

MALBIM'S SECULAR KNOWLEDGE AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE SPIRIT OF THE HASKALAH

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Rabbi Meir Loeb ben Yehiel Michel (1809-1879); who became known by his initials as Malbim, was a fascinating and significant figure on the orthodox Jewish scene in the nineteenth century. Born in Volochisk, Volhynia and troubled by a stormy Rabbinical career in a half-dozen Jewish communities, Malbim wrote a large number of books, many of which had a powerful influence upon the intellectual life of those Jews who remained opposed to the Haskalah movement, even rejuvenating the much neglected study of the Bible to a considerable extent.¹ The degree of his influence may be partially gauged by two quite divergent sources which yield the same impression — that the admiration for Malbim was almost boundless. Tzvi Hirschfeld, in an article in *Zion* 1841, which will be discussed more fully below, wrote of Malbim, "I know very well that the Jews who live in Eastern lands, upon whom the light of wisdom has not yet shone, have decided to raise him up and exalt him." Many years later, the famous Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Slonim said, "He is matchless in our generation and is as one of the great scholars of medieval times (*Rishonim*), and one page of his books is as beloved to me as any treasure and is dearer than pearls."²

Yet Malbim, the champion of orthodoxy, was imbued with a very wide range of secular knowledge; indeed, as we shall see, he could never have exercised such influence without it. It is the purpose of this paper to examine Malbim's secular learning and

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to determine how he related it to his faith and to the religious, intellectual, and social developments of his time. We shall thus gain insight into the world view of a very influential rabbi who, while remaining within the orbit of the strictest orthodoxy, grappled with the manifold problems of the age of Haskalah.

Let us turn first to a central issue, Malbim's attitude toward the Jewish Enlightenment and toward religious reform, problems which were closely intertwined in his mind. This subject is best approached through an analysis of perhaps the most painful experience of Malbim's life, his tenure as chief Rabbi of Bucharest from 1860 to 1865. Here he suffered intensely from people sympathetic to religious reform who accused him of obscurantism and who eventually had him thrown into jail, from which he was released only through the intervention of Moses Montefiore. His reaction to these events, detailed in a long article he wrote in *HaLevanon* II,³ is of great value in giving us an understanding of his feelings on these questions. We must constantly keep in mind, however, the circumstances under which this article was written. Malbim was very angry and bitter; his negative feelings will thus be exaggerated and the picture of his enemies will approach caricature. Yet exaggeration is often valuable, for it clarifies beliefs and emotions that might otherwise have remained vague.

Malbim's article, important for social and economic as well as intellectual history, divides the Jewish population of Bucharest into three groups: 1) artisans, 2) peddlers and storekeepers, and 3) the upper class. His attitude toward the first two groups is friendly, for despite their ignorance they were responsive to his preaching and careful in religious observance.⁴ This friendliness toward the ignorant masses is found elsewhere in Malbim's works as well; he says, for example, that "the masses can reach the (religious) level of a scholar by supporting him."⁵ These Jews apparently returned his affection, for he relates that many made valiant physical efforts to prevent his arrest,⁶ and at his funeral the crowds were so large that the city administration of Kiev had to supply a special guard.⁷

The upper class, however, was viewed by their rabbi with dislike and contempt. Malbim, as we shall see presently, felt that genuine enlightenment and religious belief are inseparable; the rich lacked the latter and, Malbim maintains, did not, despite their

pretenses, possess the former. When asked by his fictitious questioner about the philosophical position of his opponents, Malbim answers that previous philosophers based their systems upon knowledge obtained through the mind, the eye, and the ear, "while these "philosophers" depend upon taste, touch, and smell. "Their taste gains wisdom (יִשְׁכִּיל) in understanding the nature of all sorts of animals about which no Jew has ever gained wisdom; it investigates 'all animals that go on all fours and that have many feet' and all 'that have no fins or scales in the waters.' The sense of touch looks into the nature of the generative faculty...and investigates prohibited women for three of these philosophers. And the sense of smell, because it is a spiritual faculty, was not privileged to reign on weekdays but only on the Sabbath, for those who do not smoke all week 'have their smoke rise' on Sabbath in all streets."⁸

Now Malbim, we know, did not care much for rich people generally. This dislike goes back to his unpleasant experiences with his first wife, of a very rich family, whom he divorced largely because she wanted him to give up his studies and enter the world of business.⁹ Thus, Malbim may well have antagonized these people by not treating them respectfully. But there can be little doubt that their religious observance was minimal and that this was a major factor in the development of antagonism. Malbim, as we shall see, was exaggerating when he said that their opposition was based solely on his preaching, which emphasized religious observance, but there is surely some basis for his assertion.¹⁰

The militant non-observance of some of Malbim's detractors is illustrated by the well-known story that on Purim one of them sent him a sugar pig as *mishloach manot*, whereupon he paid the messenger and sent back his own picture "saying that Malbim thanks the sender for his image, which the respectable gentleman was kind enough to send the rabbi, and that in return he sends his own likeness."¹¹ It is also told of Malbim that a non-observant Jew asked him whether smoking was permitted on Sabbath; the answer: yes, if it is done with some change (על ידי שינוי), that is, by putting the burning side into one's mouth.¹² The fact that such incidents are related about Malbim indicates that there was strong antagonism which at least manifested itself in the form of militant opposition to religious observance and which, as we shall see, was justified on the basis of enlightenment.

Malbim's preaching, then, was a major factor in the developing animosity. Still, it is clear from his writings that he felt that a preacher must not admonish people with unmitigated harshness and severity. "One who admonishes the people... must be one of the sons of Aaron... to love peace and pursue peace, to love people and bring them closer to Torah."¹³ Elsewhere, he emphasizes the fact that the reprover must see to it that he does not embarrass the person being admonished.¹⁴ In his commentary on *Genesis*,¹⁵ Malbim attributes to God an approach which he is likely to have followed himself: "This was God's custom in most of the prohibitions: to first mention what was permitted; e.g., "Six days thou shalt work"... "Six years thou shalt sow thy land"... intending to show that the prohibitions of the Sabbath and of the Sabbatical year are not impossible to observe. Here too he meant to say (to Adam), 'After all, I have prohibited only one tree; I have prohibited only luxuries and the pleasure which causes evil, and I have not commanded that you refrain from enjoying food.'" Such a man is unlikely, despite the frequent difference between theory and practice, to have been unrestrained in the violence of his attack against the practices of the people of Bucharest. Still, the troubles he experienced in other cities as well tends to indicate that he was perhaps short-tempered and somewhat intolerant of those with whom he differed, although it should be recalled that these incidents were all after his bitter experience in Bucharest. Earlier, he had had a long and successful rabbinical career without such friction. In any event, he tells us that ten days before his arrest he came to an agreement with his opponents permitting him, as he puts it, to preach about the Sabbath and prohibited foods only to those who would willingly listen.¹⁶ Malbim probably agreed to this compromise or at least rationalized his agreement on the basis of a realization that admonitions to his opponents would go unheeded, and one of the necessary components of the commandment "Thou shalt rebuke thy neighbor" is that he be a person who might accept reproof.¹⁷ In any case, the agreement was broken by Malbim's enemies, and his unhappy years in Bucharest were brought to an end.¹⁸

At this point, we must examine the charges made against Malbim by his opponents. S. Sachs, in an article defending Malbim in *HaLevanon*,¹⁹ says that he was blamed for three reasons: 1) preaching in Hebrew, 2) inability to represent the Jewish community to

the government because of inability to speak languages (German, French, or Rumanian) well, 3) lack of supervision of the schools to see to it that secular subjects and languages (תּפּרִים וּלְשׁוֹנוֹת) be taught. There is unquestionably much truth in all these allegations. It should, however, be pointed out that even if Malbim did not speak these languages fluently, he could read at least German quite well. This is clear from his treatise on logic (*Yesodei Hokmat HaHiggayon*) where he refers, in frequent parentheses, to many difficult German philosophical terms which he has translated into Hebrew.²⁰

The third charge is more serious and more significant. On December 7, 1864, the Rumanian government passed a law requiring elementary education of all children between eight and twelve years of age.²¹ That there was strong Jewish opposition to this law is clear from a letter from the Minister of Public Instruction sent to Jewish communities in 1865. "I have been receiving requests," writes the minister, "from several Israelite communities to continue to tolerate the old, unsystematic schools." This he refused to do and proposed instead a sort of "released time" program for Jews. He ends: "The separation of schools will perpetuate the Jews' separation from the nation, for they will not become accustomed to the life of Rumanians and will accustom themselves, from infancy, to the idea of a separation between Jews and Christians."²² Thus, some degree of Jewish assimilation was the avowed aim of this program. Malbim probably felt that national and cultural assimilation of this sort was but the first step toward religious assimilation, and he was surely familiar and probably in sympathy with the cry of many Russian Jews, "No secular schools!"²³ It is true that he himself had broad secular knowledge, but he had not obtained it in an assimilation-oriented, government-sponsored program. Furthermore, there was long-standing Jewish precedent for permitting such studies to people of more advanced age and knowledge while prohibiting it to youngsters.²⁴

Malbim's experience in Bucharest aroused within him powerful feelings of distaste for what he regarded as pseudo-enlightenment. He expressed these feelings in poetic form in "Shenat HaYovel": "The darkness is dispelled, you say, the light has come; you say, 'Ethics and justice were born in my time, religion and faith are slaves of my light'; you say, 'I have grown wise though my fathers were fools...' O pure and enlightened generation! When the light

descended, darkness ascended from beneath it... So has darkness turned to light!... What is to be done to the shepherds of Israel who say that there are still Torah and commandments for Israel?.. What is to be done to obscurantists who say that 'a commandment is a candle and Torah light' and whose ear is deaf to the voice of the times that cries, 'There is no Torah for liberty has come.'"²⁵

In truth, Malbim believed in *haskalah* — in his own way. In the introduction to his commentary on *Leviticus* and *Sifra*, he says that his book is intended for wise or enlightened people (משכילי עם), and he is fearful lest it be seen by obscurantists (סורדי אור). The candelabrum in the sanctuary is a symbol of the light of wisdom and knowledge (אור הזהשכלה והדעת).²⁶ To Malbim, however *haskalah* means either knowledge and understanding of God and Torah or the use of linguistic, logical, and even scientific tools to buttress faith or to explain it.

Malbim felt that the non-belief or "heresy" of his time was a result of a perversion of the intellectual process. He discusses the person "who sins because of disbelief and comes 'with a high hand' to deny the Sinaitic revelation as did Menasseh ben Hezekiah... who equated the words of the Torah with those of men." There is no doubt that he has in mind the reformers of the nineteenth century, for in the introduction to his commentary on *Leviticus*, he accuses those who gathered at Brunswick of comparing the Torah to other ancient stories and its poetry to that of Homer and the Greeks. The passage about Menasseh continues: "There is a difference between one who sins through passion — for he will later repent — and one who sins through disbelief, for he will never repent. The first act is called sin (חטא); the second — an act of perversity (עוון) because it is a perversion of intellect (השכל)."²⁷ Malbim's pessimism about repentance is qualified somewhat in his eschatological speculations, but it is clear here that he considers the non-believer hopelessly lost. In any case, the idea that certain manifestations of the *haskalah*, viz. the anti-orthodox developments, are perversions not only of faith but also of intellect is a central one in Malbim's thought. Examples of this conviction can be easily multiplied;²⁸ we shall see later that he considered certain aspects of disbelief in orthodoxy to be absolutely untenable philosophically.

Malbim, in fact, wrote a long poem called *Mashal U-Melitzah*

to emphasize the interdependence of wisdom and faith. It has been suggested that this poem was written as a response to *Emet VeEmunah* of Adam HaKohen. Klausner points out that the two books appeared in the same year but adds that Malbim may have seen the other work in manuscript form.²⁹ This seems far-fetched. It is much more likely that this poem, which was first given to the editor of *HaLevanon*, is the result of Bucharest; it is a poetical expression of the ideas of the unfinished "Shenat HaYovel." The latter appeared in 1865 and the former in 1867; the essential idea of both is that enlightenment without faith is folly. The fact that the chief protagonist, a man in love with Wisdom (חכמה) but repelled by her sister Fear of God (יראה), is named Rich (עשיר) lends further plausibility to this conjecture. The central point, that Wisdom and Fear of God are "twin sisters," is made over and over again.³⁰ It is significant that Malbim used the poetic form to express this idea; he was interested in proving that technical skill in language can and does go hand in hand with strict fidelity to religious tradition. This too, as we shall discover, was a basic approach in all Malbim's literary endeavors.

One of the clearest examples to Malbim of the use of intellect for perverse purposes was the discovery of rationalizations to justify the abandonment of certain biblical injunctions. These rationalizations usually took the form of discovering a reason for the commandment and showing how that reason is no longer relevant. In discussing Eve's encounter with the serpent, Malbim writes, "Here we learn the serpent's method of seduction and leading astray which exists to this very day. For if people investigate the reasons for the commandments as do those of our nation who are breaking away, they ask why God prohibited five impure animals and try to discover as the reason the fact that they do damage to the body of the one who eats them. Then, when they discover that the foods are not harmful to the body, they throw away the commandment."³¹ In his homiletical work, *Artzot HaShalom*, Malbim blames Maimonides for laying a trap into which many have fallen by saying that the reason for prohibited foods is medical.³² Finally, he says that people who indulge in such speculation should at least be uncertain as to the reasons they advance and therefore not abandon religious observance.³³

Thus far, we have sketched Malbim's attitude toward the Enlightenment, particularly as it affected religious reform. Later, we shall

discuss other aspects of his approach and the scope and application of his secular knowledge. First, however, we must examine his attitude as reflected in his life work: biblical exegesis.

In 1839, a book of sermons by Malbim called *Artzot HaShalom* appeared. Tzvi Hirschfeld, in *Zion* 1841,³⁴ reviewed the book and asked Malbim to abandon far-fetched, homiletical interpretations of Scripture and to write a commentary based on the simple, true interpretation (*peshat*). Hirschfeld notes the fact that Malbim is greatly admired by the Jews of Eastern Europe and can thus influence them profoundly; he points, furthermore, to the *HaKetav Veba-Kabbalah* of Rabbi Jacob Meklenburg as a work worthy of emulation by Malbim. In turning to Malbim's commentaries, we see an attempt to fulfill Hirschfeld's request by explaining the Bible according to the plain meaning, though Malbim's idea of *peshat* and that of Hirschfeld were undoubtedly quite different. But there was much more to motivate Malbim than a single review of *Artzot HaShalom*. There was one of the overriding ambitions of his life: to prove that modern attacks on the divine authorship of the Bible and the oral law are not based on genuine scholarship and that, on the contrary, a more profound understanding of grammar and logic can demonstrate the validity of tradition. Thus, Malbim decided to use the tools of the Enlightenment to oppose its anti-orthodox tendencies. It should be stated at the outset that his command of the tools and the spirit of modern scholarship was far more restricted than that of a man like David Hoffmann, for example, whose goals were quite similar. Yet Malbim's influence was much wider, and his approach, both in its successes and failures, merits careful study.

Malbim tells us in his introduction to *Leviticus* that what really motivated him to write his commentary was the conference of reform-minded rabbis at Brunswick in 1844, although it is quite clear from the same introduction that he himself was deeply concerned with the basic problems involved and did not want to neglect the plain meaning of either the written or oral Torah. Thus, the commentary is avowedly a reaction to the times, a phenomenon which we see in the case of *Artzot HaShalom*³⁵ and *Artzot HaHayyim* (which, says Maimon,³⁶ was to be a commentary on the entire *Shulhan Aruch*) as well. The reaction, in the case of the commentary to *Leviticus*, was to unite the oral and written law. It is interesting that Malbim uses the phrase *haketav*

vebakabbalah in this context, yet does not refer explicitly to Meklenburg at all, perhaps because his own methods were to be novel.

Malbim based his commentary on a very thorough study of Hebrew grammar,³⁷ a pursuit very popular among the *maskilim*. His central purpose in this pursuit was to demonstrate that "none of the grammarians have reached even the ankles of the first generation," a demonstration which will give "ammunition... against any heretic... denier, or critic."³⁸ The method Malbim employs to effect this demonstration is the bringing of proof that previous attempts to explain grammatical phenomena have been inadequate and that only the rabbinic *midrash* provides a full explanation. To do this, he conveniently assumes that fixed rules for all phenomena must be preserved at all costs, ignoring the fact that languages develop through use.³⁹ He would justify this assumption, of course, on the basis of the special sanctity of Hebrew. When Malbim cannot establish the accuracy of a rabbinic statement, he tries to show its probability and the impossibility of contrary demonstration. When dealing, for example, with certain rabbinic comments on the compound nature of some Hebrew words (e.g. תתן אף = תנאף; רך אל = רכיל; יחן אף = יחניף), Malbim shows that many words probably are compounded, "and we do not know how. The Rabbis, however, who were near the source and knew the language and its origin knew how the development took place."⁴⁰ This exaggerated agnosticism as to linguistic development ignores the role of comparative Semitic philology of which Malbim may or may not have been aware, but it aids him in making his point in an area where proof of rabbinic accuracy would be well-nigh impossible.

Malbim, in using grammatical and logical principles, is allegedly seeking the simple meaning of the text. In his introduction to *Joshua*, *Isaiah*, and the *Song of Songs*, he explicitly differentiates between *peshat* and *derash* and says that he seeks only the former. In his commentary to *Genesis*⁴¹ he begins in one place by quoting his homiletical *Artzot HaShalom* and then says, "But according to our present method..." and gives another explanation. Despite the fact that Malbim ordinarily insists that the simple meaning and the rabbinic interpretation are identical, there are passages where he distinguishes the two and feels impelled to explain the simple meaning separately. "This," he writes, "is in accordance with the simple meaning (פשוט). And now let us explain the verses according to the interpretation of the *Sifre* and Talmud."⁴² "Till

here," he writes elsewhere; "we have interpreted according to the Mishnah (ch. 5 of *Ma'aser Sheni*) and the *Sifre*, and now let us explain according to the *peshat*."⁴³ He feels it necessary to explain the *lex talionis* according to its biblical formulation and therefore says that "in the hands of heaven" there is theoretically such punishment and payment is to be regarded as ransom money (כֶּפֶר).⁴⁴ In *Eretz Hemdab*,⁴⁵ he mentions a rabbinic explanation of a non-halachic matter together with one from the *Kuzari* as if they had equal weight. Malbim's theoretical recognition of the primacy of the simple interpretation is present in his *Artzot HaHayyim* as well,⁴⁶ although we shall later see that Malbim often lost sight of the simple meaning completely and indulged in the most fanciful homilies in his commentary.

We must now examine a vitally important question with regard to Malbim's biblical exegesis, and that is the extent of his familiarity with biblical criticism, both historical and textual. Probably the most significant passage in Malbim's writings which deals with higher criticism is in his introduction to *Psalms*. Here, he confesses that certain psalms were written under divine inspiration as late as the time of Cyrus and tries to adduce Talmudic authority for a similar opinion. He adds that he admits this "to remove from us the arguments of scoffers who ask how it is possible that in the time of David, when the monarchy was still powerful, Israel was on its land, and the decree was not yet made, that the priests should have sung about the end of the monarchy and the exile in the time of Zedekiah." Malbim, in other words, is willing to grant a small concession in order to strengthen the foundations of the faith; he is attempting to show that the divine inspiration of *Psalms* can be defended without far-fetched reasoning that insists upon Davidic authorship.

Malbim, however, always had a double audience in mind, and to his orthodox readers he supplied the necessary far-fetched reasoning. The Bible, he explains, traditionally has four levels of meaning (*peshat, remez, derash, sod* [or *Kabbalah*, as he puts it] known as PaRDeS) and as many as seventy different valid interpretations (ע' פנים לתורה). Malbim is interpreting according to the simple meaning, but the traditional view may be correct on some other level. Here he is in serious logical difficulty. The principle of PaRDeS makes sense in some areas of exegesis; an author, especially if that author is God, can intend to convey various nuances and even levels of meaning. But it makes little sense in this case. Even

if "the Torah has seventy faces," how can both David and a priest of Cyrus' time have written the same Psalm? Malbim was quite aware of this difficulty and suggests that the Psalm may have been written early, transmitted secretly by a few select individuals, and finally made public in the time of Cyrus. While this is hardly *derash*, *remez* or *sod*, it is an interesting attempt to solve a problem which obviously perplexed Malbim and troubled him considerably.⁴⁷

A striking parallel to this reasoning, one, in fact, which may have influenced Malbim, is found in an article by S. D. Luzzatto on *Isaiah* published much before Malbim wrote his introduction to *Psalms*.⁴⁸ Luzzatto, in defending the unity of *Isaiah*, wrote, "Those prophecies which refer to the distant future Isaiah did not proclaim publicly... but he wrote them down to be preserved for future generations."

It is significant that Malbim scarcely mentions the critical dissection of *Isaiah* and certainly does not enter into a careful polemic against it. That he knew about it is clear from his introduction to *Ezekiel* where he says, "This well (of Ezekiel's words)... has been left undisturbed by the commentators and critics of the last generation, unlike the books of *Isaiah* and *Job* and other wells of holy water which come from the sanctuary which they have disturbed; and some of them have come to Marah and thrown in their trees and made the water bitter, while others closed up the wells and filled them with dust." He was well aware of the critical approach to the *Song of Songs* as well, and writes in his commentary, "You see that God... has closed the eyes of some of the commentators and translators of the German Bibles... who have profaned the sanctity of this song, for they have explained it according to its outer form, according to its husk, and have considered it like the song of a harlot... They have therefore cut it in pieces and torn it to shreds... and considered it a combination of many songs — a wine song, a song of friendship, a song of Spring, a song for the dance, etc."⁴⁹ In the case of *Job*, it is fairly clear that Malbim believed it was written by Moses, for he says in his introduction, "Its value, order, character, and wisdom are evidence that there is divine wisdom in it and that it was composed through divine inspiration by a man unique in the history of Israel (איש לאדם בישראל כמוהו)."

In the case of *Isaiah* and the *Song of Songs*, it was religiously

crucial to reject higher criticism. In *Job*, Malbim thought the objective evidence to be clearly in favor of traditional views. His general feeling was, as he relates at the end of his introduction to *Joshua*, that recent commentators had either repeated what had already been done before or had gone dangerously astray. In the one case where the core of the significant religious assertion could be preserved even after the acceptance of certain critical conclusions and where the objective evidence favored such conclusions — the case of *Psalms* — we see Malbim torn by a number of opposing forces: his desire to show that one did not require far-fetched reasoning to affirm divine inspiration, his adherence to tradition, his orthodox audience, his common sense. He finally arrived at an unoriginal but instructive compromise trying to preserve all elements and satisfy all his readers.

Malbim's position on textual criticism is wholly negative. It may even be probable that his opposition to lower criticism caused him to adopt a position which profoundly affected his most basic exegetical method. In his introduction to *Jeremiah*, he carries on a polemic against Abravanel who had dared criticize the stylistic skill of the prophet. Malbim maintains that God dictated the specific language of each prophet word for word, for if we do not affirm this and assume instead the fallibility of the prophet in transmitting the content of his prophecy then we are opening the door to an unusual sort of lower criticism (stylistic improvement rather than restoration of a corrupt text). "Then," writes Malbim, "a person would dare to add and subtract from Holy Writ according to his stylistic preference, and the holy books will be like an open, un-walled city which 'little foxes that destroy vineyards' would enter to damage and destroy. . . And we are commanded not to change even one letter." In his introduction to *Leviticus*, Malbim refers to those who gathered at Brunswick as "little foxes" bent on destruction, a parallel which indicates that he is not merely referring to a theoretical danger here but was quite well aware of the growing tendency toward conjectural emendation even, to a limited extent, in a man as religious as Luzzatto. He may have felt that by raising the sanctity of each prophetic word to that of the Pentateuch itself he would prevent this tendency. Luzzatto, for example, did not emend Pentateuchal passages. In light of this conviction, the principles he laid down in his commentary to *Isaiah* that prophetic writings can contain no redundancy or superfluity in style takes on

new meaning, for the style too is not the prophet's but God's. Thus, in an indirect and perhaps subsidiary way his reaction against lower criticism is responsible for the principles underlying a major part of his exegetical works.

Malbim, as we have seen, maintained that his sole quest was for the simple meaning. Yet, despite Hirschfeld's request and despite his own resolution, he very often lapses into a homiletical excursus. *Torah Or* is replete with them, but there they are at least labeled. In *HaTorah VehaMitzvah* (the commentary proper) as well, we find him explaining that land cannot be sold forever because the human soul is merely sojourning on earth.⁵⁰ This sort of lapse is excusable and even welcome because of its brevity and beauty, and it justifies Glicksburg's comment that Malbim introduced some very appealing homiletical ideas into his commentary which do not stray too far from the plain meaning.⁵¹

There are instances, however, where the homiletical passage is longer and flagrantly violates the plain meaning of the text. In *Artzot HaShalom*, Malbim explained that the true test of Abraham was not in the command to sacrifice his son but rather in the second command — to spare him! The test was to discover whether Abraham would feel the joy that a father naturally experiences when his son is saved or whether his only joy would be that of fulfilling "a positive commandment" (מצוות עשה). The latter was true, and Abraham thus passed the test. This explanation is repeated at length in the commentary to *Genesis* and in *Eretz Hemdah*.⁵² The dehumanization of Abraham had its precedents — in Abravanel, for example, upon whom Malbim often relies heavily, Abraham begs God for permission to sacrifice Isaac — but Malbim completes his interpretation with the following far-fetched exegesis of *Gen.* 22.12 ("And thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me"): "Thou hast withheld" him "not" because he is "thy son, thine only son" but only because you heard a command "from Me." This type of interpretation is, unfortunately, not rare in Malbim's commentaries.⁵³

We have seen, then, that Malbim's entire commentary was a reaction to the developing world of *haskalah* and reform. It was the work of a man who wanted to fight these tendencies with their own tools and to prove that a proper understanding of the texts refutes almost all the major conclusions of both historical and

textual criticism. But the task of trying to completely satisfy his extremely orthodox audience and to employ fully the tools of modern linguistics and research was a task too great even for a man with as fine a mind as Malbim. Hence the numerous shortcomings of a work which is, nevertheless, a valiant and valuable effort to accomplish a monumental task.

After this discussion of Malbim's attitude toward the *Haskalah*, biblical criticism, and reform in his great works of scholarship, we can now turn to his position on some more practical matters.

The two most important political developments among Jews during Malbim's lifetime were emancipation and the rise of proto-Zionist activity. His practical attitude toward emancipation is not quite clear, although we know of his opposition to government-sponsored schools. One fact, however, is clear and instructive. Malbim succeeded in placing emancipation within the framework of a religious philosophy of history. "In this exile," he writes, "and especially in the last generation, many states have given Jews the rights of citizens (*Burgerrecht*), and their fortune and honor have risen to the extent that there is no difference between the period of exile and the time of redemption except observance of the commandments connected with the land of Israel and the Temple. Why has God done that in this last generation?" The answer: it is a test to determine whether the desire to return to the land of Israel and to repent is based only upon suffering. If the Jews are wise, they will not be satisfied with the temporal good to be obtained in exile; if they are foolish and remain content, God may leave them in exile indefinitely.⁵⁴ Thus, emancipation is the final, crucial test for the Jewish people, and it is a test Malbim expected them to pass. For in his commentary on *Daniel* he calculates that the complete redemption will take place in 1927-28; thus, according to the *Zohar* in *Shemot*, "an awakening for redemption" should begin in 1867-68. Malbim expected just such an awakening.

The awakening that did take place was proto-Zionist agitation for a return to Palestine. Chaim Heshel Braverman, in *Knesset Yisrael* of 1888,⁵⁵ writes as follows of Malbim's attitude toward this movement: "Malbim was a true lover of Zion... who approved of the intention of the 'Lovers of Zion' (חובבי ציון)... to transport a number of Jews who find it extremely difficult to make a living... to the desolate land of our fathers, to develop and till

its soil and take bread out of our fatherland that has remained as a living widow for two thousand years." It is particularly interesting that Malbim, in a number of passages, emphasizes his belief that the redemption will take place in stages, the first stage expressing itself in a state with only a small amount of power.⁵⁶ Malbim's nationalistic feelings left little room for universalism, and even the book of *Jonah* and a verse like *Amos* 9.7 are interpreted — in the latter case with total disregard for the plain meaning⁵⁷ — in a manner not at all complimentary toward Gentiles.

In other practical matters of less significance we find Malbim defending old customs which had been ridiculed by *maskilim*. He defends, for example, the method of arranging marriages in which bride and groom do not see each other till the wedding. His defense is based first on biblical precedent (Isaac and Rebecca), but he then adds the following psychological observation: "According to the modern custom, children learn to show each other love which does not exist in real life but only in parables and stage performances; therefore, when they later discover that they deceived each other, their love cools off until it might dissolve into nothingness."⁵⁸ Thus, Malbim defends a much-attacked custom not only on the basis of the Bible, but on grounds that no *maskil* could challenge: the perpetuation of love. The conservatism in dress which characterizes nineteenth century orthodoxy is reflected in Malbim,⁵⁹ yet in his commentary to *Orah Hayyim* he defends the opinion of R. Solomon Luria that covering the head is a sign of special piety and not a legal requirement.⁶⁰

At this point, it should be mentioned at least in passing that Malbim studied *kabbalah* from his youth, but he was opposed to the Hasidic movement, an opposition which caused him serious trouble in at least two towns where he was Rabbi.⁶¹ Maimon maintains that Malbim eventually became more sympathetic to Hasidism,⁶² but this never became very apparent.

Finally, we must examine Malbim's secular knowledge — in philosophy, science, and history — and discover how he used this knowledge in his works.

Malbim's early education, under R. Moshe Halevi Hurwitz, included the classics of medieval Jewish philosophy.⁶³ Later he was to write a commentary on *Behinat Olam* and a treatise of

more than one hundred pages on the principles of logic. Malbim insisted on the validity of logical and philosophical reasoning and argued against the contrary claims of skeptics. He writes in his treatise on logic that the first step in philosophy is "to clarify the fact that it is in our power to attain knowledge through syllogistic reasoning... for the Skeptics denied this, and decided that a man cannot deduce matters through scientific reasoning but only through sense-perception and common sense. And for this a special study is needed called a critique of pure reason."⁶⁴ Malbim, then, maintained the possibility of reaching fairly certain conclusions in philosophical discourse.

This certainly is reflected in metaphysical questions taken up by Malbim in his other works. Knowing of Kant, Malbim nevertheless considers the belief in God to be philosophically demonstrable through the argument from design. He says, in fact, that it is almost impossible to conceive of "a fool who could think that the world came about by chance."⁶⁵ Occasionally Malbim displays an exaggerated feeling of certainty even when his argument is not particularly convincing. He writes, for example, in his discussion of God's reply to Job, that it is a "foolish question" (שאלה סכלה) to ask why God created predatory animals, because it would not be in accordance with God's glory to create "only worms and ants. His glory is shown by the fact that there are powerful animals... which He subdues with His might." Sometimes, on the other hand, Malbim argues against non-believers by insisting upon the limitations of human knowledge: "Do you know God, and do you weigh your knowledge on the same scales as His?"⁶⁷

Malbim, though he read modern philosophers, was completely immersed in the problems of medieval philosophy in general and medieval Jewish philosophy in particular. He discusses hylic matter and the question of man's soul whether it is one with three functions or whether there are distinct souls;⁶⁸ he constantly operates with the Nachmanidean concept of the hidden miracle;⁶⁹ he deals with the opinion that angels "are made up of matter and form, their matter sometimes being of fire and sometimes of air, as is the opinion of Ibn Ezra, the *Kuzari*, and Ibn Gabirol";⁷⁰ he accepts the idea that Jews are uniquely receptive to divine inspiration (הוענין והאלקי) straight out of the *Kuzari*;⁷¹ he frequently discusses man as a microcosm (עולמך וְעולמך) and the world as a large man;⁷² he accepts the opinion that elemental fire is dark.⁷³

Malbim often opposes Maimonides in philosophical matters, though he occasionally comes to his defense.⁷⁴ Malbim maintains, against Maimonides, that man is the purpose of all creation;⁷⁵ he opposes Maimonides on prophecy in two major areas;⁷⁶ most important, he maintains that modern logic has re-established the philosophic probability of *creatio ex nihilo*.⁷⁷ This assertion is repeated in his commentary on *Exodus*⁷⁸ with an argument that is most interesting in the age of the controversy over Darwin: "I think that the principal testimony for *ex nihilo* is the fact that we see that for thousands of years no new species has been added to the world, while according to those who believe in the eternity of the world, it would be necessary that new creatures appear from time to time as they did in the past." Here is another example of Malbim's philosophical certainty in complicated matters.

The philosophical knowledge that Malbim possessed was put to use for ethical and exegetical purposes as well as for philosophical ones. He explains, for example, that success or suffering in this world is not very important and scarcely even exists, for it is predicated upon things which are merely contingent and haven't any necessary, intrinsic existence, "as has been explained in philosophy."⁷⁹ Malbim explains the Talmudic statement that the Septuagint began, "God created in the beginning" by saying that since the Greeks believed in the eternity of the world, the biblical order could have been misunderstood as implying hylic matter co-existent with God.⁸⁰ This is a remarkably perceptive comment by a person who did not even know the philosophical uses of the Greek *arche*.

Malbim's knowledge of the sciences, particularly astronomy, was extensive if not systematic. His major use of science, as we have by now learned to expect, is in the service of religion. He shows, for example, that it is implied in *Genesis* that the sun, already created as a sphere, was invested with light by God on the fourth day. He continues: "Scientists have all been confused as to the light which comes from the sun and why its source is not depleted. Actually, its source can never be depleted, for it comes from the hidden light that has no end."⁸¹ Malbim refutes an interpretation of Abravanel with a refutation based on the modern sciences,⁸² yet he seems to have believed in celestial intelligences.⁸³ He expresses belief in astrology in many passages, though in others the belief is qualified or denied,⁸⁴ and in one place implies that he might believe in alchemy.⁸⁵ He uses his scientific knowledge

extensively for biblical exegesis;⁸⁶ occasionally, however, his information is very dubious, and he relies on as old a source as *Shevilei Emunah* for medical information.⁸⁷

This knowledge of science impelled Malbim to engage in naturalistic interpretations of some miracles. The fact that the rainbow was not seen before the flood, a problem that disturbed R. Saadyah Gaon and Nachmanides, is given a scientific explanation by Malbim.⁸⁸ So, too, he gives a scientific analogy to Abraham's seeing of stars during the day.⁸⁹

Despite his extensive scientific knowledge, and despite his assertion that it is not the purpose of the Torah to teach science,⁹⁰ Malbim insists that the Rabbis had literally superhuman knowledge of scientific facts. "Although the power of inquiry is insufficient to clearly ascertain the nature of that thin air (of the upper atmosphere), still the Rabbis, who viewed, through the holy spirit (ברוח הקדש) places that investigation cannot reach, told us..."⁹¹ When Malbim was younger, he was criticized in a letter by R. Ephraim Horowitz of Volochisk for implying that in a rabbinic dispute one opinion was that what we now call the Western Hemisphere is unpopulated. R. Ephraim exclaims, "Even if the Gentile scholars erred, is the Jewish people like all nations?!" Malbim answers by pointing out that in every dispute one opinion is erroneous; however, in deference to the principle that there must be an element of truth in both views (אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים), he constructs a defense for the other opinion as well.⁹² Thus, we see that there were powerful social as well as intellectual pressures upon Malbim to defend the scientific infallibility of the Rabbis.

Malbim read historical works as well, particularly on ancient history. He knows that early civilizations sprung up near rivers⁹³ and indicates a familiarity with mythology and ancient idolatry.⁹⁴ Occasionally, he is somewhat credulous in historical matters, but he certainly read a great deal in the field.

It is clear, then, that Malbim's secular knowledge was quite extensive, and he put it to use for his central goal, the defense of his tradition.

We have seen that Malbim did not reject the pursuit of philosophy, the sciences, and other intellectual endeavors, although he was wary of including them in elementary education. He believed in *haskalah* in his own way. What he did oppose, however, was

what he considered the perversion of intellect that led to the anti-religious manifestations of the enlightenment. This feeling was strengthened by his position on the ability of the intellect to attain philosophical certainty.

Malbim could never have exercised the influence he did without his secular learning, for his life's work expressed itself in the use of science, logic, philosophy, grammar, and poetry to further and defend religion. This use, however, is often uncritical, because Malbim is caught in the dilemma of trying to satisfy completely his own orthodoxy and his orthodox readers and yet remain within the framework of secular scholarship. Given the approach of many of his readers on the infallibility of the Rabbis in all areas, this was an impossible task. Malbim himself often gets carried away by homilies and loses sight of his resolution to approach texts in a straightforward manner.

Still, Malbim is a fascinating example of a brilliant individual who could not close his eyes to the Haskalah and to secular learning and who was yet unwilling to compromise his orthodoxy by one jot or tittle. His solution was to use his learning to defend religion, a solution which gained him enormous influence and which, whatever its failings, was a courageous effort to turn two worlds into one.

N O T E S

The following abbreviations are used in the notes:

Ar. H. = *Artzot HaHayyim*, a commentary to *Orab Hayyim*, divided into M.L. = *HaMeir LaAretz* and E.Y. = *Eretz Yebudah*.

Ar. Sh. = *Artzot HaShalom*, a homiletical work.

Com. = Commentary.

E.H. = *Eretz Hemdab*, comments on the Pentateuch.

T.O. = *Torab Or*, notes, often homiletical, to *HaTorab VebaMitzvah*, the commentary to the Pentateuch.

1. S. Glicksburg (*HaDerashab beYisrael*, p. 406) writes, "In the circles of the extremely orthodox it was permitted with difficulty to study Bible with the commentary of the 'Kempener' (=Malbim)."
2. Quoted by Isaac Danzig in his *Alon Bachut, Evel Kaved 'al HaRav HaGaon... Malbim*, p. 14.
3. "Shenat HaYovel," *HaLevanon* II, pp. 68-71, 85-87, 101-103, 116-118, 134-136, 199-201, 230-233, 261-263, 294-297.
4. Pp. 231-233.
5. Manuscript notes published in E.H. on *Deut.*, p. 170.

6. "Shenat HaYovel," p. 86.
7. Danzig, *Alon Bachut*, p. 11.
8. "Shenat HaYovel," p. 263.
9. David Macht, *Malbim, The Man and his Work* (reprinted from *Jewish Comment*), p. 7.
10. The assertion comes in the following sarcastic passage of "Shenat HaYovel" (p. 117): "כי עבור שהוכיח אותם לשמור את השבת מחללו ולהגזיר מבשר החזיר מלאכלו, לכן חייתו למונותים נתנו" — פג לבי מלהאמין שהיו הדברים כפשוטן, אמרתי גם אם לא ידעו היהודים האלה כי הזהירה התורה על חלול שבת ועל מאכלות אסורות וחשבו כי מלבי בדתי המצוות החדשות האלה ובנאתי להם בשם ה' ונביא שקר חייב מיתה; בכ"ו הלא לא אמרתי להם, 'כה אמר ה' אלי אמרו אל בני ישראל... כל טמא לא תאכלו', כה אמרתי להם, 'כה אמר ה' אל משה נביאו זכור את יום השבת לקדשו...' וגם לפי מחשבתם כי הוספתי דברים אלה מלבי על תורת משה, הגה עברתי על לאו דלא תוסיף וחיבתי מלקות, לא מיתה! אמרתי עוד: הלא המוסיף הוא רק המוסיף דבר על דבר, ואחשבה לדעת איזה דבר שמרו מתורת משה וקיימוהו, עד שיאמרו שאני הוספתי על הדבר הזה עוד דבר וזולתו? ואיך יאמרו שעברתי עמ"ש בתורה: 'לא תוסיפו על הדבר', על איזה דבר?
11. Macht, *op. cit.*, p. 13. For a different version, see A. Gettinger, *D'at Zeqenim*, p. 54.
12. E. Davidson, *Sehoq Pinu*, p. 239. Cf. also p. 238, no. 874b.
13. T.O. to *Numbers* 10. 9ff.
14. Com. to *Lev.*, *Qedoshim* no. 43.
15. 2. 16-17.
16. "Shenat HaYovel," p. 117.
17. Com. to *Lev.*, *loc. cit.*
18. Malbim probably saw his own fate reflected in *Amos* 5. 13: "משכילי עם היהודים רעתכם", where he comments, "והמשכיל בעת ההיא ידום" והיה דרכתם להוכיח ועתה ידמו וישימו יד לפה באשר "עת רעה היא" ושונאים את המוכיח והורגים אותו.
19. II, pp. 92-94, 106-110.
20. Cf. also E.H. on *Gen.*, p. 18. Sachs writes of Malbim, "ולוא היה חי בימי הרמב"ן (צ"ל הרמב"ן) ורנה"ו ובעלי המאספים ז"ל כי או היו שמחים כמנצח שלל רב למצא טוב בדורם רב גדול כמוהו, אשר נקצבו באו לו יחדו מכלל כל השלמות והמעלות, כמותו ירבו בישראל (p. 109). He also makes the point that Malbim knew German, though he could not speak it fluently.
21. Sincerus, *Les Juifs en Roumanie*, p. 119.
22. "I.a separation des ecoles perpetuera leur separation de la nation; car ils ne s'habitueront pas a la vie des Roumains, et se feront, des leur enfance, a l'idee d'une separation entre Juifs et Chretiens." V.A. Urecke, *Oeuvres Completes*, 1st vol., pp. 393-4. Cited in Sincerus, pp. 119-120.
23. Cf. Gideon Katznelson, *HaMilhamah HaSifrutit beim HaHaredim VebaMaskilim*, ch. 1, esp. p. 14.
24. Cf. the famous ban of R. Solomon ben Adret as well as a similar reaction of Italian rabbis to Azariah de' Rossi's *Meor Einayim*. Cf. also Malbim's Com. to *Lev.*, *Aharei Mot* no. 41 where he explains the limited value of secular learning.

25. סר החושך — אמרת — בא האור / אמרת: המוסר והיושר לידי דורי / אמרת: הדת והאמונה עבדי אורי / אמרת: אני השכלתי ואבותי סכלו / אני קמתי ואבותי גפלו ... הדור הטגור! / הדור הנאור! / כי ברדת האור עלה החשך מתחתיה ... הדור הטהור והטגור! / כך היה החשך לאור! ... נזה לעשות לרועי ישראל / האומרים יש עוד תורה ומצוות לישראל / האומרים תורה אחת לנו ולאבותינו / תורה צוה משה מורשה היא גם לקהילותינו / מה לעשות למורדי אור! / האומרים דודי לי צרור המור / בין שדי ילין, דבר צוה לאלף דור, / אל תמיד ככורו בתבנית שור. / מה לעשות למורדי אור! / האומרים אל תבכר בן כובי בת צור / על פני בן הישראלית השנואה הבכור / אל תצמד ישראל לבעל פעור. / מה לעשות למורדי אור! / האומרים גר מצוה ותורה אור, / אונם חרשה לקול העת והתור / הקורא: "Shenat HaYovel," pp. 134-136.
26. *Rimzei HaMishkan on Exodus*, ch. 25: Cf. also T.O. on *Numbers*, beginning of *Beh'alosekha* and com. to *Song of Songs* 2.5. In T.O., *baskalah* is used of knowledge of God and Torah.
27. Com. to *Numbers* 15:30 (*Shelah* no. 48).
28. Following are a number of examples: com. to *Gen.* 2. 7: "וכן בכחות הנפש המשכלת. למעמים ישכיל לדעת ה' ודרכיו ותורתו, ולפעמים ישמש" Com. to *Gen.* 3. 6: "כשתקום התאוה אל השכל ואו תקרא התאוה את השכל לעזר לה, והשכל ישמש את התאוה ויעזר לה בשכלו, בתחבולות רשע ובהמצאי היתרים ואמתלאות למעשי" Com. to *Isaiab* 1. 29: "ויחנה כסף סיגים על חרש לאמר שהדבר מותר" "וחטא זה (בחירת ע"ז בשכל) היה גדול יותר כי יד השכל והבחירה היה במעל הזה"
29. Joseph Klausner, *Historiah shel HaSifrut Halvrit HaHadashah* III, p. 224.
30. *Mashal U-Melitzah*, p. 22: "אור חכמה אל הולך בתיבתה / אשה חן, אם לא: יגרע עונתה; / אשה רעה אל ממיר את דתה. / הישכב איש את להבת שלהבת / P. 34: "ולא יהיה לשרפת אש צרבת? — / כך שוכב חיק חכמה ועומב תורתה!" P. 110 (note): "אחיות תאומות דומות יראה וחכמה מלידה מבטן ומהריון" Cf. note on p. 95. Also *Ar. Sb.* p. 2b: "מבורכת ה' ארצי, ממד האמונה מעל, ומתהום המחקי" רובצת תחת"
31. Com. to *Gen.* 3. 3-4.
32. *Ar. Sb.*, Sermon III, p. 18a.
33. Com. to *Gen.* 2. 16-17.
34. Pp. 59-62, 73-75.
35. Introduction to *Ar. Sb.*, pp. 3a-b: "אך אנכי תולעת עצלה! ... לא עשיחי כל מאומה ... אך בחלום חזיון תרדמה ראה לבבי את כל המעשים אשר נעשו תחת השמש ואת כל המהפכה אשר הפכו ילד יום... ואשכב וארדם"
36. *Sarei HaMeah VI*, pp. 109-110.
37. Introduction to *Isaiab*.
38. Introduction to *Lev.*
39. Com. to *Lev.*, *Tazri'a* no. 17: "ונה רחוק שתהיה לשוננו הקדושה כעיר פרוצה אין חומה וגדר"
40. Com. to *Lev.*, *VaYikra*, no. 152; *Qedoshim* no. 40.
41. 12. 22-23.
42. Com. to *Deut.* 24. 1.
43. Com. to *Deut.* 26. 15.
44. Com. to *Lev.*, *Emor* no. 249.
45. *Gen.*, p. 55.

46. *Ar. H. on Orab Hayyim* I. 6, M.L. no. 73: "ועיין בארץ יהודה כתבתי בדרך אחר. והוא רק בדרך החידוד" הדברים בגי' על אדני השכל, וקרובים לאמיתתה של תורה, לא כדרך הפלפול הגהוג".
47. Following are selections from this passage: "וכתבתי לגול מעלינו טענה המלעיגים... אולם אצלנו אמונה אומן כי שבעים פנים לתורה וכפי דרך הרוש הרמז והקבלה כל המזמורים האלה כבר צפו במחזה הגביאים והמשוררים... והיו גנוזים וצפונים ביד אנשי הרוח דור דור עד עת שיצא הדבר אל הפועל ואז נאמרו בקול רם".
48. *Kerem Hemed* VII. Reprinted in *Mehqerei HaYabadut*, Vol. I, part 2. The relevant passage is on p. 30.
49. "HeHarash VebaMasger," an epilogue to the commentary on *Song of Songs*, vol. II (Jerusalem, 1956 ed. of Malbim), p. 1730.
50. Com. on *Lev., Behar* no. 39.
51. *HaDerashah BeYisrael*, p. 406.
52. *Ar. Sh.*, Sermon II, p. 14a; Com. to *Gen.* 22. 12; E. H. on *Gen.*, p. 69.
53. Cf., for example, his almost incredible explanation of *Numbers* 11. 5.
54. Notes published in E. H. to *Deut.*, p. 173. It should, however, be noted that the implication concerning indefinite exile is questionable, because in many passages Malbim says that the final date cannot be delayed.
55. *Sefer* 3, p. 212.
56. Com. to *Micah* 4. 8 and see Malbim's own references there. Pointed out by Ephraim Wites, *Evel Yabid*, pp. 44-45.
57. Com. to *Amos* 9. 7: "אתם מיוחדים לי כבני קשיים שהם מצויינים וזכרים חמיר... ע"י שחרות עורם... כן אתם... ומביא ראיה לזה הלא את ישראל העליתי מארץ מצרים... ולא התערבתם עם המצריים והעליתי את ישראל... אבל הרי פלשתיים (העלית) מכפתור וארם מקיר" בחמיהו".
58. Com. to *Deut.* 24. 1.
59. Com. to *Gen.* 48. 8-9.
60. *Ar. H. on Orab Hayyim* VIII. 2, E. Y. no. 4; on II. 6, M. L. no. 43.
61. *Maggid* — Steinschneider, *Ir Vilna*, p. 234 note. Also Macht, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
62. *Sarei HaMeah* IV, p. 177. Malbim even wrote a treatise on *kabbalah* called מגלת סתרים (not סגולת סתרים as Macht quotes it).
63. Macht, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
64. *Yesodei Hokhmat HaHiggayon*, p. 95. Occasionally, Malbim uses technical principles of this treatise in his commentaries. Cf. *Deut.* 4. 32.
65. Com. to *Gen.* 1. 1. Cf. also *Ar. Sh.* pp. 43b-44a for a more elaborate philosophical discussion. Also E. H. on *Gen.*, p. 15.
66. Com. to *Job*, 40. 7.
67. *Ar. Sh.*, Sermon 5, p. 25a.
68. Com. to *Gen.*, 2. 7.
69. Com. to *Gen.* 17. 3; *Exod.* 3. 13, 6, 2; *Deut.* 3. 24 and *passim*.
70. Com. to *Gen.* 18. 3.

71. Com. to *Exod.* 19. 1.
72. Com. to *Lev., Qedoshim* no. 2; Com. to *Psalms* 104. 1 and *passim*.
73. Com. to *Deut.* 4. 11. Cf. Nachmanides at the beginning of *Genesis*.
74. Cf. com. to *Exodus* 20.2 for a defense of Maimonides against an important criticism by Crescas.
75. E.H. on *Gen.*, p. 12.
76. E.H. on *Exod.*, pp. 10-11.
77. E.H. on *Gen.*, p. 17.
78. 20.8.
79. Com. to *Psalms* 73.20.
80. E.H. on *Gen.*, p. 5.
81. Com. to *Gen.* 1.14.
82. Com. to *Gen.* 1.1 and 6.
83. Com. to *Psalms* 89.3.
84. Belief: Com. to *Gen.* 12.1, 15.5 and elsewhere. Qualification, doubt or denial: Com. to *Deut.* 4.19 and especially com. to *Job*, introd. to chs. 4 and 6.
85. E.H. to *Gen.*, p. 25.
86. Cf. com. to *Gen.* 1.6 (on electricity and the atmosphere), 1.25, 3.1; E.H. on *Gen.*, p. 15 (on gravity) and elsewhere.
87. '*Aleh LaTerufah*, a commentary on ch. 4 of *Hilchot Deot*, pub. in E.H. on *Numbers*, p. 62. Cf. com. to *Gen.* 6.1 and 30.1 for dubious information.
88. Com. to *Gen.* 9. 13.
89. Com. to *Gen.* 15. 17.
90. T. O., note 2 to *Gen.* 1.1.
91. Com. to *Gen.* 1. 6.
92. Letter published as epilogue to *Ar. H.*
93. Com. to *Gen.* 2. 10.
94. Com. to *Gen.* 4. 22, where he makes a statement that anticipates the methodology of Cassutto and Kaufmann; *Gen.* 6. 2, 4; *Exod.* 2. 23; *Isaiah* 9. 7; E. H. on *Gen.*, p. 59.

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