

Dr. Schacter is guest editor of this special issue.

From the Pages of Tradition **RABBI JACOB EMDEN, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE AUTHORITY OF MAIMONIDES**

Beginning with the period shortly after his death in 1204, Maimonides was recognized as a pre-eminent authority in matters both halakhic and philosophical whose opinions could not simply be dismissed. Already in the thirteenth century, Maimonides' reputation reached "heroic" proportions and all who succeeded him found it necessary to reckon with the power and force of his stature and authority.¹ Those who disagreed with the fundamental assumptions of Maimonidean rationalism and were opposed to the absolute primacy of philosophical inquiry in Judaism faced a most difficult dilemma. How could they justify their position in light of the obvious and intense emphasis on philosophy reflected in the works of this outstanding, towering and influential personality? How could they deny major significance to philosophy when the great Maimonides clearly considered rational investigation of Judaism to be a crucial religious imperative and an indispensable component of genuine religious experience?²

Among those forced to deal with this problem was R. Jacob Emden (1698-1776), the well-known halakhist, kabbalist and anti-Sabbatean polemicist.³ His generally negative attitude towards philosophy (texts #1-5) forced him to confront the legacy of Maimonides and led him to attempt a solution to the problem by differentiating between the halakhic and philosophic parts of the Maimonidean oeuvre. As the forthcoming texts (#6-7) will indicate, he held the former in highest regard, but rejected the latter as a distortion of Judaism. Indeed, on occasion (texts #8-10) he even went so far as to assert that the Maimonides who achieved such great heights in the realm of halakhah could not possibly have written the Guide of the Perplexed. In this way, he was able to acknowledge Maimonides' universally recognized halakhic greatness and authority while, at the same time, distancing himself from his philosophy.⁴

R. JACOB EMDEN

1. They [i.e. philosophers] are not [motivated to perform] good deeds as a function of their fear of God who commanded them, but only in accord with what their reason dictates to be the proper and appropriate behavior to insure the existence of mankind and the preservation of his nature. To this end, they set for themselves religions and modes of behavior as they choose, behavior patterns and arrangements designed by man as an expression of self-love, to maintain their group and out of fear of losing it. It is not as if they were afraid that a punishment from God, may He be blessed, would affect them by neglecting those actions. If they were to choose the life of freedom and abandonment [of *mizvot*], no one could restrain them. For they are devoid of the fear of Heaven. They are not afraid of

heights,⁵ the watchman, caretaker and commander over the face of the habitable world (Job 37:12). They will not subject themselves to God, except for that which their would-be-philosophizing dictates and [only] according to that which they can grasp with their rationalizing. . . . This is the goal of their wisdom. With this they intend to achieve their ultimate perfection; not through any normative act. . . .⁶

It is appropriate to drive them from the civilized world to the desert, even unto *Hormah* (Numbers 14:45). . . . They who consider the world to be without an owner will [themselves] be open prey to the beasts of the field, to cut them down and destroy them, to set them up as a target⁷ for the targets of revenge. . . .⁸

They were the sinful stumbling block for the house of Israel at the beginning of its flowering. They pursued idolatry only to permit themselves [involvement in] public immorality, to the utter ruin of moist and dry alike (Deuteronomy 29:18). All the evil of the days of the First Commonwealth emerged from this stock sprouting poison weed and wormwood (*ibid.*, 29:17), the source of the filth. . . .

This was the very peg upon which evil was fixed⁹ throughout the entire period of the Second Commonwealth whose turbulence did not rest from beginning to end. From it sprouted all the opposing sects, who rivalled one another and were the cause of the war [against Rome]. Indeed, it was the accursed Greek wisdom which was the cause of our trouble,¹⁰ that destroyed the Temple and despoiled the Land of Israel. It was this that caused the dispersion of Jerusalem that was in Sefarad (Ovadia 1:20) to be expelled and uprooted from the country of Spain where they had been on a very high level of wealth and wisdom. [They remained so] until their hearts became arrogant to exchange the honor of their distinguished, rich and pleasant Torah, which gave birth to them, for the harlot, naked maidservant which is philosophy.¹¹

2. [Philosophy is] abhorrent unto God . . . malignant leprosy is in his right hand, a sword for great carnage that presses (Ezekiel 21:19). In her left hand are stored death and destruction.¹²

From it [i.e. philosophy] did emerge all the families of the heretics by their lands, according to their nations (Genesis 10:31). It is this which begat alien children¹³ to our nation. All of those many evil sects [were as] scorpions and lepers. Ever since the poison of their wisdom entered our land, they turned away the hearts of the nation¹⁴ from Torah and divine service. They began grafting words of the divine Torah onto their fabricated wisdom, a grafting that can never take hold. To be sure, they plotted to tear out its [i.e. the Torah's] roots and cut her branches for there are many who break through, who want to cast off its yoke from upon themselves and lead a life of freedom. Because of their differing opinions and divisiveness, they did not rest and were not silent¹⁵ until they brought upon themselves the rulers of the [Gentile] nations who destroyed the Second Temple and exiled them from their land [into] this bitter dispersion.

And that seducer still dances among us. It is he that also caused the feet of our people in Spain to stumble,¹⁶ to exterminate them from there because they delved deeply¹⁷ into that wisdom. That was the source of their trouble,¹⁸ to teach them to be lighthearted with prohibitions [of Jewish law], as mentioned above. They distorted Torah, contrary to Halakhah. They violated the covenant; they nullified the law.¹⁹ However, their wisdom is of nought; most of their words increase the vanity of sin. They have no foundation nor root whatsoever; from the pit of philosophy were they dug.²⁰

It seems to me that the destruction of the Jews from the land of the Ukraine, where they grew and became wealthy, was also for this [reason]. To the extent to which they were exalted, to that extent did they fall and were uprooted from that entire land. Although there were also highly pious people then, it is nevertheless apparent that the scab of philosophy spread²¹ also in that generation, as can be understood from the responsa of Maharshah to our master, the Rama (in his responsa, #7). God does not act unjustly.²²

3. However, the complete and perfect wisdom, insured from all obstacles and falsehood, is the true fear of Heaven. There is none other than this. It is this and no other which bestows the desired traits of character. . . . As it is written, *He said to man, "See! Fear of the Lord is wisdom"* (Job 28:28). In other places, it [i.e. the fear of the Lord] is referred to as *the beginning of wisdom* (Psalms 111:10) [or] *the beginning of knowledge* (Proverbs 1:7).

This is certainly true, for without the fear of the Lord, any wisdom and knowledge is absolutely inconceivable. For the function of both is to distinguish between the good and the evil and between the true and the false. If man's mind could possibly imagine that there is no need for the fear of Heaven, as the heretics contend, God forbid, then why do they need all this bother and for what do they trouble their souls with these investigations? What benefit can they find in them? Behold it would be sufficient for them to live like *beasts of the wild* (Micah 5:7), as their beastly soul would teach them. Who would tell them what is proper and what is indecent? There are many people like the Tartary dwellers and whole nations at the edge of India who consider robbery, adultery and similar acts to be fine and proper activities! With them they lived on, *prospered and grew wealthy, their seed established before them* (Job 21:7-8).²³ Their species will survive (by chance and happenstance which are pillars of the study of philosophy) *as the beasts of the field* (Genesis 2:20).²⁴

4. I have already discussed at length the great harm that extends to those who occupy themselves with philosophy. Ultimately they become corrupted and cast away the entire Torah behind their backs. . . .²⁵

Consider, please, what was accomplished by the early nations who rose mightily, a hundredfold, on the ladder of philosophy? They almost conquered the entire world with their wisdom, [yet] what was their end and their result? Who does not know of the wisdom of Egypt (mentioned even in Scripture) which attained such great prominence in the world . . . and now it is an abode of robbers. The land of the Chaldeans which had been full of wise sages is now *an abode of shepherds* (Jeremiah 33:12). . . . Where is the lair of the philosophical lions²⁶ of Greece who were full of the wisdom of the ancients? The reputation of Greek wisdom pervaded the entire land, to subdue all the inhabitants of the world under it. Before it bowed every nation and language. Now, [it is] *a haunt of jackals* (Jeremiah 10:22). Even though they were not commanded to study Torah, they were uprooted from the world and their wisdom was to no avail. Certainly we, who have a true and reliable wisdom given to us on condition that we involve ourselves with it exclusively all our days, how can we hope to achieve any spiritual or physical success through it [i.e. philosophy]? Behold, experience has proven the opposite. For wherever and whenever they [i.e. Jews] pursued it, it has become their troubler²⁷ and uprooted them from the places they had rested with universal honor.²⁸

5. This is not the place to elaborate at greater length, only to mention a *whisper of it* (Job 4:12), to know and to understand that the human intellect is incapable of grasping [even] one iota of the myriads²⁹ of wonders in the creations of this basic world of ours. [*Just as you do not know . . .*] *the limbs within the womb of a pregnant woman, so you cannot understand the actions of God, who causes all things to happen* (Ecclesiastes 11:5). Certainly, no human being can gather up [enough] strength to understand and to examine all the works of God in the upper world, the location of His throne and glory *for He is awesome* (Exodus 34:10). And Job declared, *Can you discover the mystery of God?* (Job 11:7).

Therefore, if already for the first [i.e. manipulating divine names] *my heart quakes and leaps from its place* (Job 37:1), then now, the second [i.e. the spread of philosophy] *makes the hair of my flesh bristle* (Job 4:15), *panic has overwhelmed me* (Isaiah 21:4), *my eyes fail from vexation* (Job 17:7) for the evil tidings which have come.³⁰ For poisonous snakes were found among our people; scoundrels have come forth from among us. They denied the Lord above. They said to God, "Depart from us. *What is God that we should serve Him? What will be gained by praying to Him?*" (Job 21:15). *The clouds screen Him* (*ibid.*, 22:14).

There are those who deny and reject the essence and consider the world to be ownerless. They believe that a major city [can exist] without a ruler. They walk contrarily, ascribing all to chance and happenstance. They do not believe in divine Providence. Initially, Satan opened for them a small aperture to ridicule the words of the Sages and they mocked the masters of the traditions, angels of God. They cast off the yoke of the Oral Law from their shoulders. . . .

After they had uprooted a whole section from the Torah where it is written, *You must not deviate from the verdict which they shall declare unto you either to the right or to the left* (Deuteronomy 17:11), the gap now widened for them *like a spreading breach that occurs in a lofty wall* (Isaiah 30:13).³¹ They also cast the entire Written Law behind their backs.³² They did not believe in marvels and miracles. They take no part in *mizvot* and deeds. (I will mention only [a few of] the customs of the licentious ones. At the time when Jews enter their synagogues for prayer³³ . . . these people go to circuses and theaters, offering their bodies and souls in the worship of their impulses, to satisfy their lusts. . . .

They waste most of their time preoccupied with frivolous books (*sifrei hamiras*),³⁴ with words of sexual desire, sensual lust, heresy, [and] new licentiousness³⁵ which comes forth every day from the printing press. In them they seek their *summum bonum* while our holy Torah is not even considered [as important] as their idle chatter. . . .

Thus they behave as the beasts of the forest, a man [copulating] with the wife of his friend. They neighed [like] *well fed lusty stallions* (Jeremiah 5:8), to stroll with the wives of their friends. They have removed the veil of shame.

These then are but a few of the ways of these wild ones. They are surely not of the seed of Israel, only descendants of the mixed multitude. We are not responsible nor guarantors³⁶ for them, although Jews are responsible for one another.³⁷ Nevertheless, one must be careful to separate oneself from them and their murmuring so that the holy and pure seed of Israel not stumble through them. [We] should not have any business dealings with them and they should not come [for burial] in Jewish graves.

All this was caused for them by their involvement in frivolous books (*bi-sifrei hamiras*). They have considered the alien ways to be sufficient.³⁸ They forsook the

Torah of their mothers and the discipline of their Father above.³⁹ Woe, woe. This is what destroyed the first and second Temples and led us into captivity now close to two thousand years. This was also the cause of the expulsion of Israel from Spain. It is still galloping among us. And all this evil sprang forth from the poisonous interpretation[s] of the aforementioned philosophy.⁴⁰

6. It is with justification that our Sages already prevented the study of *higgayon*,⁴¹ as I have written on occasion in *Bet El* and in *Ir Elohit*,⁴² for it is very, very dangerous.

Please note that the two great masters, R. Abraham ibn Ezra and Maimonides, could not stand up against it with all the strength of their wisdom. They were not protected from the sword in its hand. For in their fleeing and escaping from the trap of anthropomorphism with all their strength, they utilized instruments of the study of philosophical logic. They became ensnared in *the trap of the fowler* (Psalms 91:3) of the eternity of the world into which stumbled and fell many fools who did not understand their [i.e. Ibn Ezra's and Maimonides'] words and advice for [in truth] their intention was for good, for they were imbued with a different spirit.⁴³

However, in the generation that came after them, they took their words literally and rejected the Torah in its entirety. This became for them a snare and an obstacle, a stumbling block for the household of Israel.⁴⁴

7. Certainly one should not set aside time to study with them and in their heretical works, as did Maimonides. He became attached to them and was engaged with them in [the study of] philosophy and logic with great diligence (as he testified about himself that he studied with the Moslem heretic, Abubacher b. Alzaig, as is written in the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*. May his Master [i.e. God] forgive him. That which he did, he brought upon himself.

It is, however, possible to judge him favorably because [he responded to] the need of the hour. In his days, the *land was filled* (Isaiah 11:9) with the heresy of philosophy. The heretics in his generation pressured and compelled him to engage in Greek wisdom so that he could stand up against them, as I wrote, with the help of Heaven, in *She'elat Ya'avez*, end #41. See, however, how successful he was. For he plunged into the majestic waters⁴⁵ and came up with [only] a potsherd in his hand. In the book, *Guide of the Perplexed in which he walked in darkness* (Isaiah 50:10), he did not stride freely.⁴⁶ His ankles stumbled on the slippery foreign beliefs and opinions. . . . The danger is very great. Is it insignificant that the Sages included "and he who studies *sefarim hizonim*" among those who have no share in the World to Come?⁴⁷

8. It is possible to speak favorably about him [i.e. Maimonides] in a manner [similar to that] written about King Solomon. Even though he [i.e. Solomon] was beloved by God (as Nehemiah wrote, and as [is indicated by] the name God gave him), he too was brought to sin by the foreign women about whom he repeatedly warned in the Book of Proverbs. Indeed, so it is found written in the name of Maimonides in a letter that he said of himself that he took the strange secular wisdoms as cooks and perfumers.⁴⁸ (He appropriately called them by these names for surely they are cooks to the insensitive man who is lured after them *like an ox going to the slaughter* (Proverbs 7:22), like the word of the wise man [i.e. King Solomon] in his parables (*ibid.*); and they are as perfumers, for *the lips of a strange woman*

drop honey (Proverbs 5:3). It is therefore no wonder that they caused him [i.e. Maimonides] to sin as well, for he was lured by *the smooth tongue of an alien woman* (Proverbs 6:24). He was not better than Solomon . . .

Maimonides was responsible for an obstacle [for Jews] for he left over a stumbling stone for generations, the *Guide of the Perplexed*, as is well known. . . . However, as for me, I do not think so, as I have revealed my opinion. This is not the work of the great author among the Jews⁴⁹ but of one of the philosophers of his generation. . . . Since he benefitted the masses (with his work, the *Yad ha-Hazakah* [written] by him), for this reason I cannot believe that he was responsible for the aforementioned sinful striking stone.⁵⁰ [After all], he accomplished good for Israel with several books of his talmudic works in which he strengthened the pillars of the faith. Therefore, he is remembered for good and for a blessing for eternity while the lawless wicked ones who make of the book *Guide of the Perplexed* an ax to cut off the branches of the Torah and *mizvot*, to chop down the roots of Prophecy and Providence, will be *to everlasting abhorrence* (Daniel 12:2). *The name of the wicked shall rot* (Proverbs 10:7). May God save us⁵¹ from them and from any part of them.⁵²

9. The truth is that when I examine and ponder the rationale of *mizvot* as suggested by the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*, my spirit fails me⁵³ and falls into weakness. Especially [upsetting is] the . . . reason that he gave for sacrifices⁵⁴. . . . What person could tolerate [this] . . . , ensnaring the mind in a net, unless one who is incurably mentally deficient or one who abandons himself to nullify what the Men of the Great Assembly wrote, that the world rests on the [Temple] service.⁵⁵ They further state that, "were it not for the [daily sacrificial ritual of the] *ma'amadot*, heaven and earth could not exist."⁵⁶ And what will he do with the verse, "[Be punctilious in presenting to Me at stated times] the offerings of food due Me, as offerings by fire of pleasing odor to Me" (Numbers 28:2)? I wonder if he [ever] looked at it. For had he done so, he would declare and admit, saying, "for naught have I labored with sophistry; for emptiness and nonsense did I waste my strength philosophizing"⁵⁷ . . . *Who can garner enough strength* (II Chronicles 2:5) to contain all the madness included in just this [statement] alone? . . .

There is no limit and no end to the depth and wisdom [of] the laws relating to sanctification . . . explained by Rabbi Moses [Maimonides] in his revered and sacred book, [devoted] to the laws of the Torah at great length [i.e. the *Mishneh Torah* or *Yad ha-Hazakah*]. How is it possible to imagine that the two works (namely the *Yad*⁵⁸ and the *Guide of the Perplexed*) were written by the hand of one author? For, according to the words of the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*, all the laws of sanctification – lengthy, detailed, and profound—are tantamount to an act of nonsense. Undoubtedly, the would-be philosophers who follow in its footsteps . . . consider them [to be] much idle prattle and a wearying of the flesh.⁵⁹

It is therefore impossible to ascribe the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*, to Maimonides who was himself meritorious and who brought merit to so many. For, "whoever leads many to righteousness shall not be the cause of sin."⁶⁰ There is no doubt in the world that this obstacle of the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*, misled many from [a proper understanding of] the Torah. Who knows how many hundreds and thousands left the faith because of this? It is the direct cause of the destruction of many great and mighty Jewish communities and their total eradication from the lands of Spain and France. . . . Had there been found in the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*, nothing other than this alone, namely, the reason for the sacrifices that it

contains, it is enough to condemn it to be burned.⁶¹

10. It is certainly our duty to be involved in judging Maimonides favorably, as we have done in many places in our works. . . . For he was certainly a pillar and wellspring of the diaspora in his generation. To this day we drink from his waters. He illuminated our eyes to [understand] many fundamental laws and fine ethical teachings. He also spoke beautifully regarding many matters of faith. . . . See, *his reward is with him; his recompense [before him]* (Isaiah 40:10; 62:11) for he strengthened the hands of the weak,⁶² those weary from the exile, who, in his days, were persecuted by the heretics and licentious ones who pressured them. It is they who impelled him to study philosophy in order to know how to respond to the heretic.⁶³ I declare with regard to him, "Great is a sin [committed] for His Name's sake."⁶⁴ His entire intention was for the sake of Heaven. . . .

In truth, regarding the book, *Guide of the Perplexed*, I state once and for all: God forbid that I should believe that this great author, faithful to his God, who worked and struggled so assiduously to understand the minutiae of *mizvot*, in all their details and conditions, . . . that this obstacle would emerge from his hand, to provide an opening and an opportunity for heretics to prevail [and] to think that the ritual of the Temple service and the active meticulous fulfillment of the *mizvot* are nonsense, God forbid. . . . For it is impossible to bring into agreement the words of these two works together, as it is clear to an expert in them. [R. Emden goes on to contrast the dangerous *Guide* with the "holy *Yad*."⁶⁵]

NOTES

My thanks to my father, Rabbi Herschel Schacter, for his assistance and to Dr. Shnayer Z. Leiman for his helpful suggestions.

1. For the use of the phrase, "heroic conception" or "heroic image of Maimonides," see Bernard Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition* (Cambridge, 1982), 48, 63, 99-100. See also Isadore Twersky, *Rabad of Posquières* (Cambridge, 1962), 181; *idem.*, "Aspects of the Social and Cultural History of Provencal Jewry," *Jewish Society Through the Ages*, ed. H. H. Ben-Sasson and S. Ettinger (New York, 1973), 206; *idem.*, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides (Mishneh Torah)* (New Haven, 1980), 1; Julius Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism* (New York, 1964), 183.
2. A comprehensive history of anti-rationalist reactions to the stature and authority of Maimonides remains a major historical desideratum. In the interim, see Avraham Halkin, *bi-Ikevot Rambam* (Jerusalem, 1979); B. Septimus, *ibid.*, and the sources cited there on p. 147, n. 1.
3. For a full treatment of this fascinating figure, see my *Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; Harvard University, 1988).
4. I present a full analysis of R. Emden's attitude towards philosophy and Maimonides in my work, 548-86.
For R. Emden's most positive assessment of the halakhic contribution of Maimonides, see e.g. his *Iggeret Bikkoret* (Zhitomir, 1867), 21b, 23b; *Birat Migdal Oz* (Jerusalem, 1969), 22b; *Mitpahat Sefarim* (Lvov, 1870), 3.
5. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5. The reference is to God.
6. J. Emden, *Amudei Shamayim* (Altona, 1746), 247b-248a.
7. Cf. I Samuel 20:20.
8. *Amudei Shamayim*, 248b-249a.

9. Cf. Isaiah 22:25.
10. Cf. Judges 11:35.
11. *Amudei Shamayim*, 249a.
For an analysis of R. Emden's blaming the sin of excessive study of philosophy in Spain for the Spanish expulsion, see my "Echoes of the Spanish Expulsion in Eighteenth Century Germany: The Baer Thesis Revisited," *Judaism* 41:2 (Spring 1992): 185-89.
12. J. Emden, *Sh'arei Shamayim* (Altona, 1747), 77a. For the last phrase, cf. Job 28:22.
13. Cf. Hosea 5:7.
14. Cf. Numbers 32:9.
15. Cf. Job 3:26.
16. Cf. Job 12:5.
17. Cf. Hosea 9:9.
18. Cf. Judges 11:35.
19. Cf. Isaiah 24:5.
20. Cf. Isaiah 51:1.
21. Cf. Leviticus 13:7.
22. *Sh'arei Shamayim*, 77a-b.
23. In the context of the verse, "*nakhon*" means established. Here R. Emden used it in the sense of "proper" or "appropriate," i.e. although they engage in illicit sexual relations, they see no problem with the children of these unions.
24. *Birat Migdal Oz*, 47a.
25. Cf. I Kings 14:9.
26. Cf. Nahum 2:12.
27. Cf. Judges 11:35.
28. J. Emden, *Ez Avot* (Maramarossziget, 1912), 58b-59a, on Avot 5:22.
29. Lit., "one of the thousands and tens of thousands."
30. Cf. Ezekiel 21:12.
31. R. Emden reversed the order of two words in this verse but the meaning remains unchanged.
32. Cf. Nehemiah 9:26.
33. Lit., "enter their miniature sanctuaries to engage in service of the heart."
34. There is some confusion as to the precise meaning of this phrase. I follow the definition of *Penei Mosheh on Yerushalmi*, Sanhedrin 10:1. See R. Gordis, "'Homeric' Books in Palestine," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 38 (1948): 359-68. Cf. the commentaries of Maimonides and R. Samson of Sens to Yadayim 4:6 where it is translated as "heretical works."
35. Cf. Lamentations 3:23.
36. Cf. the text of the standard marriage document.
37. See *Sanhedrin* 27b, *Shavu'ot* 39a.
38. This is a play on Isaiah 2:6.
39. Cf. Proverbs 1:8.
40. J. Emden, "Hali Ketem," in *Derush Tefillat Yeshtarim* (Krakau, 1911), 26a-b.
41. See *Berakhot* 28b.
42. See *Amudei Shamayim*, 235b-236a, where R. Emden rejected various other interpretations given to "*higayon*" in medieval literature (e.g., a reference to the Bible, childish talk, etc.) and concluded that it refers to philosophy.
For the history of this phrase, see Mordecai Breuer, "'Min'u Benekhem Min ha-Higayon,'" *Mikhtam le-David* (Ramat Gan, 1978), 242-61.
43. Cf. Numbers 14:24. The verse refers to Caleb who was held in high esteem by God.
44. *Birat Migdal Oz*, 23a. For the last phrase, cf. *Isalah* 8:4.
45. Cf. Exodus 15:10.
46. Cf. Psalms 18:37.
47. *Ez Avot*, 20a, on Avot 2:14. The reference to *sefarim hizonim* is in Mishnah Sanhedrin 11:1.
48. Cf. I Samuel 8:13. The reference is to Maimonides' famous letter to R. Jonathan ha-Kohen of Lunel. See Joshua Blau, ed., *Teshuvot ha-Rambam* III (Jerusalem, 1961), 57.

49. Cf. Esther 10:3.
50. Cf. Isaiah 8:14.
51. See *Shabbat* 48b.
52. J. Emden, *Mishneh Lehem* (Altona, 1768), 48b-49a, on Avot 2:14. This commentary on Avot was printed only once, at the end of the first edition of the second volume of R. Emden's *Lehem Shamayim*. His *Ez Avot* commentary on Avot was printed earlier (and reprinted several times) and is a totally different work.
For more sources reflecting the problematics of R. Emden's position vis-a-vis the authorship of the *Guide of the Perplexed* expressed here (for example, in the previous text he simply assumes that Maimonides *did* write it), see my "Rabbi Jacob Emden's *Iggeret Purim*," *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature II*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, 1984), 442-43, n. 12.
53. Cf. Psalms 107:5 and 143:4.
54. In *Guide* 3:32, Maimonides writes that God included the institution of sacrifices in the Torah as a concession to the idolatrous nature of the world in which the Jewish people lived at the time it was revealed. Since it was then the universally accepted means of worship, it would have been impossible for God to demand of the Jews to entirely dispense with it. As a result, He allowed them to engage in it, but limited its focus to Himself. See too *Guide* 3:46. This lack of an intrinsic value and significance for the entire sacrificial ritual aroused the ire of many who succeeded Maimonides. See, e.g., Ramban's *Commentary on the Torah to Leviticus* 1:9.
55. See *Avot* 1:2.
56. See *Ta'anit* 27b.
57. Cf. Isaiah 49:4.
58. A more popular name for the *Mishneh Torah*.
59. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:12.
60. *Avot* 5:18.
61. *Mitpahat Sefarim* (Lvov, 1870), 61-62.
62. Cf. Isaiah 35:3; Job 4:3.
63. See *Avot* 2:14.
64. See *Nazir* 23b and *Horiyot* 10b where the Talmud states that such a sin is greater than a *mizvah* performed not for the sake of God's Name.
65. *Mitpahat Sefarim*, 64-65.