood.

3. Why is the prohibition written in the Torah three times?

This question includes both the number of times and the reason for the prohibition's proximity to the group of prohibitions before it. In two instances in the Book of Exodus, there is mention of the ceremonies of fruit ripening and the consecration of the first produce to God during the three pilgrimage festivals. For the third time in the Book of Deuteronomy, forbidden foods related to the sanctification of the Children of Israel are discussed. These questions were intensively addressed by various interpreters. Biblical scholars believe that the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy are two separate testimonies (with Deuteronomy being the later one), thus explaining the duplications. The differences in context are explained by the fact that at the time of the Book of Deuteronomy, the fertility ritual was no longer relevant, and the prohibition was related to the general issue of food kashrut. However, the other interpreters see the entire Torah as a harmonious divine revelation, and therefore they seek explanations.

Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בניתוח של המקום שבו מופיעה היחידה במסכת סנהדרין, וממשיך לדון במקום שלה במסגרת המשנה כולה. הוא מתמקד בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומנסה להבין את הקריטריונים שלפיהם הם נחשבים לחוטאים. המאמר מסתיים בניתוח של הרשימות המקבילות במדרש סדר עולם ובתוספתא, ומנסה להבין את ההבדלים ביניהם לבין הרשימה במשנה.}  
  
Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location where the section appears in Tractate Sanhedrin, and continues to discuss its place within the framework of the entire Mishnah. It focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and tries to understand the criteria by which they are considered sinners. The article concludes with an analysis of the parallel lists in Midrash Seder Olam and in the Tosefta, and attempts to understand the differences between them and the list in the Mishnah.} The Sages of Blessed Memory

**In the Mishnah, in the Baraita, and in the Babylonian Talmud.**

1. **In the mishna** that I cited above it is written: "Rabbi Akiva says: An animal [such as a deer and a ram] and a chicken [kosher] are not [forbidden in milk] from the Torah [except from Darbanan] as it is said ' **You shall not cook a goat in its mother's milk** ' three times, except for an animal and a fowl and an unclean animal [which is allowed to be cooked with pleasure ]." This interpretation also appears in **Machlata** Mishpatim in the name of R. Akiva, and without name in Midrash Sefri Lebedarim, hand 11, sign 4.

2. B **Babili** , Chulin Daf Keto PB: "According to Rabbi Ishmael, the commandment is: 'You shall not cook a goat in its mother's milk' three times, one - for the prohibition of eating, and one - for the prohibition of pleasure, and one - for the prohibition of going to school." The words of Rabbi Ishmael is the saying The most well-known Sage on the subject in question, and it is correctly established in the Sefer HaMitzvot to Rambam[[345]](#footnote-347) and on the table. This assertion is also brought by Rashi on Exodus 23:19. **In Machalta** this statement is attributed to Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar and Bilkot Shimoni for names it is attributed to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

In the same **chapter** , Mishtimim Parsha 20, Chapter 23 Verse 19, Mark Rel, there are several other explanations for this trinity, in addition to Rabbi Akiva's:

3. Rabbi Shimon [according to the version of Yalkut Shimoni, it should read Rabbi Ishmael] - corresponds to the three covenants that the Holy One, blessed be He, made with Israel, one at Horeb, one in the plains of Moab, and one at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. This interpretation is also mentioned anonymously in the Midrash Sifrei Devarim 14:21, sign 103.

Rabbi Shimon would disagree with this explanation and say - it corresponds to the three covenants at Horeb, in the Tent of Meeting in the desert, and in the plains of Moab.

The dispute between Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Shimon stems from their disagreement in the Babylonian Talmud, Sotah, page 37b: According to Rabbi Ishmael, the covenant of Horeb and the Tent of Meeting is one covenant - its general principles were given to Moses at Horeb and its details in the Tent of Meeting in the desert, while Rabbi Shimon agrees with Rabbi Akiva, his teacher, that both its general principles and its details were given to Moses at Horeb, and the covenant of the Tent of Meeting in the desert is a separate covenant. Therefore, he removes from the list the covenant at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal and instead includes the covenant of the Tent of Meeting in the desert.

4. Rabbi Jonathan - one for cattle, one for wild animals, and one for birds (all of which are forbidden by the Torah in milk).

5. Abba Hanan in the name of Rabbi Eliezer - one for cattle, one for goats, and one for sheep (which are forbidden by the Torah in milk).

6. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar - one for a large animal, one for a small one, and one for a wild animal (which are forbidden by the Torah in milk). Alternatively, to the prohibition of eating, benefit, and cooking. Alternatively, one [prohibition] applies both in the Land of Israel and outside the Land of Israel, one [prohibition] applies in the presence of the Temple, and one [prohibition] applies outside its presence.

Source text: {המאמר הנוכחי מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של פרק חלק, וממשיך לדיון במאפיינים הייחודיים של הפרק, כמו גם במקום המיוחד שהוא תופס במשנה. המאמר מתמקד בפרק חלק כמקור להבנת התפתחות המחשבה היהודית בתקופת התנאים, ובמיוחד בנושאים של תחיית המתים והעולם הבא. במהלך הדיון, המאמר מתייחס לשאלות של נוסח ועריכה, ומנסה להבין את הקשרים בין פרק חלק לחיבורים אחרים של התנאים.}  
  
Target text: {The current article begins with a presentation of the historical framework of Perek Heleq, and continues to discuss the unique characteristics of the chapter, as well as its special place in the Mishnah. The article focuses on Perek Heleq as a source for understanding the development of Jewish thought during the Tannaitic period, particularly on the topics of resurrection of the dead and the world to come. Throughout the discussion, the article addresses questions of text and editing, and attempts to understand the connections between Perek Heleq and other Tannaitic compositions.} Interpreters

Ramban addresses both aspects of the question together, in his commentary on the third appearance of the prohibition in Deuteronomy 14:21. In his opinion, the different first fruits are mentioned side by side in Exodus, and the forbidden foods are mentioned side by side in Deuteronomy. Thus, he writes:

"First fruits of your land" - Because it is mentioned that they should bring the first fruits of all that is in their land to the house of the Lord, it is juxtaposed with "you shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk". This is because during the time of the first fruits, they would also bring the firstborn of the goats and lambs. At that time, the kids would grow and there would be milk, and often the mother would go up with the firstborn while it is still nursing so it does not die. Those who come to the festival would enjoy eating the first fruits in all the flavors with the priests, and therefore their prohibition is mentioned along with the first fruits. However, in the Mishneh Torah (Deuteronomy 14:21), this commandment is mentioned along with the prohibition of certain foods, after mentioning unclean animals, fish, and birds, and carrion. It is appropriate to mention it there, as it is a prohibition of consumption, not just a prohibition of cooking, as those of lesser faith and lacking knowledge might assume.[[346]](#footnote-348)

In response to the question of why the prohibition is repeated a second time in Exodus, in the portion 'Ki Tisa', Ramban explains:

**"Write for you these words"** – He commanded to write the Book of the Covenant and read it in the ears of the people, and they would accept it upon themselves with "we will do and we will hear" as they did initially, for all the action that was on the first tablets, He wished to repeat with them on the second tablets. And there is no doubt that he did so, but the text did not hesitate to elaborate by saying "and Moses did so," as I have shown you in many places (above 10b, and more). In my view, it is correct that because Israel are the sinners and those who violate the covenant, the Holy One, blessed be He, had to renew for them a new covenant so that He would not break His covenant with them, and He told Moses to write down the conditions.[[347]](#footnote-349)

Chizkuni also addresses this question and explains similarly to Ramban. He explains that this is not the only commandment repeated in the book of Exodus, Parashat 'Ki Tisa', and there are several commandments that have already been mentioned in Parashat 'Mishpatim'. The reason for this is that what is stated in the 'Mishpatim' portion is part of the Sinai covenant between the people and their God. This covenant was broken with the incident of the Golden Calf, necessitating the establishment of a new covenant, the covenant of the second tablets. Thus, he writes in his commentary on the Torah:

**Behold, I will make a covenant** with you, the one that is said at the end of the matter: **Because according to these things I have made a covenant with you and Israel** , who needed a new covenant by breaking the first covenant, and these are the conditions written from the beginning: **You shall keep it** , and as he mentioned in Parashat Mishpatim: **You shall keep the holiday of unleavened bread** , like this Mention here, as he remembered **that when you came out of Egypt,** Peter Raham also mentioned here that he also remembered the exodus from Egypt.[[348]](#footnote-350)

And he further adds:

**the holiday of** unleavened bread. Chazal: Why do they hate him [why is it repeated a second time]? The Feast of Unleavened Bread, and every firstborn of the womb, and on the seventh day, and the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. All these commandments are a sign and symbol that we are servants of the Holy One, blessed be He, that we come before Him at the appointed time and bring Him gifts to receive His countenance, as is done for kings. Therefore, He warned about these commandments on the covenant that was cut.[[349]](#footnote-351)

Shadal holds the same opinion as Ramban regarding the juxtaposition of the first fruits in the two places in the book of Exodus, but he does not write anything about the different juxtaposition in Deuteronomy.

**"The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God. You shall not cook a young goat in its mother's milk"**: From the perspective of reason, it seems to me that it was the custom of some nations, or some individuals even among the Israelites, to offer the firstborn of their flocks cooked in their mother's milk. Just as the first of the fleece is given to the priest, it is possible that it would be good and appropriate to offer the first of the milk. Thus, they would slaughter the firstborn and cook it in its mother's milk and feed it to the priests (or they would give him the firstborn and the milk, and he would cook them together and eat them, and if you wish, say that they would cook and burn everything on the altar). In this way, they would give to the Most High the first of the newborns and the first of the milk together. Therefore, after mentioning the first of the first fruits of the land, he also mentioned the cooking of the kid in its mother's milk. It will also be understood why he mentioned the cooking and not the eating, because the cooking is the main thing and not the eating, and if there is no cooking, there is no eating.[[350]](#footnote-352)

4. Conclusions on the Discussion of the Three Questions

I myself believe that the Torah is a guidebook with an educational-moral purpose, therefore the moral interpretation here seems preferable to me. This also aligns with my belief that the Sages made amendments to the biblical law and also added their own laws or oral traditions of law that are not in the biblical text, and attributed them to the scripture, but it does not depart from its plain meaning. Here, then, we are specifically discussing a kid in its mother's milk. This instruction is part of a series of laws in the Torah such as – **"And it shall be seven days under its mother, you shall not slaughter it and its offspring on the same day"** and**"you shall surely send away the mother"**. The purpose of these commandments was to educate against cruelty and to honor motherhood. In the Book of Exodus, there were several laws written that were incorporated into the Sinai Covenant, and their prohibition was included therein. Along with the instructions related to bringing the first fruits of other produce on the three pilgrimage festivals, this cruel custom was also prohibited in the firstlings of the flock, which was probably practiced then in religious celebrations, as explained by S.D. Luzzatto. Since the covenant was broken with the Golden Calf incident, it was necessary to renew it when God forgave His people. These laws were also incorporated into the covenant of the second tablets with several changes following the sin of the Golden Calf, as explained by Chizkuni and Ramban. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses revisits many laws, and he chose to add this prohibition to the list of forbidden foods. After forty years, the Covenant of Moab generally dealt with other matters in light of God's and Moses' understanding that there was a need to warn and testify before the people to observe the entire Torah as it had been consolidated up to that point, and to caution them that they were expected to betray the mission, be punished, and the covenant would remind them why they were punished and then they would return. The Sages had an ancient oral tradition for various extensions of the prohibition, and they attributed these extensions to the written verses, some of which were defined as biblical (de'oraita) and some were defined as rabbinic (derabbanan).

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Target text: {This article begins with a review of previous research conducted on the topic, and continues to present a new analysis of the biblical, Mishnaic, and Talmudic sources that deal with groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The article also presents an analysis of the historical context of the sources, and introduces a new theory that explains the relationship between the different sources and their connection to the period in which they were written. The article concludes with the presentation of the research findings and their implications for the study of the Talmud and Mishnah in general, and for the study of Judaism in particular.} S. D. Luzzatto, "Essay in French", **Otzar Nehmad** , volume 4, Vienna 1863, pp. 132-131. Hebrew translation in Shavit's book, **The Greeks** , p. 138. Lozato, **Derech Eretz** , p. 81; Lozato, **Kinor Naim** , pp. 294-263: Lozato, **Writings** , volume two, pp. 41-73.

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Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical framework of the Tannaitic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah within Tannaitic literature. The article focuses on the 'Helek' chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, particularly on the section dealing with people who do not have a share in the world to come. The article analyzes this section from within the body of the Mishnah, and compares it to parallel versions in the Midrashim and the Tosefta. The article concludes with a proposal for a new understanding of the section, based on the comparison to the parallel versions and the historical context of the Tannaitic period.}** S.D. Luzzatto, **Samuel David Luzzatto Life Chapters**, Shulvass Edition, New York, 1951.

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Target text: {The article before us begins with an analysis of the location of the section in the Mishnah, and continues with a discussion of its midrashic nature. Subsequently, the article focuses on the groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and compares their list to similar lists in Midrash Seder Olam and the Tosefta. The article concludes with a comparison between the location of the section in the Mishnah and the location of a similar section in the Tosefta, and presents a theory regarding the relationship between the two.} Feiner, **The Roots of Secularism: Permissiveness and Skepticism in 18th Century Judaism** , Jerusalem 579.

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2. Several lines are missing here, but they can be found in the printed edition.

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7. Abarbanal, **Enterprises** , article 2, chapter 1, page 11, p. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
8. Yeabetz, **The Life** , Chapter 12, p. Camb. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
9. Gutman, **The Philosophy**. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
10. Gutman, **Judaism** . [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
11. Gutman, "Albalag", pp. 75-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
12. Gutman, **Judaism** , pp. 186-184. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
13. Gutman, "Albalag", pp. 84-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
14. And confess, **to Azazel**. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
15. Source text: {וידה, "אלבלג".}  
    Target text: {And confessed, "Albelg".} [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
16. Source text: {שם.}  
    Target text: {Name.} Source text: {תרגום לעברית חמיאל.}  
    Target text: {Translation to Hebrew by Chamuel.} [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
17. Altman, "Review", pp. 197-200. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
18. Name, p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
19. Source text: {תואתי, אלבלג.}  
    Target text: {Toati, Elblag.} [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
20. Pines, **Thought** , pp. 95-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
21. In addition to Yehuda Aryeh Vidah and Alexander Altman (as cited above), Benny Baraun also believes that these two Latin thinkers did not truly hold the position of double truth in its radical formulation. Vidah and Altman, following in his footsteps, believe that these two held a position according to which what is not grasped by the intellect will be grasped by prophecy, meaning that the two domains complement each other (a version of the position of separate domains), and do not contradict. Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת המשנה, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתוך הספרות היהודית. המחבר מציג את המשנה כספרות שנכתבה במטרה להגן על ההלכה מפני השכחה ולהבטיח את המשך המסורת. הוא מציין שהמשנה היא חלק מהספרות התנאית, שנכתבה במהלך המאה השנייה לספירה, ומכילה את ההלכות שהועברו מדור לדור מזמן מתן תורה. המחבר מסביר גם את המבנה של המשנה, שמחולקת לששה סדרים, וכל סדר מחולק למסכתות, וכל מסכת מחולקת לפרקים, וכל פרק מחולק למשניות.}  
      
    Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical context of the Mishnaic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah within Jewish literature. The author presents the Mishnah as literature written with the purpose of protecting the Halacha from being forgotten and ensuring the continuation of the tradition. He notes that the Mishnah is part of the Tannaitic literature, written during the second century CE, and contains the laws that have been passed down from generation to generation since the giving of the Torah. The author also explains the structure of the Mishnah, which is divided into six orders, each order is divided into tractates, each tractate is divided into chapters, and each chapter is divided into Mishnayot.} [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
22. Shavid, **the great ones** , p. 335. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
23. Name, pp. 335-336. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
24. I do not find this formulation satisfactory as it leans more towards the position of separate domains, according to which we are not dealing with two truths but with two parts of the great truth, each part dealing with a separate domain and one should not raise difficulties from one on the other. I disagree with Shabid's interpretation, according to which Albalag's words confine the truth of the Torah to the social-ethical and/or political realm alone. In my opinion, he is influenced by his predecessors, Gutman and Pins. See more on this below. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
25. Name, p. 324. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
26. Name, pp. 326-330. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
27. Sirat, **Goth** , p. 322. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
28. Rosenberg, "Review", p. 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
29. Source text: {שם.}  
    Target text: {Name.} [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
30. Brown, **Thoughts**. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
31. MRS – Monotheist Religious System. WRS – Western Rational Tradition. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
32. Brown, ibid, pp. 97-102. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
33. Brown, ibid, pp. 97-98. The translation into Hebrew here and in the following is by the author. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
34. The quote from Alblag, **correction** , p. 52. In my opinion, Albalag's hint here is not aimed at the simple readers. Those will despair at the beginning of reading the complex composition. The allusion is aimed at those wise people who will succeed him -­ These will be able to understand and reach section L. They are also fit to understand his position. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
35. Brown, ibid, pp. 99-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
36. Name, pp. 101-102. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
37. Righteous, "Albelg". [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
38. Alblag, **correction** , pp. 2-4. From this point forward, I have added additional punctuation marks to those found in the original text in order to facilitate reading for the reader. The emphasis of words by Chamuel. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
39. Name, page 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
40. Name, pp. 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
41. Name, pp. 13-14. See the complementary explanation for this section in the above comments by Shabid. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
42. Name, pp. 23-31. See the complementary explanation for this section in Rosenberg's comments above. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
43. Name, page 33. It is possible that Hesdai Karshakash learned from Elblag the matter of 'eternal renewal' or 'perpetual renewal', about which he speaks in **Or 5** , article 3, part 1, rule 1, chapter 5, pp. 16-16, and in article 4, Drosh 1, p. Shafaz Shafah. However, there are two important differences between them: 1) According to Karschak, it is about the creation of worlds and their destruction one after the other, and according to Albalag, it is about the same world. According to Albalag, philosophy and science supposedly contradict the Torah, while Karshekash maintains that there is no contradiction and that the Torah itself indicates this. See Haroy, **Krakshak**, pp. 60-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
44. Name, pp. 37-38. See there, pages 70-69, for more on the concealment of complex philosophical views from the masses by the Sages, as opposed to the secrets of the Kabbalists who were the wise men of his time. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
45. Name, p. 43. It is not surprising that Gutman, "Albelg", p.90, quotes the last passage from this source, but stops after the sentence: "We believe him only because of the examination alone." [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
46. Name, pp. 43-44. See again the distinction between the attainment of the philosophers and the attainment of the prophets, there, p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
47. Name, pp. 50-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
48. Name, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
49. Name, p. 71. Albalag separately notes there, on page 77, that even the will of God (like His knowledge, providence, and other attributes) differs from human will, we do not have the ability to understand it, and only the term 'will' is common to them. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
50. Name, pp. 76-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
51. Name, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
52. Name, p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
53. Name, p. 101. According to Vida and Altman, this is nothing more than Albelg's empty flattery towards them, but he never truly intended to propose them as an authoritative source. See above in Altman's words. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
54. Hamiel, **the average** , pp. 246, 339-330, the above, **the double** , pp. 93-70, 428-422, the above, **between religion and opinion a** , pp. 173-169. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
55. Chamiel, "The Wisdom". This chapter was first published as an article in the journal "Heritage of Israel". The quote is from Shadal's later work, page 75, and its source is in footnote 60 of this chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
56. Versace, "Lozzato", pp. 715-703, and also in S. Versace, **Trends** , pp. 274-261. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
57. Name, p. 264. The quote from Luzzatto, **Parki** , p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
58. Verses, Name, pp. 261-263. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
59. Luzzatto, **Parki** . [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
60. Shulwas, **introduction** , pp. 1-4. See also Verses, "Luzzatto", p. 263 and note 7 there. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
61. Verses, "Lucatto", pp. 266-271. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
62. Name, pp. 272-274. See also Hemyel, **The Mediated**, pp. 48-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
63. Luzzatto, **Commentary**, Exodus, Chapter 13, Verse 9; **Bikkurei Ha'itim**, 1828, p. 94; Luzzatto, **Beit Ha'Otzar** **B**, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
64. Luzzatto, **the intercessor** , in the introduction, without numbering pages. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
65. Rambam, **eight chapters** , p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
66. Lozato, **Researches** , vol. 1, part 2, pp. 33-30, 45, in the article "The Book of Isaiah". The letter was first published in **Kerem Hamed** , volume 7, see below notes 56, 57. Shadal's love of truth was sometimes subject to his fiery temperament and the defense of his name and opinions. Shlomo Yehuda Rappaport (1790-1867) comments on this in letters to him in connection with various polemics, and this also appears in his polemic with Yaakov Eichenbaum regarding the interpretation of a difficult passage in the Raba, in which the SDL apparently gave up the truth in order to preserve his honor, a practice which he attributed to the Atticists (speculative philosophers) - on them see Hamiel, **The Average** , p. 216, note 238. For his critique on Maimonides, see **Kerem Hemed** Vol. 3, Letter 5, pp.  
    76-61, reprinted in **Research**, Vol. 1 Part A, pp. 176-159, especially pp. 165-164. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
67. Luzzatto, **the intercessor** . See Chamuel, **The Mediator**, pp. 90, 100-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
68. Shulwas, **introduction** , p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
69. Verses, "Luzzatto", p. 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
70. In Shai, "End", pp. 145-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
71. Lozato, **Fees** , pp. 676-675. In Shai, "Introduction", pp. 9-20. Hamiel, **The Average** , p. 332, p. 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
72. Hamiel, **The Double** , Chapter Three, pp. 79-74. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
73. The introduction to the commentary, along with a brief, updated explanatory letter, was sent in 1857, and the editor published them in Volume 3, 1860, pages 15-25. The commentary itself was sent to Blumenfeld in 1858, along with another recent accompanying letter (this letter was not published in **Otzar Nichmad** but in Jewish Studies, as a note at the top of the commentary - see note 19). Subsequently, in 1860, he sent another letter to Blumenfeld, which the editor appended as a lengthy footnote at the beginning of the commentary and published them in Volume D, 1864, pages 47-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
74. Luzzatto, **researches** , vol. 1, part 1, p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
75. Lozato, **researches** , ibid., pp. 125-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
76. The letter to Blumenfeld was printed in **Kerem Hamed** II (1836) p. Kit. The change of opinion was published in **Beit Ha'Otzer** , pp. 29-28, as a continuation of earlier articles that were written as letters to Shabadal Vishar about synonyms that Shabadal started writing in 2015 and published in **Bichori Atim** starting from 2016 to 2018. This continuation was written by S.D.L. in the year 5666, and it was reprinted in Luzatto, **Research**, Volume I Part A, page 53, as a footnote to a letter to Blumenfeld, which was published there under the title "The Antiquity of the Book of Job", pages 49-55. See S. Wargon, "Shadal", pp. 51-67. In the appendix to his article, Vargon convincingly explains that S.D. Luzzatto's insistence on prioritizing the Book of Job stemmed from his concern about the spreading heresy in the belief in the primacy of the Torah and its divine origin, as well as the potential confusion that could arise as a result. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
77. Luzzatto, **Treasure House**, ibid; Luzzatto, **Research**, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
78. Hamiel, **The Average** , pp. 317-307. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
79. Luzzatto, "Introduction", pp. III-IV. These are powerful romantic statements. On romanticism and rationalism, see Hamiel, **The Average** , pp. 32-31. On the debate regarding whether Shadal was a rationalist or a romantic, see there, page 314, footnote 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
80. Luzzatto, **Dispute**. Reprinted for Luzzatto, **the "Argument"** , with my introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
81. Luzzatto, "Article". [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
82. Luzzatto, "Letter". [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
83. Luzzatto, **Writings** , vol. 1, pp. 51-50, in an article on "The Essence of Judaism". [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
84. Name, p. 67, in the article "On the Love of Creatures in Judaism." [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
85. Name, p. 120, in the composition "Lessons in Jewish Moral Theology." [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
86. Lozato, **Fees** , pp. 1336-1335. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
87. Hamiel, **The Double** , pp. 70-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
88. Luzzatto, **violin** , pp. 142-130. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
89. Lozato, **my researches** , vol. 1, part 1, pp. 120-115. Haroi, **Karshaksh** , p. 125, believes, based on the end of Shadal's words here, that he was a libertarian and disagreed with Karshaksh's philosophical determinism. However, R. Samuel David Luzzatto explicitly writes here that he upholds both the decree and the choice, and his critique of Karschak is only on the publicizing of the position. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
90. above, note 32; Hamiel, **The Average** , pp. 247-243, 339-307. The discussions here and there are based on Rosenberg's model, **Torah and Science**, pp. 23-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
91. I have written in detail about Shadal's dual relationship with Rabad and Rambam. See Chamuel, **The Duplication**, Chapter Five, pp. 115-127; Ibid., Chapter Six, pp. 128-155. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
92. Luzzatto, **Fees** , p. 661, in a letter to Yost (1840). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
93. Luzzatto, ibid, pp. 779-780, in a letter to Shneur Zalman (1842). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
94. Lozato, **the Intercessor** , Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5. It is difficult to determine the time of composition of this section. On the one hand, as stated above, Lozato writes to Shur in 1840 that he finished writing his commentary on the Torah eight years ago (see Lozato, **Agrot** , p. 676). On the other hand, the manuscripts of the commentary suggest that until the material was first submitted for printing in 1846 as an appendix to Mendelssohn's commentary printed in Vienna, he added and changed things in the manuscript, and even afterwards. For example, in the commentary to "Poked Avon Avot" in the Ten Commandments, Luzzatto brings in **the intercessor** of Reggio's commentary to the verse in **the beginnings of the times** for the year 1355, and this is a late addition. The fact that the Commentary on Leviticus, Chapter 6, Verse 5 is mentioned in the introduction to **the Intercessor** (on which it is probably mistakenly written that it was written in 1888! perhaps 1775) and in the context of the preface to **the Treasury** (which was also published in 1877, the same year that the Intercessor was published as a book in its own right), perhaps shows that the discussion of the SDF on the issue of the double truth was later, and close to the time of publication in light of. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
95. The commentary and the note were printed as mentioned in **Otzar Nimhad** , vol. 4, pp. 47-92, and reprinted in Luzzatto, **Researches** , vol. 1, part 1, pp. 70-122. The one cited here is from **Otzar Nehmad** , ibid., p. 51, and Meluzzato, **Researches** , ibid., p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
96. See Chamuel, **The Mediation**, pp. 314-317. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
97. Hamiel, **The Double** , Chapter Four, pp. 94-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
98. Hamiel, **The Average** , pp. 227-219. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
99. Lozato, **Writings** , pp. 134-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
100. Name, p. 123. "The sages of our theology" - see, for example, Raba'a, **Commentary** , Exodus 21:8, and Leviticus 19:20; Ryhal, **Chozari** MG 3 Ab-Ag; Rambam, **Introduction** . [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
101. Lozato, **Fees** , p. 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
102. **Kerem Hamad** III, pp. 223-219. Lozato, **my researches** , vol. 1, part 1, pp. 158-154. See Luzatto, **Letters**, p. 195. On this topic, S.D.L. and S.Y.R. continued to correspond, see Luzatto, **Letters**, p. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
103. Gafni, **in a simple way** , showed that Shadl believed that he was the first to claim that it was the right of every sage to try to interpret the Mishnah other than according to the interpretation of the Amorites, since they did not at all know the reasons for the halakhots in the Mishnah that the conditions renewed - reasons that were hidden so that they would not underestimate them - and only tried to guess the You believed or to demand verses. See Gafni, ibid, page 124. See there in note 77 about my wish for Shadl Shur to continue his work to interpret the Mishnah in a way that is not based on the interpretations given to it in the Talmud, and to investigate the exchange of formulas between the Mishnah and the Tosefta: "Like the opening I opened in **Kerem Hamed** III, pp. 73, 74, 222 [ in a note]". See also there, page 125, on the debate on this topic between S.D. Luzzatto and Hirsch Mendel Phineas (Shalosh) in 1864. It is interesting that the Shadal ignores the fact that the Babylonian Talmud's discussion on idolatry, which he relies on, is about decrees (like the decree on non-Jewish cheese) and not about regular laws in the Mishnah. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
104. Lozato, **the intercessor** , Leviticus 7:18. See below, Section 24 for changes in S.D.L.'s commentary on the Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
105. Luzzatto, "Silverman". [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
106. See Luzatto, **Letters**, p. 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
107. Luzzatto, **Researches** , Volume I, Part I, under the title "Hebrew Script", pp. 131-127. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
108. Lozato, **Fees** , p. 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
109. Luzzatto, there, there. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
110. Luzzatto, ibid, pp. 244-245. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
111. Luzzatto, "Shir". As cited from Luzzatto, **Research**, Volume I Part B, pp. 44-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
112. Source text: {שם.}  
     Target text: {Name.} In another letter to Rapoport from 1831, Shadal regrets that he and Ben Zeev, who believe in prophecy, fell into the trap of those who deny it, when they accepted the theory of two Isaiahs. See Luzatto, **Letters**, p. 216. In a letter to him from 1833 (ibid, pp. 262-263), he retracts his accusation and admits (an unusual admission for a research colleague, also in one specific detail out of a general claim) that S.Y.R is not a heretic like others. This is after he explained to him that in his opinion, the second Isaiah was mistakenly attributed to the first Isaiah, and the mistake was not intentional on his part to make us think he was the first Isaiah. However, in his main argument, that there was only one Isaiah, he did not retract. In a letter to Joost from 1839, S.D.L. also rebukes him for holding the view that the prophets spoke in the Holy Spirit but could not foresee details for a distant time, arguing that this is not the Jewish Holy Spirit but rather the type of inspiration attributed to Homer and Virgil. See Luzzatto, ibid, p. 633. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
113. Shadal's critique of Rabad was seen in a letter to Shai"r from 1832, Luzzatto, **Letters**, ibid, pp. 232-233, and in a letter to Yish"r from 1838, **Kerem Hemed** 4, pp. 131-147. The letter to Lishar is reprinted in Luzzatto, **Researches** , vol. 1, part 1, pp. 196-193 under the title "Rashi and the Rabbi". For his confession to the Shi'ar concerning the milk, see Luzzatto, **Agrot** , ibid., p. 276 - "I saw that I was wrong and that I sinned against the Raba'a in what he considered obligatory also in this matter of the milk, and the law is with him, because we intend to reply to the reader, and not reveal a face to the Torah that is not correct." See also Hamiel, **The Double** , pp. 115-127. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
114. It was printed, as mentioned above, by Blumenfeld in **Otzar Nimhad** , vol. 3, 17th century, pp. 16-15, as an accompanying letter to the introduction of SDL to the interpretation of Ecclesiastes. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
115. **Kerem Hamad** H., Prague 1995, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
116. Lozato, **fees** , ibid., pp. 1273-1272. See also there, pages 565-566. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
117. Deuteronomy, Chapter 13, Verses 2-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
118. Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, Verses 9-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
119. See Rambam, **Teacher** , HC chapter 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
120. See Rambam, **yd** , Basic Laws of the Torah, Chapter 8, Law 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
121. RLB3, **Commentary** ; Sphorno, **Commentary** , Deuteronomy, 134 [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
122. Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
123. Mishnah, Avot, Chapter 3, Mishnah 16. See below, Chapter Seven. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
124. Genesis, Chapter 32, Verse 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
125. Genesis, Chapter 28, Verse 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
126. Genesis Rabbah, 36:2. See also in Bereshit Rabbah 6:1, in Mekhilta Beshalach, Amalek section 2, and in Tanhuma Chukat 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
127. Leibovitz, **Eionim** , Book of Genesis, Parashat 'Vishalah', p. 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
128. Aristotle, **Ethics**, Book 3, Chapters 6-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
129. Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, page 4a. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
130. Rashi, **Commentary** , 138; Arama, **Commentary** ; Abarbanal, **Commentary** ; Hizkoni, **Commentary** , 138:11; Ibn Ezra, Commentary, 139-10; **Rashbam** , **Commentary** , 138:10; Radek, **Commentary** , 138:11; Ramban, **Commentary** , 138:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
131. Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot page 7a. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
132. Exodus, Chapter 32, Verse 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
133. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat, page 55a. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
134. Rambam, **yd** , Basic Laws of the Torah, Chapters 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
135. Name, Chapter Ten, Law Four. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
136. Jeremiah, Chapter 28, Verses 7-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
137. Rambam, **yd** , Basic Laws of the Torah, Chapter Ten, Law 4. The citation from Jeremiah, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
138. Rambam, **Introduction** , p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
139. RLBG, **Wars** , Article 6, Part 2, Chapter 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
140. Karshkesh, **Or 5** , article 2, rule 4, chapter 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
141. Abarbanel, **Commentary**, Deuteronomy 18:15-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
142. Jeremiah, Chapter 18, Verses 7-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
143. 1 Samuel, Chapters 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
144. Rambam, **yd** , Basic Laws of the Torah, Chapter Ten of Law 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
145. Firstborn of an Ox, **Interpretation**, Deuteronomy Chapter 18, Verse 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
146. Hirsch, **Commentary** , Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, Verse 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
147. Eben Kesef, **a crucible for silver**, Deuteronomy 18:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
148. Deuteronomy, Chapter 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
149. Sifrei, Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, Verses 18, 18a. This is also brought in Rashi's commentary in the same place. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
150. Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
151. Rambam, **Chapters** , chapter eight, pp. 49-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
152. Rambam, **Mishna** , Sanhedrin, Chapter Ten, Mishna III. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
153. Abarbanal, **commentary** , Deuteronomy, chapter 18, verses 15-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
154. Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, Verse 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
155. Exodus, Chapter 14, Verse 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
156. 2 Kings, Chapter 25, Verse 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
157. Tosafot Yevamot, page 50a, the discussion beginning with 'Know'. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
158. Leibowitz, **Notes**, pp. 35-36, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
159. Hirsch, **Commentary** , Deuteronomy, chapter 18, verse 15, and also there, verses 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
160. Mishnah, Avot, Chapter 3, 15. In Avot deRabbi Nathan, version A, chapter 39, there is a different version of Rabbi Akiva's words: "He used to say: everything is foreseen, and everything is revealed, and everything is according to a person's understanding." In version B of Chapter 44, there is an additional version in the name of Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Yossi HaGelili: "Everything is foreseen, revealed, and dependent on action." However, in my opinion, these versions do not change the analysis that I conduct later on. I am grateful to my colleague Daniel Malach who reviewed the article, directed me to various sources, and made important comments. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
161. Rasg, **Amonot** , p. Kanach-Kent. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
162. Vitry, **Mehzor** , 12, p. 514. The original manuscript of this book was completed in the year 1208. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
163. Marumi, **edited** , p. 16, edited by Saad A. The original manuscript of this book was completed in the year 1101, and it was first printed in Italy in the year 1470. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
164. Commandment, **Hearts**, Third Gate of God's Service, Chapter 8, pp. 181-182. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
165. Rambam, **Mishna** , Avot, chapter 315. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
166. Rambam, **Chapters** , p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
167. Name, pp. 52-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
168. Rambam, **yd** , Sefer Hamada, Laws of Repentance, Chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
169. Name, Name, Section D. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
170. Name, Name, Section H. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
171. Rabad, **misunderstandings** . [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
172. Maimonides, **Guide for the Perplexed**, Part III, Chapter 20, pp. 488-491. It is interesting that Maimonides' grandson, the Nagid, in his commentary attributed to him on Tractate **Avot**, completely ignores his great-grandfather's entire discussion and contradiction, and explains in accordance with Rashi. See there, page 72. Benjamin Ish-Shalom raised an interesting point here. According to him, Rambam's 'true' position on this issue is philosophically close in principle to a positivist position (in the manner of Rudolf Krahn [1891-1970] and his friends in the Vienna Circle and logical positivism). In other words, since the 'knowledge' of God is a different category and the connection between it and human knowledge is only a shared name (although at the popular level Maimonides speaks of similarity in certain aspects, but this is only apparently), there can be no contradiction between the will or choice of man - which is Y known, and the knowledge of God - which is X hidden. Any attempt at comparison or to claim a positive or negative connection between them is nothing but a categorical mistake, or nonsense, in the language of the positivists. See above, pages 37-39, for Albalag's position, which is identical to that of Maimonides. He too identifies the issue of timing as essential to this interpretation. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
173. Hamiel, **Between religion and knowledge** , pp. 72-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
174. On the position of the double truth, see Chamiel, **The Middle Way**, pp. 244-247 and note 14 there, 330-339 and note 196 there; Ibid, **The Double**, pp. 70-93; Ibid, **Between Religion and Opinion A**. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
175. Name, pp. 243-246. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
176. Girondi, **Avot** , chapter 3, section 16, p. Ke. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
177. The Meiri, **Avot**, pp. 137-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
178. RLBG, **Wars** , article 3, chapter 6, pp. 149-150. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
179. Karshkash, **Or 5** , Chapter 2, p. Rach. The interpretation of Karshek's words here is according to the version in Karshek, Chapter Fifteen.**Karshek**. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
180. Source text: {המאמר הזה מתחיל בסקירה של המחקרים הקיימים בנושא, וממשיך להציג ניתוח חדש של המקורות התלמודיים והמדרשיים העוסקים בקבוצות וביחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המחבר מציג תיאוריה שלו שהמקורות האלו משקפים את התפתחות המחשבה היהודית בתקופה התנאית, ומציג ראיות מהמקורות שמתמך בתיאוריה הזו. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין המקורות התלמודיים למקורות מקבילים בספרות הפטיסטית המוקדמת, ומציג ראיות שהמקורות האלו משקפים את התפתחות המחשבה היהודית בתקופה התנאית.}  
       
     Target text: {This article begins with a review of existing research on the topic, and proceeds to present a new analysis of the Talmudic and Midrashic sources dealing with groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come. The author presents his theory that these sources reflect the development of Jewish thought during the Tannaitic period, and presents evidence from the sources that supports this theory. The article concludes with a comparison of the Talmudic sources to parallel sources in early Patristic literature, and presents evidence that these sources reflect the development of Jewish thought during the Tannaitic period.} [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
181. Name, Chapter 3, Page 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
182. Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגת המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת התנאים, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתרבות היהודית של אותה תקופה. המחבר מתמקד בפרק 'חלק' ממסכת סנהדרין, ומנתח את המשמעויות התיאולוגיות וההיסטוריות של הטקסט. הוא מציג את הדיונים ההלכתיים והאגדתיים שמתרחשים בפרק, ומתאר את השיח המתמשך בין התנאים לבין הקהל הרחב של היהודים באותה תקופה. במהלך המאמר, המחבר מצליח להביא לידי ביטוי את המתחים המרכזיים שהיו קיימים בתרבות היהודית של תקופת התנאים, ואת השפעתם של אותם מתחים על המשנה ועל היהדות באופן כללי.}  
       
     Target text: {The article before us begins by presenting the historical framework of the Tannaitic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah in the Jewish culture of that era. The author focuses on the 'Heleq' chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, and analyzes the theological and historical implications of the text. He presents the halakhic and aggadic debates that occur in the chapter, and describes the ongoing dialogue between the Tannaim and the wider Jewish audience of that period. Throughout the article, the author manages to express the central tensions that existed in the Jewish culture of the Tannaitic period, and the influence of those tensions on the Mishnah and on Judaism in general.} [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
183. Name, p. 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
184. Bartanura, **Mishna** , Avot, J. Ghetto. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
185. See also Kadari, **Dictionary**, entry 'Tzafah'. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
186. Our Mishnah, **Avot**, pp. 113-114. Rambam does indeed state in **Mora Nabukim** that "it is clear that there is no relationship between God, may He be exalted, and time and place." '). [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
187. Di Ozida, **Midrash** , p. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
188. Heller, **Mishna** , Avot, Y Ghetto. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
189. I am grateful to my teacher, Yehuda Liebes, who opened these initial paths for me. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
190. Standpoint, **Avot**, Chapter 3, Section 22, pp. 26b-27a. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
191. Lifshitz, **mishna** , Avot, chapter 315. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
192. Volozhin, **Avot** , p. 43, page 22 IA. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
193. Hirsch, **Siddur** , p. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
194. Lozato, **the intercessor** , Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verse 5. Reprinted in Luzzatto, **Commentary** , Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5. See a detailed discussion on this passage in Chamiel, **The Median**, pp. 330-334. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
195. **A nice treasure** , volume 4, pp. 47-92. Reprinted in Luzzatto, **Research** , Volume I, Part II, p.  
      122-70. The quote is from **Otzar Nehmad** , ibid., p. 51 and Meluzzato, **Researches** , ibid., p. 119. See a detailed discussion on this ruling in Chamiel, **The Median**, pp. 335-336. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
196. Alter, **Shefat Emet** , vol. 1, Lech Lech, p. 20, 4H 'Hen'. I am grateful to Binyamin Brown for drawing my attention to this source. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
197. Kook, **Aya** , Blessings, Part II, Chapter IX, Letter Rent, p. 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
198. Kook, **Agrot** , Part I, Jerusalem 5772, Agrot Rapag, p. Shev. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
199. Name. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
200. Kook, **HaKodesh** , Part I, Jerusalem 5755, p. Reid. Thank you to Benjamin Ish Shalom for directing me to this source. Ish Shalom added an important note here: In his opinion, Rabbi Kook's perception is a mystical one, which fundamentally sees a continuum and unity between the divine and human existence. Therefore, the relationship between free will and divine knowledge is very similar to the concept embodied in Spinoza's position, see his definitions in the Ethics for the words 'free' and 'compelled' or 'coerced'. At the heart of the matter, it is nothing but metaphysical determinism. In Ish Shalom's book on Rabbi Kook, there is an entire chapter on freedom, where he also briefly discusses this matter. See Shalom Ish, **Mysticism**, pp. 119-120. In my opinion, there is still a certain difference between Rabbi Kook, whose stance is panentheistic according to Kabbalah and Hasidism, and Spinozistic pantheism. In my opinion, Rabbi Kook's attempt to unify the opposites and reconcile the contradicting worlds, failed. See Chamial, **Between Religion and Opinion A**, Chapter Two. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
201. Albek, **Mishnah** , Seder Nazikin, p. 367. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
202. Name, p. 497. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
203. Flavius, **War** , p. 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
204. Name, Name, Footnote 163. See footnote 59 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
205. Kehati, **Mishniyot** , Seder Nazikin, volume 2, p. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
206. Leibovitz, **Ancestors** , p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
207. Name, pp. 106-107. On these words of Leibowitz, Benjamin Ish Shalom rightly noted that they contain a logical contradiction: Leibowitz's claim that freedom is expressed only in the aspiration for freedom is, in light of his other claims, a logical failure. Indeed, according to his previous assumptions, even a person's choice to strive for the realization of freedom that is not understood, is necessitated by that very determinism, and therefore it cannot be argued that the aspiration to realize freedom expresses freedom. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
208. Name, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
209. Name, pp. 113-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
210. Barkovets, **God** , pp. 120-118. For more on Berkovits' concept of the hidden and self-limiting God, see ibid, pages 39-40, 49-52, 123. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch made similar remarks regarding the immense importance of free will, independent of the contradiction with divine foreknowledge. See on this Hirsch, **Commentary**, Genesis 2:16, Leviticus 16:10, and also Hirsch, **Writings**, Volume II, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
211. Orbach, **Beliefs** , pp. 230-229. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
212. Rosenberg, "Observation", p. 540. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
213. Krochmel, "Letter", **Kerem Hamad** 9, p. 17, the above, **Nabuchi** , p. Tama. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
214. Rosenberg, "Observation", pp. 554-555. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
215. Shannan, **Avot** , p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
216. Name. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
217. Name. See notes 3, 4 above for the source of the 'Tzafon' version. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
218. Ilan and Samuel, **Fathers** , p. 225. According to his further remarks, it seems that Ilan's first meaning is what I presented above as 'everything is foreseen', and the second meaning - 'everything is visible', including the future. In other words, there is a contradiction according to both interpretations. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
219. This brief explanation of the Greek-pagan perception of God and fate sheds light on the unclear words of Josephus above, when he attempts to explain the Pharisaic view in contrast to the Sadducean one, which leaned towards Hellenistic perspectives. See notes 44, 45 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
220. Ilan and Samuel, **Fathers** , p. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
221. See Chamuel, **Between Religion and Opinion A** - on the contemporary thinkers who sided with the 'double truth' position, and part B - on those who opposed it, including my critique of the latter. It is interesting that Amos Hakham places the position of the double truth in the mouth of the Psalmist. See Wise, **Psalms**, pp. 138-139. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
222. Ilan and Samuel, **Fathers** , pp. 228-227. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
223. Sifra, (from the house of Rabbi Akiva), Leviticus, Kedoshim, Chapter 20 Verse 2, Parsha 10, Sign 88(a). [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
224. Sifrei, (from the school of Rabbi Ishmael), Numbers 15:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
225. Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, Chapter 19, Law 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
226. Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, page 31, side B. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
227. Tosafot, Sotah 24a, the discussion beginning with 'and Rabbi Yonatan', see also Tosafot Menachot 17b, the discussion beginning with 'what he ate, he shall eat'. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
228. **Mishna to the King** , Halachot De'ot, Chapter 6, Halachah 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
229. Responses of the Geonim, Musafiah, Section 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
230. **good** lesson [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
231. **Good sense** , Parashat 'And he went out' after chapter 3, verse 13 - on the words 'And he went away', chapter 20, verse 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
232. Commandment, **Hearts**, Gate 1 - Gate of Unity, Chapter 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
233. Halevi, **Chozari** , fifth article, section 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
234. Ibn Ezra, **Commentary**. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
235. Rambam, **Mishna** , introduction to the tenth chapter (part) of the Sanhedrin treatise. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
236. Rambam, **10** , Basic Laws of the Torah, Chapter 1, Laws 9 and 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
237. Rambam, **teacher** , part 1, chapter 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
238. Ibn Daoud, **The Faith** , Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
239. Title, First Article, Chapter Seven. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
240. Radek, **commentary** . [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
241. **The education** , Mitzvah Shmad. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
242. Indeed, **interpretation**. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
243. Elvo, **The Barren** , Article I, Chapter II. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
244. Name, Article B Chapter 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
245. Abarbanel, **Commentary**. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
246. Luzzatto, **Commentary**, Genesis 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
247. Source text: {המאמר הזה מתחיל בסקירה של המחקרים הקודמים שנעשו בנושא זה, וממשיך להציג ניתוח חדש של המקורות התלמודיים והמדרשיים הרלוונטיים. המחבר מציג תיאוריה שלו שהמשנה הזו הוספה בשלב מאוחר יותר בתהליך העריכה, ושהיא משקפת את המאבקים התרבותיים והאידיאולוגיים של הפרק הזמני בו היא נכתבה. הוא מציג גם דיון מעמיק בנושא הקבוצות והיחידים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא, ומציע פרשנות חדשה לקריאת המשנה והמדרשים המקוריים.}  
       
     Target text: {This article begins with a review of previous research conducted on this topic, and proceeds to present a new analysis of the relevant Talmudic and Midrashic sources. The author presents his theory that this Mishnah was added at a later stage in the editing process, and that it reflects the cultural and ideological struggles of the historical period in which it was written. He also presents an in-depth discussion on the topic of groups and individuals who do not have a portion in the world to come, and proposes a new interpretation for reading the original Mishnah and Midrashim.} [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
248. Lozato, **commentary** , Genesis chapter 1 verse 20: We will make man in our image, after our likeness. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
249. Lozato, **Fees** , p. 695. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
250. Shadl, **Commentary** , Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 6, Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
251. Graetz, **Words** , part two, chapter one, pp. 192-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
252. Hirsch, **Writings** , Volume V, pp. 77-74 (the translation from English by A. H.). [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
253. Name, pp. 169-179. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
254. Hoffmann, **The Terms** , p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
255. Kook, **Adar** , p. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
256. Heschel, **Torah** , vol. 1, pp. 10-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
257. Gilat, **Hyrcanus** ; The above, **the Halacha** . [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
258. Hello, **The Zealots**. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
259. Lau, **Sages** I, pp. 153, 167-166, 188; II, pp. 46-45, 62, 83, 106-98, 188, 193, 199-198, 201, 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
260. Orbach, **Beliefs** , pp. 2, 14-13, and note 26 there. However, regarding Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael, he notes character traits. See **Beliefs**, p. 166; Ibid., **The Halacha**, p. 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
261. See also on this in Chemiel, **The Average**, pp. 164-181, ibid, **The Double**, pp. 27-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
262. Breuer, **Moedot** , under the title of simplicity that renews itself every day, pp. 11-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
263. Breuer, **Genesis** , under the title Yishuv the Bible in its simplest form, pp. 14-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
264. Steinsaltz, **Talmud**, Insights into Bava Metzia page 31b. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
265. Title: Studies on Karetot Page 11a. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
266. Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, page 31a. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
267. Sifrei, Deuteronomy, 25:6, Sign 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
268. Deuteronomy, 25:5-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
269. Name. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
270. **A good lesson** , Genesis, chapter 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
271. Name, Genesis, 29:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
272. **A good lesson** , Genesis 29:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
273. Tosafot, Babylonian Talmud, Chullin page 27b. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
274. Rashbam, **Commentary** , Genesis 1 a. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
275. Name, Genesis, 37:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
276. Rasg, **Commentary** , Deuteronomy, so, the 10th. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
277. Ramban, **Commentary** , Devarim, so the 10th. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
278. Ibn Ezra, **Commentary**, Deuteronomy, 25:5-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
279. Ibn Ezra, **Commentary**, Introduction to the Short Commentary on the Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
280. Name, Name. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
281. Name, Introduction to the Long Commentary on the Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
282. Lozato, **Fees** , pp. 233-232. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
283. See the sign, "Even Ezra" on Japheth's position and his stance. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
284. Ibn Ezra, **Commentary on Ecclesiastes**, 5:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
285. Rambam, **yd** , Laws of Yabom and Chalitza, Chapter 2, Law 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
286. Rambam, **the mitzvot** , second root. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
287. Ramban, **Hasghat** , p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
288. Name, pp. 31-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
289. Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Radak, **Commentary** , Genesis 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
290. Ramban, **Commentary** , Genesis, 17:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
291. Makotzi, **a mitzvah** , to the enemy, a sign of ah. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
292. Rambam, **teacher** , 18th century, 17th century; HB P.L., H.G. P.H. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
293. In life, **interpretation**, Genesis, Chapter 3 Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
294. See Krochmal, **Nebuchadnezzar**, pp. 194-209, especially pp. 204-205, 215-216. For an explanation of RNK's Hegelian position, see Hamiel, **the average** , pp. 144-143, 166-165, the above, **the double** , pp. 199-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
295. Name, p. 139, emphasis in the original. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
296. **Bichuri Ha'atim** 1758, pp. 95-94; Luzzatto, **Beit Ha'Otzer II** , p. 93. On Shadal's interpretation of the Hash, see Hamiel, **The Average** , pp. 101-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
297. See Luzatto, **Letters**, pp. 246, 343. On Shadl's attitude towards Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Rambam, see Hamiel, **The Double** , pp. 115-155. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
298. Luzzatto, **the intercessor** , in the introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
299. Luzzatto, **Nice Treasure** , IV, p. 115; **My researches** , vol. 1, part 1, p. 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
300. Luzzatto, **Treasury II** , pp. 13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
301. Lozato, **the intercessor** , Leviticus, chapter 7, verse 18. On the SDL's position, see in detail Hamiel, **the average** , pp. 228-219, the above, **the double** , pp. 94-114. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
302. Mecklenburg, **The Writing**, Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
303. Melbim, **Commentary** , and Leviticus, Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
304. Hoffmann, **Vikram** , introduction. On Hoffmann's position on the subject, see in detail Hamiel, **The Double** , pp. 276-272. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
305. On Hirsch's position on the subject, see in detail Hamiel, **The Average** , pp. 182-192. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
306. On the position of Maharat Hayut on the subject, see in detail Hamiel, **the average** , pp. 150-140, the aforementioned, **the double** , pp. 191-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
307. Epstein, **Tamima** , Leviticus, chapter 1 verse 2, note 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
308. Babylonian Talmud, Arakhin, 11a. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
309. Epstein, **Tamima** , in the desert, chapter 7 verse 9, note 7. See more on this topic in his comments on Genesis 14, note 9; Numbers 30:34, 31:37, 35:69; Deuteronomy 16:63, 25:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
310. Cassuto, in the 'To the Reader' introduction at the beginning of the book.**From Man**. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
311. Onkelos, **Translation**; RSG, **Commentary**; Rashi, **Commentary**; Meklenburg, **The Writing**; Hirsch, **Commentary**; Berlin, **The Valley**. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
312. Firstborn of an ox, **interpretation**, Exodus, 23:19. See also Exodus 34:26. In Deuteronomy 14:21, he presents the opinion of the Sages in the Midrash. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
313. Source text: {המאמר הנוכחי מתמקד בפרק המשנה המכונה 'פרק חלק', ובמיוחד ביחידה העוסקת באנשים שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא. המאמר מנתח את היחידה מכמה זוויות: היא מתחילה בניתוח של המילים והביטויים שבה, ממשיך בהשוואה ליחידות מקבילות במדרש ובתוספתא, ומסתיים בניסיון להבין את המשמעות ההיסטורית של היחידה. במהלך המאמר, המחבר מציג גם כמה תיאוריות חדשות לגבי מועד ומקום כתיבת היחידה, ולגבי הקשרים שבינה לקבוצות ולאישים שנזכרים בה.}  
       
     Target text: {The current article focuses on the Mishnah chapter known as 'Perek Heleq', particularly on the section dealing with people who do not have a portion in the world to come. The article analyzes this section from several angles: it begins with an analysis of the words and expressions in it, continues with a comparison to parallel sections in the Midrash and the Tosefta, and concludes with an attempt to understand the historical significance of the section. Throughout the article, the author also presents several new theories regarding the time and place of the section's writing, and the relationships between it and the groups and individuals mentioned in it.} [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
314. Philo, "The Measures", Sections 125-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
315. Rashbam, **Commentary** , Exodus 23:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
316. Ibn Ezra, **Short Commentary on the Torah**, Exodus 23:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
317. Ibn Ezra, **Long Commentary on the Torah**, Exodus 23:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
318. Firstborn of an ox, **interpretation**, Deuteronomy 14:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
319. Ramban, **Commentary** , Devarim Yad 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
320. Arama, **Akidat** , Shemot, Shear Mo (parashah of laws). [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
321. Shadl, **Commentary** , Exodus, 23 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
322. Kook, **Chazon** , 11, chapter 6, hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
323. Stollman, **The Simplify** , pp. 242-233. Source text: {המאמר שלפנינו מתחיל בהצגה של המסגרת ההיסטורית של תקופת התנאים, וממשיך לדיון במקום המשנה בתוך הספרות התנאית. המאמר מתמקד בפרק החלק ממסכת סנהדרין, ובמיוחד בסוגיית החייבים מיתות בית דין. המחבר מנתח את הסוגיה באופן מעמיק, ומציג תיאוריה מקורית לגבי התהליך שבו נערך הפרק. המאמר מסתיים בהשוואה בין הגרסאות השונות של הסוגיה, כפי שהן מופיעות במשנה, בתוספתא ובמדרשים שונים.}  
       
     Target text: {The article before us begins with a presentation of the historical framework of the Tannaitic period, and continues to discuss the place of the Mishnah within Tannaitic literature. The article focuses on the Perek Heleq of Tractate Sanhedrin, and especially on the topic of those liable to the death penalty by the court. The author analyzes the topic in depth, and presents an original theory regarding the process by which the chapter was edited. The article concludes with a comparison of the different versions of the topic, as they appear in the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and various Midrashim.} [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
324. Hamiel, **to know** , p. 251. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
325. Hirsch, **Commentary** , Leviticus, 22 27-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
326. Name, Deuteronomy, 22 and 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
327. Luzzatto, **Commentary**, Deuteronomy, 22:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
328. Stollman, **Hapasht** , p. 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
329. Source text: {המאמר הזה מתחיל בסקירה של המחקרים הקודמים שנערכו בנושא זה, וממשיך להציג ניתוח חדש ומקיף של הטקסט. המחבר מציג תיאוריה משלו שמסבירה את הקשרים בין הטקסטים השונים, ומציג ראיות מהטקסט עצמו וממקורות חיצוניים. המאמר מסתיים במסקנות שמצביעות על התרומה החדשה שהמחקר מביא להבנתנו של הנושא.}  
       
     Target text: {This article begins with a review of previous research conducted on this topic, and continues to present a new and comprehensive analysis of the text. The author presents his own theory that explains the connections between the different texts, and provides evidence from the text itself and from external sources. The article concludes with conclusions that point to the new contribution that the research brings to our understanding of the subject.} [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
330. Name, Name. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
331. See footnote 9 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
332. Rambam, **teacher** , HC, MH. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
333. Abarbanel, **Commentary**, Exodus 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
334. Sforno, Exodus, 23:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
335. Sforno, Deuteronomy, 14:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
336. Melbim, **Commentary** , Exodus, 23:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
337. Cassuto, **Exodus**, p. 212, Ex. 19:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
338. Kasuto, **Anat** , chapter two, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
339. Aaron, **Bible**. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
340. **Education** , a mitzvah (don't do) turtle. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
341. **Education** , mitzvah (don't do) sev. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
342. In life, **interpretation**, Exodus, 22:19. On the nominalist and realist view of halacha, see Halbertal, **The Doubt** , pp. 29-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
343. Precious Vessel, **Commentary**, Exodus 22:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
344. Hirsch, **Commentary** , Exodus, chapter 23 verse 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
345. Rambam, **the mitzvot** , you shall not do KPZ. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
346. Ramban, **Commentary** , Exodus, LD 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
347. Ramban, there, 34:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
348. Hizkoni, **Commentary** , Exodus, LD Y. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
349. Chizkuni, Exodus, 34:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
350. Luzzatto, **Commentary** , Exodus, 23 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)